PARTING OF THE WATERS: DIVERGENCES IN EARLY THEOLOGIES OF
BAPTISMAL ANOINTING PRACTICES

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By
Elizabeth H. Farnsworth
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PARTING OF THE WATERS:

DIVERGENCES IN EARLY THEOLOGIES OF BAPTISMAL ANOINTING

PRACTICES

Name: Farnsworth, Elizabeth H.

APPROVED BY:

________________________________
Fr. Silviu N. Bunta, Ph.D.
Faculty Advisor

________________________________
Matthew Levering, Ph.D.
Faculty Reader

________________________________
William Johnston, Ph.D.
Faculty Reader
ABSTRACT

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Name: Farnsworth, Elizabeth H.
University of Dayton

Advisor: Fr. Silviu Bunta, Ph.D.

The practice of baptismal anointing was diverse both in practice and interpretation in the first four centuries. Early Christians at times interpreted the practice of baptismal anointing in the context of Old Testament anointings, as well as the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. Liturgical development of baptism can be seen as early as the second and third centuries with relation to anointing practices. The fourth century shows further liturgical development affected by the Christological and Pneumatological debates, as well as the growth of Christianity both doctrinally and ecclesially. As a result of the heresy debates of the fourth century, many early Christians sought to unify the practice and doctrinal theology concerning the baptismal practices. An understanding of the ritual development can aid in modern theological discussions concerning the baptismal liturgy.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Anointing in the ancient world was a common occurrence. From ancient fragmentary cuneiform texts, scholars are able to discern four categories of ancient Mesopotamian anointing practices: 1) oil rubbed on the skin when washing or dressing; 2) oil rubbed onto divine statues in the context of ritual sacrifices; 3) oil was used on the skin in social situations: when eating and drinking, when legal contracts were concluded, when eating during oath-taking because oil together with food and drink could contain a spell or potential curse on perjurers; and 4) oil was used in the change of status, or to mark a selection, such as a spouse or the selection of vassal kings.¹ Funerary unction with the ‘oil of pacification’ was also used in ancient Mesopotamia to please and pacify the spirit of the deceased in order to protect the living from the harm of a displeased spirit.²

Similarly, anointing practices were common in ancient Greece. Oils and unguents were distributed to the local temples to be used as regular offerings to the local gods.³ Ambrosia, ointment and oil infused with roses or aromatic oil, was restricted to the

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Olympians. Oil was also used by the ancient Greeks to purify a mother and child after childbirth, and the practice of anointing was used in Greek exercising and bathing rituals.

The theological understanding of being drafted into the holy through an initiatory anointing can be traced as far back as the late second-millennium BCE primitive Assyrian Emar tradition of anointing the NIN.DINGIR, the high priestess of the storm god's temple, and similarly, the Emar's zukru ritual of anointing/consecrating the upright stones as a way to identify it with the divine presence. The ancient Jews initiated their

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5 Bowie, "Oil in Ancient Greece," 28.
6 Bryan D. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*, Liturgy, Worship and Society Series (Burlington, VA: Ashgate, 2006), 36. Fikret Yegül shows the seriousness with which the Greeks understood the practice of anointing: “To take one example: that anointing was an essential accompaniment to exercise and bathing is clear. However, not so clear is the determination of the exact step in the sequence in which anointing was undertaken. Pliny anointed before exercise; Alexander Severus, after. In Apuleius’s *Metamorphosis*, Milo’s guest was first rubbed with oil at home and then taken to the nearest baths. But this might have been done because he was weary after a long trip; normally, one was anointed after bathing (as was Julius Caesar’s custom), then one sat down to dinner. The final bathing treat that Homer’s heroes enjoyed in the *Odyssey* before they were entertained by their host was the ‘fragrant oil’. Galen recommends rubbing of the body with oil after the bath because oil ‘hinders the penetration of excess air by closing the pores and protects the skin against a dryness and harmful winds’. Celsus supplied a more critical view: whether the patient should be anointed before or after the hot baths should be decided by the doctor according to each individual case and the state of the patient’s recovery…Anointing was not simply smearing the body with oil: it was a serious and quasi-scientific procedure of massage with oils and unguents of different preparations and qualities in order to obtain a wide range of benefits – protective, preventive, mollifying, and cosmetic.” Fikret Yegül, *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 354-5.

priests, kings, and holy objects by a similar means of an anointing, which was divinely commanded in the book of Exodus.

Given the commonality of the Greco-Roman and Jewish uses of oil in bathing and initiatory rites, it comes as no surprise that early Christians would also accompany the baptismal bath with a form of anointing, though the anointing(s) were often interpreted differently in various regions.\(^8\) Christ is understood as 'anointed' by the Holy Spirit at His baptism,\(^9\) which would be the basis for Christian baptismal anointing.

Many theologians attest to a baptismal anointing appearing first in Syria and only later being implemented into the Eastern and Western baptismal liturgies because of the influx of pilgrimage to Jerusalem.\(^10\) Paul F. Bradshaw points out that in Jerusalem, pilgrims bring east and west face to face, and the result was a "broad similarity which largely masked the earlier diversity."\(^11\) The Christological and Pneumatological debates, which heightened in the fourth century, also played a role in the how the baptismal anointing was articulated in various areas. The legalization of Christianity and subsequent development of ecclesiology aided in the unification of baptismal anointing practices, and as a result, many of the theologies became standardized by the beginning of the fifth century. Sebastian Brock argues that the rapid Christianization of the Roman Empire in the fourth century CE had the tendency to push the Jewish origins of

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\(^9\) Mat 3:16.


Christianity to the background as the Christian culture became more Hellenized; however, many of the Jewish interpretations are seen well past the fourth century in Greek and Latin speaking lands.

**Overview of the Project**

This thesis seeks to show the variances, as well as the similarities, in the way Christians of the first four centuries understood the practice of baptismal anointing, both in practice and theologically. The three questions that I ask when reading the early baptismal accounts are: 1) How does the anointing fit within the context of the particular baptismal ceremony; 2) How are the anointing(s) interpreted: Christologically, Pneumatically, neither, or both; and 3) What is the function of the anointing: exorcistic, cathartic, strengthening, sealing, etc. From these questions, we are able to see patterns of association, as well as the theological and liturgical development of the anointing practices.

Since the early Christians interpreted many of the baptismal anointings in light of Old Testament anointings, an account of the Old Testament practice of anointing priests and kings is given in Chapter II. Chapter III brings to fore some of the New Testament references used by early Christians in their understanding of baptismal anointing, as well as two pseudepigraphical Jewish-Christian accounts of heavenly ascent, which include anointing language similar to that of some of the early Christians. The pseudepigraphical accounts give some context of the stories containing heavenly anointings that would have been familiar to the early Christians, especially the Syrians. Chapter IV is an account of

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13 The two texts are the Testament of Levi and 2 Enoch, both of which can be considered Jewish texts, but most likely with some form of Christian influence. The Christian influence is more obviously seen in the baptismal account found in the Testament of Levi.
the primitive baptismal anointing references found in writings prior to the fourth century. Many of the references to baptismal anointing in Chapter IV appear cryptic and will only allude to the baptismal anointing, calling into question whether or not a physical anointing exists. Chapters V through VII are distinguished by region: Syria, East, and West. In this thesis, East Syria refers to the Syriac speaking Christians, and West Syria refers to the Greek speaking Syrians. It is understood that the distinction made between the East and West Syrians, or the Greek and Syriac speaking Syrians, is in many ways an artificial distinction; however, the fourth century Pneumatological debates influenced the Greek speaking Christians in ways that did not influence the Syriac speaking Christians until well past the fourth century because of the location and language barrier, which shows in their articulations of baptismal theologies.

Obviously, it is impossible to give accounts of every baptismal anointing reference in the first four centuries. By necessity, I am relying on a modified "trans-traditional" methodology. What this means is that certain persons will be considered as representative for an entire region. For example, Italy is explained primarily using the writings of Ambrose of Milan, with the obvious understanding that Ambrose is not the only voice hailing from that area. I have tried to incorporate at least two voices from any given region in order to help paint a more complete liturgical picture. Many of the authors were chosen simply because they provide the most extensive evidence of the baptismal liturgy from a particular location in time and place. The obvious disadvantage to this approach is that traditions are only partially surveyed, though we are able to gain some insight into the earliest baptismal anointing practices and theologies with the use of this methodology.
CHAPTER II
ROYAL AND PRIESTLY ANOINTINGS BCE

In ancient Judaism the attribute “anointed” was eventually designated for the king and High Priest as a sign of investiture, and by extension other divinely appointed functionaries who were not actually anointed, such as patriarchs (Psalm 105) and foreign kings (1 Kings 19:15; Isaiah 45:1; 2 Kings 8:7).¹⁴ Milgrom argues that the sacred unction probably ended with the destruction of the First Temple and definitely ended by the end of the Second Temple Period because the oil was compounded once and could never be reproduced (Exodus 30:31-32), which would have been destroyed when the Temple was destroyed.¹⁵ However, a more obvious reason for the end of sacred anointing after the destruction of the Temples is that the place in which the sacrifices were performed was destroyed, and thus the use of a High Priest became void.

Since the ancient Jews considered smell to be an extension of one’s personality,¹⁶ the sweet smelling odor of the anointing oil symbolized the living God and allowed people to be attached to God through sharing in His fragrance.¹⁷ Sacred anointing

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¹⁵ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 554.
involved a symbolic transfer of sanctity from the deity to a person or object.\textsuperscript{18} Anointing in ancient Israel served to place people and objects in the realm of the holy and to set them apart from the ordinary categories of existence.\textsuperscript{19} The use of sacred oil for anything other than sacred anointing was forbidden on pain of death (Exodus 30:32-33).

**Kingly Anointing**

Examples of royal anointings in the Old Testament are seen primarily in the examples of Saul and David. Saul's anointing fits with older folklore\textsuperscript{20} and can be considered an older source than that of David,\textsuperscript{21} and the story of David's anointing is modeled after that of Saul.\textsuperscript{22} The idea of the king being installed by the godhead was prevalent in the ancient Orient, though ancient Hittite sources show the king was anointed upon their ascent to the throne, but the anointment signified the granting of authority and did not occur at the order of the godhead.\textsuperscript{23}

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\textsuperscript{20} See McCarter, *I Samuel*, 277. McCarter notes that the story of Saul is derived from the folkloric motif of the seventh (or eighth) son who rises above his brother. The one difference is God's involvement in the events. Rudman notes that David's and Saul's occupation plays a role in their being chosen as God's elect. David's occupation as a shepherd fits two of the central elements of ANE royal ideology: shepherd as hero and shepherd as ruler. D. Rudman, "The Commissioning Stories of Saul and David as Theological Allegory," 525. Isaiah 44:28–45:1 attests to the same tradition: "who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose'; saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.' Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue the nations before him and uncover the loins of kings and to open the doors before him that gates may not be closed." (All Scripture quotes are from the RSV, unless otherwise noted.)


\textsuperscript{22} See 1 Sam 10:17–27, 16:1–13.

Attestations of royal anointings found in the Old Testament seem to follow two different traditions. The anointing of Saul described in 1 Samuel 10:1 and 16:13 happen secretly, whereas David's anointing found in 2 Samuel 2:4 and 5:3 are both public anointings. Both Saul and David are called by name prior to the anointing. The anointing seems to have been on the head, followed by a kiss, as can be seen in 1 Samuel 10:1: "Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said, 'Has not the Lord anointed you to be prince over his people Israel?..."," which is reiterated by Josephus: "and the prophet [Samuel], taking his vial, poured oil upon the young man's head and kissed him." Kingly anointing was always performed with a horn of oil being poured over the head. After being anointed, Saul is given loaves of bread and wine. He then prophesies, and is only later proclaimed a king.

The royal anointing ceremony was believed to impart the sanctity of the national god to the king. Thus, after Saul is anointed he is told that, "The spirit of YHWH will rush upon [him]." The connection between unction and inspiration is seen even more profoundly in the case of David's anointing: "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward..." In David's case we clearly see the spiritual

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24 See 1 Sam 9:26; 2 Sam 2:1–4.
25 RSV
27 1 Sam 16:13; 1 Kgs 1:39.
28 Milgrom, Lev. 1–16, 518. Dura Europos panel (WC3) portrays David's anointment by Samuel with the horn of oil with the oil being poured over his head.
29 1 Sam 10:3.
30 1 Sam 10:11.
31 1 Sam 10:17–27; cf. 1 Sam 16:13.
32 McCarter, I Samuel, 178.
33 1 Sam 10:6.
34 1 Sam 16:13.
significance of the anointing because the anointing is the occasion for the indwelling of
the Spirit that does not leave him.\textsuperscript{35}

The Priestly effect of the anointing is that Saul is now entitled to the sacral
privilege of the sacrificial portions of food, which are usually reserved for priests.\textsuperscript{36}
Through the unction, the king incorporates divine attributes.\textsuperscript{37} The anointing of the king
allows him to be in a father-son relationship with YHWH.\textsuperscript{38} The anointment of the king
symbolizes the kings' relation to YHWH.\textsuperscript{39} The oil, in the case of kingship, is also
thought to have been considered "life-giving."\textsuperscript{40}

\textbf{Priestly Anointing}

Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers together provide an extensive description of the
priestly ordination ritual in ancient Israel.\textsuperscript{41} Two views of the priesthood can be seen: the
book of Exodus ritually distinguishes Aaron as High Priest without his sons; whereas,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{36} McCarter, \textit{I Samuel}, 186.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Milgrom, \textit{Lev. 1–16}, 554.
\item \textsuperscript{38} 1 Sam 9:2; 10:2; 26:10–12; 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7, 89:27–8. Rudman notes that that the image of the father-son relationship between God and the anointed is derived from a motif that is characteristic of ANE royal ideology in general, and that of the Davidic dynasty in particular. See Rudman, "The Commissioning Stories of Saul and David as Theological Allegory," 524.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Noth, \textit{The Laws in the Pentateuch and other Studies}, 239. Noth argues that the ancient oriental (ancient Syria and Israel) conception claimed to contain vital energy and was considered "life-giving oil." The anointing bestowed upon the person the divine life giving power, which gave the person permanent additional vital energy and distinguished the anointed from mere mortals.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Porter claims that it is unlikely that there was ever an anointing for the regular priesthood analogous to that of the high priest in Leviticus. Anointing in ancient Mesopotamia was associated with purification. In ancient Israel, water was associated with purification (Lev 8:6), and anointing was used to consecrate (Lev 8:10, 8:12). J. Roy Porter, “Oil in the Old Testament,” in \textit{The Oil of Gladness}, ed. Martin Dudley and Geoffrey Rowell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 37. Propp mentions in passing that it is the blood that purifies, rather than the water. See Propp, \textit{Exodus 19–40}, 470. Klingbeil notes that Gen 28:18, 31:13, and 35 are possible origins of the High Priestly anointing, but not of the kingly anointing. Klingbeil, "The Anointing of Aaron," 236.
\end{itemize}
Numbers also anoints his sons.\(^\text{42}\) It is also likely that the periscope found in Leviticus 8 is a continuation of Exodus 40:17–33, with Exodus 40:34–8 and Leviticus 1–7 as later interpolations.\(^\text{43}\)

The sacred anointing oil is a unique recipe\(^\text{44}\) that could only be used for objects and persons that were to be dedicated to God.\(^\text{45}\) Similar to the kingly anointing, the anointing oil was poured onto Aaron's head at ordination.\(^\text{46}\) The anointings of the priests and Temple sacra, together, occurred on the eighth day of the ordination process.\(^\text{47}\) The consecration ritual found in Leviticus 8 consists of a double series of three acts: washing, clothing, and anointing the priests with three different kinds of sacrifices.\(^\text{48}\) One anointing consisted of the oil being poured over Aaron's head, whereas another consisted of a mixture of oil and blood being sprinkled onto Aaron and his garments.\(^\text{49}\) The


\(^{44}\) Ex 30:22–5.

\(^{45}\) Ex 30:32-3. See Houtman, "On the Function of the Holy Incense (Exodus XXX 34-8) and the Sacred Anointing Oil (Exodus XXX 22-33)," 465.

\(^{46}\) Lev 21:10, 12.


\(^{49}\) Lev 8:12, 8:30. It should be noted that Ex 29:20–1 mentions the blood prior to the oil, whereas Lev 8:30 mentions the oil prior to the blood in the sequence. Concerning this, Milgrom argues that Ex 29's premise is that the consecration of Aaron is not complete until he is sprinkled with the sacrificial blood and anointment oil. Milgrom insists that the sequence found in Exodus is a more sensible sequence because it insists that the daubing off of the priest, which would be considered a purgative procedure, must precede Aaron's sanctification. Milgrom, *Lev 1–16*, 519.
anointing 'sanctifies' the high priest by removing him from the realm of the ordinary and allowing him to operate in the realm of the sacred. Propp mentions that having been:

washed in water, purified by blood, consecrated with oil and garbed in protective wear, the priest can survive contact with the Divine and safely pass back and forth between YHWH and Israel.

The implication of the priestly anointing is that the anointed one becomes inviolable because he has received divine sanction. Propp observes that the purification and sanctification were gradual because the priestly candidates transfer their sins/impurities to the altar during the sin offering, and so they and the altar simultaneously receive holiness by virtue of the anointing oil over time as more sin offerings are performed.

As a result of the anointing, the High Priest was not allowed to depart from the sanctuary because he was distinguished by his unction with the 'oil of anointing' and his right to wear the sacred vestments. In a sense, the High Priest becomes equated with the sacred vessels. He is consecrated in the same ceremony and in much the same way as the sacred vessels and is treated similarly concerning the restrictions presented in Levitical law.

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50 Milgrom, *Lev. 1–16*, 554.
54 Levine, "The Descriptive Tabernacle Texts of the Pentateuch," 311. Levine claims that this comes from the traditional structure of the priestly cult in which the High Priest is the only one allowed inside the tent of meeting and before the ark. Ordinary priests were only able to officiate outside the Tent.
The Anointing of the Tabernacle

The priestly anointing occurred in conjunction with the consecration of the cult objects.56 The anointing of the Tabernacle, altar, and sacred vessels in the Temple shows a connection between ritual space and the ancient perception of the divine.57 Levine argues that the sanctification of the Tabernacle, its vessels, and Aaron by the 'oil of anointing,'58 and the ordination of Aaron and his sons in their priestly office by means of sacrificial rites with a seven-day incubation period59 are two distinct, but combined rituals.60

It is significant that the same verb māšah is used for both Aaron and the sancta because Aaron is brought into metonymic association with the sacred cult objects.61 Much like the case of the anointing found in Lev 8:10–12, which includes marking off the area of Aaron's ritual activity, the altar distinguishes the area of the priests' ritual activity.62

Conclusions

Anointings found in the Old Testament served to bring the anointed person or object into the realm of the holy. Priests and kings were anointed in order to serve a specific purpose, priests for Temple ministry, and kings for divine governance. The

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58 Lev 8:7–12.
59 Lev 8:13–36.
60 Levine, "The Descriptive Tabernacle of the Pentateuch," 311. Levine also notes that the periscope in Ex 29:1–37 corresponds to the special role of the High Priest with regards to the special unction (Ex 29:7), but it does not view that unction as part of the sanctification of the tabernacle and its vessels as in Lev 8, but rather as an act connected with ordination.
61 Milgrom, Lev. 1–16, 518.
62 Gormon, "The Ideology of Ritual," 136. Gormon concludes that since the blood form the altar is also used in this sprinkling rite, it may be a demonstration of the priests' concern with blood manipulation on the altar.
anointing of kings was interpreted spiritually, whereas the anointing of priests was more interested in the cultic activity of the Temple.

The early Christian baptismal anointing understanding and practice was greatly influenced by the Old Testament practice of anointing priests and kings: washing, anointing by pouring oil onto the initiates head, and clothing in special garments are all part of the baptismal ritual. The understanding of being grafted into the realm of the holy is also a prevalent interpretation of Christian baptism.

Although not expounded on in this chapter, many early Christians also interpreted the baptismal anointing Pneumatologically in light of Isaiah 61:1: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted..." in conjunction with Christ's baptism in the Jordan. This interpretation, which is also a Lukan trope, shows the common connection between the Spirit and anointing, which would later become prevalent in the interpretation of Christian baptismal anointing.
A debate lingers as to whether a liturgical practice can be determined from the few New Testament baptismal references. Ferguson claims that the variety of anointing practices and variances in theological meanings of the ceremonies in early Christianity shows that the anointing practices are “not of apostolic appointment,” but were later developments.\(^{63}\) However, Johnson argues that even though we do not have specific accounts of the apostolic baptismal rituals, the hand laying associated with the Spirit accompanying initiatory accounts in Acts 8 shows that there was some understanding of a practice surrounding baptism that could account for an anointing, and if not a physical anointing, a ritual and theological understanding that would allow for an anointing to later develop within the context of the baptismal practice.\(^{64}\) In other words, we have no way of knowing whether the Christians in Acts used oil with baptism, but we are able to see the seeds of the later baptismal anointing practices for which we can account.\(^{65}\)

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\(^{65}\) Bradshaw observes that there are no unambiguous witnesses in the New Testament itself that point to a particular liturgical practice. It is only detectable by interpreting obscure allusions with anachronistic and dislocated methodology. It is possible that there may be a historical continuity between the first century and later liturgical practices, but most scholarship suggests a later interpretation. Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 2002), 51.
Besides the New Testament, first century CE Jewish texts with possible Christian influences provide evidence of anointing theologies that contain an initiatory function. The two accounted for in this chapter are The Testament of Levi and 2 Enoch. The language found in these pseudepigraphical works is apocalyptic, and it points to a mystical theology of anointing similar to that of ancient heavenly ascent literature.

Daniélou claims that the context of the first Christian liturgy should be viewed in light of the Essene Jewish type, which is typically apocalyptic and heavily ascetic, because it is the closest parallel to the practices of baptismal initiation. In the case of the Testament of Levi and 2 Enoch, a heavenly ascent of a king or priest is accompanied by an anointing, or vice versa. Joseph P. Schultz calls to mind that in ancient Mesopotamian literature, the king, who is considered both a “wise scribe” and a “visionary seer,” and is understood as “the Sent One,” makes the heavenly ascent. Schultz also notices a pattern in ascent literature that is somewhat reminiscent of later baptismal practices:

   1) Ascent to Heaven  
   2) Entering the heavenly palace  
   3) Reception by the high god in his assembly  
   4) Purification  
   5) Anointing  
   6) Robed in royal or heavenly garments  
   7) Handing over the heavenly book or heavenly tablets to the bearer of revelation  
   8) Calling with names of honor  
   9) Initiation into the heavenly secrets  
  10) Enthronement on the god-father’s throne  
  11) Sending forth with a commission or a message to instruct the generation

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While Schultz's list is not an exact replica of the later Christian baptismal practice, the elements of purification, anointing, and a robing in special garments as a form of initiation are found in nearly all early baptismal practices.

**The New Testament**

Baptismal allusions in the New Testament, while difficult to pinpoint a physical anointing ritual, are the direct influences for later baptismal theologies. New Testament baptismal language is often understood in light of Old Testament anointing themes. Bradshaw points to Jesus's anointing with the Holy Spirit by God and Jesus's reception of the Holy Spirit at his baptism, along with the understanding that Christians receive the same Spirit, as the influence for the early Christian theological conclusion that they were being anointed into a 'royal priesthood' or 'kingdom of priests' in their own baptism. These conceptions contributed to baptismal anointing theology that later led to the adoption of a physical anointing with oil as part of the baptismal ceremony. The two anointed figures found in Zechariah 4:11–13 were later interpreted eschatologically

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69 See G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), 106; Spinks notes that the New Testament has a variety of possible ritual understandings and that it is not a neat evolutionary account, nor a "progression of fixed forms." Spinks also notes that it is impossible to know whether the language in the New Testament is linguistic imagery or ritual action. Bryan D. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*, Liturgy, Worship and Society Series (Burlington, VA: Ashgate, 2006), 12. Similarly, Betz notes that we encounter the problems one should expect in the case of complex ritual transferal. An example is the case of Paul's baptism. Betz argues that if prior to his conversion, Paul was a Torah-observing Jew, then the type of baptism he would have encountered would not have been a Jewish proselyte baptism, nor the type of baptism performed by John; instead, he would have encountered a ritual performed for those who joined the disciples who were still members of the Damascus synagogues. (See Acts 9) Hans Dieter Betz, “Transferring a Ritual” in *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 103. DeMaris also argues that the New Testament is an idealized portrait of the early Church, which was written long after the events, which do not give us a historically accurate view. See Richard E. DeMaris, *The New Testament in its Ritual World* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008).

70 Lk 4:16–18; Acts 4:26–7, 10:38.
71 Matt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22.
72 1 Pet 2:5, 2:9.
by Christians into two strands: an eschatological king and an eschatological priest.\textsuperscript{75} Both strands of expectation are realized in Jesus's baptism.

Lampe argues that Jesus's title of 'Messiah' connotes his possession of the spirit of YHWH in relation to the Old Testament kings,\textsuperscript{76} showing his role as the fulfillment of the messianic hope.\textsuperscript{77} The messianic unction of Jesus,\textsuperscript{78} from where the title derives, is naturally also seen in relation to the anointing of the High Priest, kings, and prophets.\textsuperscript{79} The New Testament presents Jesus as the eschatological fulfillment, or the messianic king, with the quotation of Psalm 2:7, a coronation psalm, at his baptism.\textsuperscript{80}

The Church corporately inherits the royal priesthood.\textsuperscript{81} The title 'Christian' refers to one who has received the anointing from Christ, or participates in the anointing of Christ, which is often thought of in terms of a 'seal.'\textsuperscript{82} Whitaker claims that the possession of the Spirit was a characteristic mark of those belonging to Christ and the new messianic age.\textsuperscript{83} Paul's question in Acts of whether the disciples of John have received the Spirit shows the Pneumatic accompaniment to baptism, which was dispensed in the imposition of hands.\textsuperscript{84} The Pneumatological aspect of Jesus's baptism is associated

\begin{itemize}
\item See the 'priestly' and 'kingly' messiah in the Qumran texts: 4Q Florilegium 1.11; Damascus 7.18-20 (9.8-10); 1Q Sa 1.1, 2.11-14; Jeffrey John, "Anointing in the New Testament," in The Oil of Gladness, ed. Martin Dudley and Geoffrey Rowell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 61.
\item 1 Sam 16:13–14; Is 61:1.
\item Lk 4:16 (Lk 4:16 associates Jesus with the prophetic spirit of anointing when quoting Is 61:1), 4:18; Acts 4:27, 10:38; Heb 1:9.
\item Heb 2:17, 4:14–5:10, 7:1–10:22; Jn 19:23 (The seamless garment is the robe of the High Priest.); Rev 1:13 (Description of Christ).
\item 1 Pet 2:5, 2:9; Rev 1:6, 5:10, 20:6.
\item Rom 8:9; Lk 4:18; Acts 2:17, 2:38; Titus 3:5. E.C. Whitaker, Sacramental Initiation Complete in Baptism, in Grove Booklets on Liturgical Study no. 1 (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1975), 7.
\item Acts 19:2–6.
\end{itemize}
with power that led to Christ's exorcistic acts and healings, by means of his divine Sonship.85

The Testament of Levi

The Testament of Levi is the third testament in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs was originally written in Greek and was later preserved in Armenian, Slavonic, Hebrew, and Aramaic.86 The Testaments were most likely written around the second century BCE with the possibility of later Christian interpolations as late as 200 CE in Syria.87

The Testament of Levi follows the typical heavenly ascent pattern.88 While in heaven, Levi is called to the priesthood by seven men dressed in white. The first half of Levi's initiation follows the initiation found in Exodus:89

The first anointed me with holy oil and gave me a staff. The second washed me with pure water, fed me by hand with bread and holy wine, and put on me a holy and glorious vestment. The third put on me something made of linen, like an ephod.90

It is debated whether this is a Christian interpolation that describes baptismal imagery or if it is simply elaborating on the anointing practices of priests and kings of the Old Testament. Daniélou claims that this section is an example of a pre-baptismal anointing with oil, which purports to describe the installation of the High Priest, but is

87 Charlesworth, "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," 777-8. Nickelsberg notes that the clear references to Jesus the Messiah attest that the present form of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs is in part a Christian product. He goes on to say that the latest date that the composition could have been finished was 200 CE because Origen quotes it, though he could have been using the Greek version. George W.E. Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 314–5.
89 Cf. Ex 28:41–3, 29:1–8; Ps 133:2; Lv 16:1–34.
90 Testament of Levi 8.4-6.
actually a symbolic description of a baptismal initiation.  

Daniélou goes on to question the order in which the anointing and bath occur, and concludes that it does fit with the Syrian tradition, which places the anointing prior to the bath.  

Nickelsburg points to the Christian baptismal imagery found in the Testament of Levi 10:10-12 that is not present in the extant Aramaic document.  

And he shall open the gates of paradise; he shall remove the sword that has threatened since Adam, and he will grant to the saints to eat of the tree of life. The spirit of holiness shall be upon them…  

The reference to Revelation 22:2 (river next to tree of life) and 22:4 (name on their foreheads) is reminiscent of the elements of the later baptismal imageries. Nickelsburg notes that New Testament statements regarding latter-day descendants of Levi should be read in light of the glorification of the eschatological High Priest found in apocalyptic literature, which could shed light on how the early Christians interpreted Jesus's anointing, and as a result, their own baptismal anointing.  

2 Enoch  

2 Enoch, also known as the Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch, is a late first century CE amplification of Genesis 5:21–32 that is preserved only in Old Slavonic and Coptic in both a long and a short recension. Andersen notes that 2 Enoch shares similar ideas and language to that of Matthew and that the Christian author was probably only influenced by one book of the New Testament. It is difficult to discern whether or not this work

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91 Daniélou, "The Theology of Jewish Christianity," 324.  
92 Ibid.  
93 Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah, 308.  
95 Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah, 308.  
97 Andersen, "2 Enoch," 95.
comes to us through Jewish or Christian circles because the content is Jewish, but Christian interludes can be seen in passing. Nickelsburg argues that a Christian author did not write this work because it would have been problematic for Christian circles to portray theology that enhances the figure of Enoch to a height that would overshadow the exalted Christ. 98 The book fits closely to the Jewish mystical circles that points to Jewish authorship, rather than a Jewish appropriation of a Christian appropriation of the Jewish Enoch material. It seems likely that 2 Enoch and the New Testament are drawing on much of the same background, or as Anderson mentions, that the author of 2 Enoch is vaguely influenced by the New Testament. 99 In the first century CE, Christianity was not necessarily a separate religion. Christians would have been more along the lines of a group of Judaism who believed that Jesus was the messianic fulfillment.

In the Seventh, and final, Heaven, Enoch is anointed by Michael:

And the Lord said to Michael, 'Go, and extract Enoch from [his] earthly clothing. And anoint him with my delightful oil, and put him into the clothes of my glory.' And so Michael did, just as the Lord had said to him. He anointed me and clothed me. 100

The anointing had a physical affect on Enoch that stemmed from the magnificent appearance of the oil:

and the appearance of that oil is greater than the greatest light, its ointment is like sweet dew, and its fragrance like myrrh; and its shining like the sun. And I gazed at all of myself, and I had become like one of the glorious ones, and there was no observable difference. 101

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98 Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 225. Nickelsburg goes on to mention that the themes in 2 Enoch parallel Egyptian mythological motifs and traditions found in Philo of Alexandria and suggests that the location of origin was first century Egypt.

99 Andersen, "2 Enoch," 95.

100 2 Enoch [J] 22:8–9a.

Enoch's anointing cannot be considered an allusion to orthodox Christian baptism because the water bath does not accompany the anointing as it did in the case of the Testament of Levi. However, this document is useful in understanding Christian baptismal anointing theologies because it shows the importance placed on the anointing and oil in a sort of initiatory practice in the first century CE. Porter notes that the anointing with the holy oil played the leading part in Enoch's transformation, which can be seen in the description of the oil.\(^\text{102}\) The oil itself originated in Paradise where Eve and her son, Seth, search for oil to cure Adam,\(^\text{103}\) which become a theme in some baptismal anointing portrayals in the following centuries.

**Conclusions**

It is easy to see the seeds of later baptismal rituals in the references found in the New Testament. While it is difficult to say whether or not an actual New Testament anointing ritual accompanied the Pneumatic event in the Jordan, or in the accounts found in Acts, one can see how the practice eventually developed as the Church itself developed. Christian baptism was modeled after the baptism of Christ in the Jordan, and the anointing practice and theology was in many instances associated with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Jesus's baptism.

The Testament of Levi and 2 Enoch are examples of pseudepigraphical stories containing anointing theologies that were composed around the same time as the New Testament. These two texts show aspects of the heavenly ascent tradition, which incorporated anointing portrayals that would influence the way some later Christians

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\(^{103}\) 2 Enoch 8.5; Cf. Apocalypse of Moses 9.3; 13.1. See Porter, "Oil in the Old Testament," 40.
would understand their own baptismal anointing practice, especially in the Syrian traditions.
CHAPTER IV
SECOND AND THIRD CENTURY BAPTISMAL ANOINTING

It is not until the dawning of the third century that we begin to see the practice of anointing associated with baptism explicitly notated in texts. It must be mentioned here that conversion practices this early were diverse; Thomas Finn puts it this way: "Indeed, to expect uniformity of practice from ancient cultures as diverse as Latin, Greek, and Syriac is to look for a unicorn."\(^{104}\) The ancient Church did not think of the practice of anointing as a separate liturgical rite.\(^{105}\) Some have pointed to authors as early as Justin Martyr for the earliest liturgical clues regarding a Pneumatic anointing, though, as Lampe notes, there is no author that early who identified a separate ceremony for the Spirit.\(^{106}\)

Bradshaw mentions that we are unable to gain much from the ante-Nicene evidence, though an anointing reference does seem to be a normal element in the baptismal rite.\(^{107}\) There are discrepancies concerning the position (before/after bath), form (cranial/body/both), and the meaning of the anointing. For example, the Syrian baptismal unction is typically described as having been before the bath and was associated with the Spirit, whereas the Western Pneumatic event was typically understood in the imposition of hands after the bath.

\(^{104}\) Thomas M. Finn, *From Death to Rebirth* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 163.
Many theories exist concerning the origins of the anointing. Spinks argues that the early Christian anointing rituals pattern the secular bathing/anointing practices physically, but not in meaning.\textsuperscript{108} It is the meaning and context that made the Christian ritual distinctive. This chapter will give brief examples from three regions in order to show the variety of theologies and practices in the second and third centuries. Obviously, the list cannot be exhaustive, but it does give a glimpse into the baptismal liturgy and theology of the Church prior to the fourth century.

**Syria and Asia Minor**

Most scholars agree that the early Syrian Christians understood baptism as a mimesis of Jesus's baptism in the Jordan with no reference to Romans 6.\textsuperscript{109} Brock argues that in the early Syrian baptismal rite, the anointing was interpreted in light of the Jewish circumcision ritual.\textsuperscript{110} He goes on to argue that the anointing of the forehead was a new mark of identity that was governed by the Old Testament practice of anointing kings, priests, and prophets and that the *rushma*, or mark, was associated with the protective mark found in Exodus and Ezekiel.\textsuperscript{111} In his work, *The History of Jewish Christianity*, Jean Daniélou shows that the *rushma* (Syriac), *sphragis* (Greek), or *signatio* (Latin), was originally a Hebrew *tau* that represented the mark of YHWH that was placed on the


\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
forehead of the elect. It is the Hebrew tau that would later be interpreted as the Cross of Christ, as we will see specifically in the case of Tertullian.

*Didascalia Apostolorum*

The *Didascalia Apostolorum* is an early third century church order, modeled after the *Didaché*, from the region north east of Antioch. The author is thought to have been a Hellenized Syrian bishop. Spinks proposes that the purpose of the *Didascalia* was to change the structure of ministry in the early Syrian churches. The early church order was originally written in Greek and was later translated into Syriac, and the Semitic influence is pronounced. The *Didascalia* comes to us today from two early Latin and Syriac translations of the Greek. The translators responsible for the Arabic and Ethiopic depend on the fourth century Syrian manual, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Books 1–6.

The baptismal sequence found in the *Didascalia* is: a pre-baptismal anointing of the head accompanied by the imposition of the bishop's hand; the citation of Psalm 2.7, possibly as the formula accompanying the hand-laying; a full body anointing by the appropriate ministers; followed by the immersion into the baptismal waters. In the event of female initiation and there are no female deacons present, the full body anointing

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114 Ibid.
117 Ibid.
118 Ps 2.7 is a textual variant of Lk 3.22 with reference to Jesus's baptism in the Jordan.
is eliminated for the sake of modesty.\textsuperscript{120} No post-baptismal anointing can be detected in the \textit{Didascalia}. Johnson notes that the major concern with the anointings was the first cranial anointing that was interpreted \textit{ messianically} in relation to the anointing of priests and kings:\textsuperscript{121}

\ldots but with the imposition of hand you should anoint the head only. As of old priests and kings were anointed in Israel, so do you likewise, with the imposition of hand, anoint the head of those who receive baptism, whether it be of men or of women…\textsuperscript{122}

The association of the full body anointing is only with the 'oil of anointing.'\textsuperscript{123} Little evidence can be taken from the \textit{Didascalia} alone that helps with interpreting the baptismal anointing theologies. Most scholars view the \textit{Didascalia} alongside the \textit{Apostolic Tradition} and the \textit{Apostolic Constitutions} to fill in the picture. For the purposes of this paper, the \textit{Didascalia} is viewed alone because of its early dating.

\textbf{Acts of Judas Thomas}

The \textit{Acts of Judas Thomas} are the oldest extant non-biblical text composed in Syriac, which Spinks dates as ca. 220-230.\textsuperscript{124} This text was originally composed in Syriac and Greek; the Syriac is thought to be the oldest tradition, though the oldest extant manuscript is in Greek.\textsuperscript{125} Five accounts of baptism are seen in the \textit{Acts of Judas Thomas}: the baptism of Gundaphorus, the woman possessed by the devil and healed, the

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\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Didascalia} 16 in E.C. Whitaker, \textit{Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy}, revised and expanded by Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 14-5.  \\
\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Didascalia} 3.12; Johnson, \textit{The Rites of Christian Initiation}, 54-5; Bradshaw argues that this anointing is not interpreted messianically. Paul F. Bradshaw, \textit{Early Christian Worship}, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010).  \\
\textsuperscript{11} Because of the emphasis placed on Ps 2:7, which is a reference to Jesus's baptism, it seems that the cranial anointing is interpreted in light of Christ.  \\
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Didascalia} 16 in Whitaker, \textit{Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy}, 14-5.  \\
\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Didascalia} 16.  \\
\textsuperscript{125} Spinks, "Baptismal Patterns in Early Syria," 47.
\end{flushright}
baptism of Mygdonia, the baptism at Sifur, and the baptisms of Vizan and the other women. All of the accounts contain, often minor, differences between the Syriac and the Greek traditions. Bradshaw argues that the Acts of Judas Thomas and the Didascalia represent two separate parallel traditions that were known in the area, rather than relying on one line of development.

The water bath is emphasized in the Syriac, though not so in the Greek. When compared, Simon Jones observes concerning the oil that: 1) some of the accounts observe a cranial anointing; however, Vizan (a woman) receives a full body anointing by Mygdonia (female deacon), and in the case of the Baptism of Sifir and his family, both men and women only obtain an anointing of the head, without the full body anointing; 2) Several of the anointing accounts contain a blessing of the oil; however, the formula varies: the epiclesis comes first and is present in both the Syriac and the Greek, and the feminine language is expanded into both erotic and maternal imagery, whereas in the Greek, it is not; and finally 3) the word 'seal' is used ambiguously and can mean either the anointing, the actual baptism in water, or the entire rite. Klijn notes that when the feminine is invoked in the epiclesis over the oil in chapter 27, that it is a remnant of the ancient Semitic understandings of the female being closely related to God, which was later associated with the Holy Spirit. In the Syriac the two instances that refer to the anointing of the head alone are messianic in character and do not contain a blessing prayer, whereas the two instances referring to the anointing of both head and full body

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126 Ibid.
127 Bradshaw, Reconstructing Early Christian Worship, 86.
are associated with healing and do observe a blessing prayer,\footnote{The Acts of Judas Thomas 121, 156-8.} while one instance only mentions the water alone.\footnote{The Acts of Judas Thomas 49-50.} The Greek version has no reference to water in relation to the oil or the 'seal.'\footnote{The Acts of Judas Thomas 27-9, 49-50.}

Various theories exist that account for the differences. Winkler argues that the Greek and Syriac sources attest to at least two different patterns, if not more, one with oil alone and one consisting of oil and water.\footnote{See Gabriele Winkler, “The Syriac Prebaptismal Anointing in the Light of the Earliest Armenian Sources,” in Symposium Syriacum 1976: célèbre du 13 au 17 septembre 1976 au Centre Culturel “Les Fontaines” de Chantilly, 317-324, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 205 (Roma: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1978).} She also notes that in the Greek version of the baptism of Gundaphorus the anointing and chrismation seems to be in addition to the oil being poured on the head. Sebastian Brock also mentions that several layers of interpretation can be seen in the \textit{Acts of Thomas}.\footnote{Sebastian P. Brock, "Invocations to/for the Holy Spirit in Syriac Liturgical Texts: Some Comparative Approaches," pages 377-406 in \textit{Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years After Anton Baumstark}, ed. Robert F. Taft and Gabriele Winkler, \textit{Orientalia Christiana Analecta} 265 (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Orientale, 2001), 379.} Ruth Myers takes a redactional approach, arguing that the Syriac manuscripts conform to later practices, whereas the Greek seems to preserve older and less standardized rituals.\footnote{Susan E. Myers, “‘Come, Hidden Mother’: Spirit Epicleses in the \textit{Acts of Thomas}” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2003), 80-1.} Klijn argues that originally the seal was confined to the anointing and that later it was attributed to the entire rite based on the phrase, "added sealing of the seal" in chapter 27.\footnote{Klijn, "Baptism in the Acts of Thomas," 61.} However, it is indeterminate from the evidence we have as to the origin of the baptismal discrepancies.

The theological associations of the anointings vary with the practices, though the term 'seal,' \textit{sphragis}, or sign, \textit{rushma}, is used in all five initiation accounts, is repeatedly requested by the one being baptized, and applies to the rite that includes anointing only.
The seal has many associations in the Acts of Judas Thomas: as a sign of ownership similar to the branding of an animal, a gift from the apostle to the believer, and at other times illumination. It is difficult to determine with what part of the rite the seal is associated. The oil is at times associated with a defense from the adversary, the remission of sins, and the salvation for souls. In the initiation of Siphir and his family, little prominence is given to the anointing; the apostle simply pours oil atop the initiates' heads accompanied by a prayer of praise. Mygdonia's prayer in the Greek text shows a kinship between the oil and the cross. The prayers over the oil of Mygdonia, Vizan, and Iuzanes (Greek version of Vizan) are exorcistic.

All of the associations of oil found in the Acts of Judas Thomas are found in fourth century baptismal anointing practices in various regions. It is likely that the Greek traditions found in the Acts of Judas Thomas would continue to influence the Greek speaking Christians, and the Syriac traditions would likewise continue to influence the Syriac speaking Christians into the fourth century, though cross pollination of liturgical practice can also be seen as Christianity grows.

North Africa

North Africa and Egypt give us the first Western evidence of a baptismal anointing, which occurred after the bath. By the third century, Carthage and Alexandria had begun debates concerning what constitutes orthodox Christology, which influenced how the early North African Christians interpreted the 'sign' that was traced on

139 *The Acts of Judas Thomas* 120.
their foreheads as part of the baptismal ritual. Also significant were the Decian and Valerian persecutions, which influenced the practice and theology of initiation for the early Latin Church. Many would leave the Church in the time of persecution and try to return after having already received baptism. The consignation became one way in which persons were able to re-enter the Church. Much of our information concerning baptism in ancient northern Africa comes from the mid-third century controversy between North Africa and Rome over the question of 're-baptism.' The liturgical tradition and its interpretation are distinct from Syria and will seem much more familiar to today's Western sacramental practice.

Fortunately we have enough material preserved from the early third century North Africa to allow for a somewhat complete description of the liturgical rite. North Africa and Rome were in close contact through much of the third century, so we will see similarities between Rome and North African liturgical traditions.

**Tertullian**

Tertullian (ca. 160 - ca. 225), a Carthaginian who converted to Christianity in 195, mentions a post-baptismal anointing, followed by an imposition of hands in his *De Baptismo* 7-8:

*(7) After that we come up from the washing and are anointed with the blessed unction, following that ancient practice by which, ever since Aaron was anointed by Moses, there was a custom of anointing them for priesthood with oil out of a horn. That is why [the high priest is called a Christ, from 'chrism' which is [the Greek for] 'anointing' and from this also our Lord obtained his title, though it had become a spiritual anointing, in that he was anointed with the Spirit by God the Father. (8) Next follows the imposition of the hand in benediction, inviting and welcoming the Holy Spirit…But this too is involved in that ancient sacred act…by placing his hands interchanged upon their heads, turned transversely

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upon themselves in such a manner as to make the shape of Christ, and at that early
date to prefigure the blessing that was to be in Christ.\footnote{146}

Tertullian associates the post-baptismal anointing with that of the royal anointing
of Aaron at the hand of Moses, and it is not until the imposition of hands that the Holy
Spirit is invoked. It is common in second and third century Western baptismal traditions,
as it is today in the Latin Rite, to have a separate theological understanding of the post-
baptismal anointing and the imposition of hands, even if the liturgical act is not
necessarily understood as separated. The consignation of the forehead is seen in relation
to Ezekiel 9:4, which shows a sign of ownership, as well as contains a protective quality.
Ferguson observes that the sign, even though it is listed as a separate item, could have
been part of the anointing so that the sign of the cross was traced in oil.\footnote{147} Daniélou
traces the \textit{signatio} back to the Hebrew \textit{tau}, which would have been represented in its
archaic form as an X, and later T, and was the mark of YHWH, according to Ezekiel
9:4.\footnote{148} The mark shifted in meaning from the divine Name to the abbreviation for
\textit{(X)ristos}, who was also associated with the divine Name.\footnote{149} The \textit{signatio} eventually
would be associated with the cross; however, the association of the X or T with the divine
Name is older.\footnote{150} Tertullian seems to be harkening back to the older Jewish divine Name
association with the mark, instead of the cross imagery, which is found in many later
Christian understandings of the \textit{signatio}. In doing this, Tertullian is making a
Christological statement, in that Jesus is God because He possesses the divine Name,
which is then given to us in the baptismal \textit{signatio}.

\footnote{146}{Tertullian, \textit{On Baptism} 7-8 in Whitaker, \textit{Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy}, 9.}
\footnote{147}{Everett Ferguson, \textit{Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the first Five
Centuries} (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmands Publishing, 2009), 344.}
\footnote{148}{Daniélou, \textit{The Theology of Jewish Christianity}, 154.}
\footnote{149}{Ibid.}
\footnote{150}{Ibid.}
Tertullian also incorporates the Romans 6 language of dying and rising in Christ through baptism. Bradshaw notes a similarity in Tertullian and the *Didascalia* in their references to Moses and Aaron, and although in a different location in the rite, he suggests that it is possible that the two were quarrying with the same scriptures as a way to explain a practice that had lost its original meaning.\(^{151}\)

Tertullian's theology of the baptismal rituals can be more easily seen in his *De Resurrectione Carnis* 8:

> The flesh is washed, that the soul may be made spotless: the flesh is anointed that the soul may be consecrated: the flesh is signed [with the cross], that the soul too may be protected: the flesh is overshadowed by the imposition of the hand that the soul may be illumined by the Spirit: the flesh feeds on the Body and Blood of Christ so that the soul as well may be filled with God.\(^{152}\)

Here, Tertullian goes through the ritual act externally (the flesh) and shows the internal, or eternal (soul), effect of the ritual action. The ritual sequence is: the baptism in water (washing), post-baptismal anointing, and an imposition of hands, and it is only after this sequence that the initiated person is ready for the Eucharist. The consecration of the soul is likely referring to the consecration of the High Priest found in the Old Testament.

Tertullian alludes to a mothering typology in his *Against Marcion*:

> He certainly has not even yet rejected the Creator's water, for in it he washes his own, nor the oil with which he anoints them, nor the compound of milk and honey on which he weans them, nor the Creator's bread by which he makes manifest his own body. Even in his own rites and ceremonies he cannot do without things begged and borrowed from the Creator.\(^{153}\)

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Some ancient initiatory rites included milk and honey for the neophytes prior to the reception of the Eucharist. This passage in Tertullian exemplifies a theology that not only is the person initiated into God, but the elements used in the ceremony are a gift from God as well.

**Cyprian of Carthage**

Cyprian was ordained as the bishop of Carthage in 249 and died a martyr in 258, which is the same region as Tertullian, only a half a century later. Cyprian considered unction to be immediately bound with baptism:

… It is also necessary that he who is baptized should be anointed: so that having received the chrism, that is the anointing, he may be the anointed of God and have in him the grace of Christ. Further, it is the Eucharist whence the baptized are anointed with the oil sanctified on the altar. But he cannot sanctify the creature of oil who has neither an altar nor a church.\(^{154}\)

Lampe argues that Cyprian was prepared to deny the validity of baptism if the chrism had not been properly consecrated, which took place at the Eucharist.\(^ {155}\) The only anointing mentioned by Cyprian is a post-baptismal anointing interpreted Christologically that we see in *Letter 70*. Cyprian also never specifies whether the anointing is cranial or full body.\(^ {156}\) Many later Christians, especially Cyril of Jerusalem and Gregory of Nyssa, understand the significance for the anointing oil in relation to the Eucharist. It is possible that the later theology stems from the practice of consecrating the oil on the Eucharistic altar.

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\(^ {155}\) Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 176ff. Ferguson also notes that although Cyprian could acknowledge a distribution of the baptismal blessings in separate acts of the ceremony, he strenuously argued against separating the imposition of hands with the baptismal ceremony. Cyprian wanted all of the rites to be in one unified ceremony. Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 354.

Following Tertullian, Cyprian attributes the gift of the Holy Spirit to the post-baptismal imposition of hands:

….They who are baptized in the church are brought to the prelates of the church, and by our prayers and by the imposition of the hand obtain the Holy Spirit, and are perfected with the Lord's seal [signaculo dominico].

Ferguson notes, as he does with Tertullian, that it is unclear whether Cyprian incorporates oil into the sealing, though most scholars agree that at this early stage oil was not associated with the Pneumatic imposition of hands, and that the oil was added to the rite sometime in the fourth century.

Much like Tertullian, Cyprian identifies the Signaculum, which is the sign of the Cross, with the tav of Ezekiel 9:4. Johnson notes that Cyprian is the first to incorporate Acts 8 specifically as justification for the post-baptismal imposition of hands, which would later become influential in Western liturgical theology.

**Origen**

Origen of Alexandria (ca. 185-ca. 254), who studied under Clement of Alexandria, was one of the most influential theologians of the third century. He is known for his biblical hermeneutics, which incorporates a three-tier approach to scripture interpretation. A dispute remains as to whether Origen alludes to a particular ritual pattern of initiation in his writings. Origen's mention of the "Holy Spirit and water" is inconclusive. Bradshaw notes that Origen's reference most likely refers to a very early Egyptian or Caesarean ritual sequence, consisting of a pre-baptismal anointing and a

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157 Cyprian, Letter 73.9 to Jubaianus, in Whitaker, Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy, 13.
158 Ferguson, Baptism in the Early Church, 354.
159 Johnson, The Rites of Christian Initiation, 90.
160 See Testamonia 2.22.
161 Johnson, The Rites of Christian Initiation, 91.
162 Spinks, Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism, 35.
water bath, while Spinks argues that Origen was probably not giving a strict ritual sequence that can be attributed to a specific place. Given the dissimilarity of ritual patterns represented in Origen's writings, it seems probable that he was referring to the elements of the baptismal rite, but not necessarily the order in which they occurred.

It also remains disputed as to whether the allusions to baptismal anointing are metaphorical or an actual ritual. Lampe argues that other second century theologians may represent the unction of the Spirit that is conferred in baptism figuratively, but that Origen knew of an actual anointing based on Origen's descriptions. Since it is unlikely that Origen himself invented the physical baptismal anointing, other Christians probably knew of a physical anointing as well, if Lampe is correct. Others argue that the anointing may have existed, but would not have been considered an extra ceremony because Origen did not raise the question of which part of the baptism conveyed the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Origen differentiates the Holy Spirit from the baptismal waters by quoting John 3:5 and speaks of a visible anointing in his Commentary on Romans: "And although all of us may be baptized in those visible waters and in a visible anointing, in accordance with the form handed down to the churches."

Bradshaw notes that the 'visible waters' and 'visible chrism’ could describe a possible physical anointing of either the Caesarean (pre-baptismal anointing) or Alexandrian practice (post-baptismal anointing) because in his

164 Spinks, Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism, 47.
Homilies on Leviticus 5, Origen speaks of the anointing of kings before he speaks of the baptismal bath, switching the order of anointing and bath.168 Spinks argues that Origen was also familiar with the Syrian initiation pattern (Caesarean) containing a pre-baptismal anointing.169 Johnson rightly cautions against deducing a clear ritual pattern sequence from Origen's writings. Not only does the nature of Origen's biblical hermeneutics make it difficult to decipher what is an interpretation of an actual ritual, and what is a theological interpretation of a particular biblical text that was only later associated with a liturgical reality.

Even with the uncertainty as to whether Origen is referencing a physical or figural anointing, his interpretations of chrism, oil, and anointing were influential to later liturgical traditions. At times, Origen connects the imparting of the Holy Spirit with hand laying: "Through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given in baptism,"170 though when commenting on Ezekiel 16:9, Origen identifies the Spirit with the chrism: "Anointing is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in knowledge of truth."171 Origen often relates anointing with kingship: "Among mortals, anointing is a symbol of kingship,"172 and priesthood: "All Christians have this sacred anointing and so are priests."173 At other times, Origen speaks of a Christological interpretation of baptismal

168 See Bradshaw, "Baptismal Practice in the Alexandrian Tradition," 15.
169 Spinks, Early and Medieval Theologies of Baptism, 35.
170 Origen, On First Principles 1.3.2., quoted in Ferguson, Baptism in the Early Church, 427.
172 Origen, Jo. 1.191, quoted in Radde-Gallwitz, "Gregory of Nyssa's Pneumatology in Context," 264.
173 Origen, Homilies on Leviticus 9.9.3, quoted in Ferguson, Baptism in the Early Church, 427.
anointing.\textsuperscript{174} “Christ is the fountain from whom rivers of living waters flow, and he is the bread, spikenard, and ointment which makes those anointed to be Christ."\textsuperscript{175}

In the last quote, one is able to see that Origen is most likely not referring to a ritual sequence in his description of Song of Songs 1:12 because the ointment is located after the bread. The plurality of baptismal anointing references found in Origen are used and expanded by various Christians in the fourth century and later.

\textbf{Rome and Spain}

Evidence from Rome and around Spain gives us a fairly clear portrait of the baptismal rite from the third century. I have included Hippolytus in this section, regardless of the controversy surrounding the dating and the possible traditionalist approach because it still provides evidence as to what they wanted to incorporate as part of the ritual.

I did not include Justin Martyr in this section primarily because of space, but more importantly because his descriptions of baptism are not as developed as Hippolytus and Irenaeus and because he never mentions a physical anointing. We do, however, see on one occasion that the Son is called \textit{Christos} because he anointed by God, but this is the extent to Justin's anointing references.\textsuperscript{176}

\textbf{Hippolytus and the Apostolic Tradition}

Hippolytus (ca. 170 - ca. 236) hailed as a presbyter from Rome and was a disciple of Irenaeus until his martyrdom in ca 236. Hippolytus's \textit{Commentary on Daniel} is from the same period as Cyprian and associates the power of the Holy Spirit with the oil:

\textsuperscript{174} See Mitchell, \textit{Baptismal Anointing}, 78.
\textsuperscript{175} Origen, \textit{Commentary on the Song of Songs} 2.9, quoted in Ferguson, \textit{Baptism in the Early Church}, 427.
\textsuperscript{176} See Justin Martyr 2nd Apology 6.
On the day [Easter] the bath is prepared in the Garden for those who are burning and the Church...is presented to God as a pure bride; and faith and charity, like her [Susanna's] companions, prepare the oil and unguents for those being washed. What are the unguents but the commandments of the Word? What is the oil but the power of the Holy Spirit, with which, like perfume, believers are anointed after bath?\[177\]

A striking difference between Hippolytus and the North African authors is that Hippolytus associates the Holy Spirit with the post-baptismal anointing, as opposed to the imposition of hands, which we see in Cyprian and Tertullian. Also, the preparation in the Garden (Paradise) and the nuptial language is reminiscent of later Syrian baptismal descriptions.

Arguably, the most important western baptismal document of the third century is the *Apostolic Tradition*, attributed to Hippolytus. The origins and intent of the *Apostolic Tradition* are the source of much debate.\[178\] Mitchell argues that it is Alexandrian in origin and 'ideal' in character.\[179\] Bradshaw, following Brock, argues that the baptismal formula originates from Jerusalem because the themes are similar to Cyril's *Mystagogical Catecheses*.\[180\] However, Bradshaw notes that the double post-baptismal anointing is a Roman feature of the document.\[181\] It is likely that the pre-baptismal exorcistic anointing


\[178\] Spinks notes differences between the Latin Verona Version and the Egyptian version and claims that the document is made up of a community collecting and supplementing traditions about its rites. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*, 30. Bradshaw argues that it is possible that the major ritual units within the text (baptism, ordination, Eucharist) may be composite literary creations, artificially drawn up by different local traditions. Paul F. Bradshaw, "The Problems of a New Edition of the *Apostolic Tradition*," pages 613-622 in *Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years After Anton Baumstark*, edited by Robert F. Taft and Gabriele Winkler. *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 265. (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Orientale, 2001), 617.


\[180\] See Bradshaw, "Baptismal Practice in the Alexandrian Tradition," 13.

\[181\] Bradshaw, "The Problems of a New Edition of the *Apostolic Tradition*," 616.
was probably a fourth century addition to the text, though there is no way to be certain of the later date.\textsuperscript{182}

Spinks argues that the community behind the \textit{Apostolic Tradition} was most likely a conservative group and that it:

seems to represent the wishful thinking of a nostalgic dissident group in Rome at the end of the third century, and is in no way representative of all things Roman c. 215.\textsuperscript{183}

Spinks also notes that the post-baptismal anointing with the 'oil of thanksgiving' by a presbyter, prayer by the bishop, the asking for grace with the imposition of hands, the anointing by the bishop, and the kiss on the forehead are ceremonies that are peculiar to Rome in the third century.\textsuperscript{184} However, with the little evidence still in existence, it is difficult to determine what, if any, parts of the \textit{Apostolic Tradition} are later than the third century.

Even with the challenges the \textit{Apostolic Tradition} poses, the document is still valuable for later liturgical traditions, and it is still a very early document with parts stretching as far back as the third century. The initiatory sequence begins prior to the Easter vigil with an exorcistic rite performed by the bishop:

\begin{quote}
…Let him [the bishop] command them all to pray and kneel. And, imposing his hand over them let him command every alien spirit to flee from them and not to return again to them. When he has finished exorcising them, let him exhale on their faces, and when he has signed their forehead, ears and noses [with the cross], let him raise them to a standing position…\textsuperscript{185}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{183} Spinks, \textit{Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism}, 28.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 29-30.
At sunrise, after the catechumen had kept vigil all night, the baptismal ceremony begins. A prayer is said over the water, which is followed by a sequence of preparatory questions. The bishop provides a pre-baptismal anointing, first with the oil of thanksgiving, followed by the oil of exorcism:

And at the time fixed for baptizing, the bishop shall give thanks over the oil, which he puts in a vessel: one calls it 'oil of thanksgiving'. And he shall also take other oil and exorcize it: one calls it 'oil of exorcism'. And a deacon takes the oil of exorcism and stands on the priest's left; and another deacon takes the oil of thanksgiving and stands on the priest's right. And when the priest takes each one of those who are to receive baptism, he shall bid him renounce, saying: I renounce you, Satan, and all your service and all your works. And when each one has renounced all this, he shall anoint him with the oil of exorcism, saying to him: Let every spirit depart far from you...

After coming up from the water, the newly baptized is anointed with the oil of thanksgiving associated with a Christic intent: "I anoint you with the holy oil in the name of Jesus Christ." After they neophytes have dressed, instructions in the Apostolic Tradition continue:

And the bishop shall lay his hands on them and invoke, saying: 'Lord God, you have made them worthy to receive remission of sins through the laver of regeneration of the holy Spirit: send upon them your grace, that they may serve you according to your will, for to you is glory, to Father and Son with the holy Spirit in the holy Church, both now and to the ages of ages. Amen.' Then, pouring the oil of thanksgiving from his hand and placing it on his head, he shall say: 'I anoint you with holy oil in God the Father almighty and Christ Jesus and the holy Spirit.' And having signed him on the forehead, he shall give him a kiss...

The prayer of the bishop during the post-baptismal imposition of hands, which occurs after the mentions the Spirit, seems to be associated with the regeneration by the Spirit in the baptismal bath.

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186 Apostolic Tradition 20, quoted in Finn, Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate, 49.
187 Apostolic Tradition 21, quoted in Finn, Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate, 50.
188 Apostolic Tradition 21, quoted in Whitaker, Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy, 8.
The *Apostolic Tradition* gives one of the fullest baptismal attestations of the first four centuries, which involves two pre-baptismal anointings, a post-baptismal anointing, and a consignation from the bishop. Even if it was not the most common practice of the Roman people, it at least shows the liturgical reflection by a group in ancient Rome, which will become one of the most influential baptismal documents of the first four centuries for liturgical scholarship.

**Irenaeus of Lyons**

It is unclear from Irenaeus's work if he knew of a physical anointing that accompanied baptism. Power notes that Irenaeus did not know a ritual anointing associated with baptism, while Mitchell proceeds with caution when saying that Irenaeus's *Demonstrations of the Apostolic Preaching* 47 and *Against Heresies* 3.9.3 are consistent with other sources containing an external anointing, though conclusions are difficult. It is possible that Irenaeus did know a physical baptismal anointing, though he felt the need to downplay the rite in order to dispute the heretical group that was baptizing with only a mixture of oil and water, as opposed to the water baptism, similar to the case of the Greek strand of the *Acts of Judas Thomas*. Thomassen observes that Irenaeus is the primary source that shows evidence of the heretical practice of rejecting the baptismal water and using a mixture of oil and water because of his refutation. Thomassen further claims that it is possible that the heretical practice is actually the older

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practice of baptism and anointing, which possibly consisted in two distinct parts, collapsed into a single act.¹⁹¹

Reminiscent of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, Irenaeus associates the seal with baptism, showing the importance of the water for baptismal theology:

First of all the rule of faith admonishes us to remember that we have received baptism for the remission of sins in the name of God the Father, and in the name of Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit of God; and that this baptism is the seal of eternal life and is rebirth unto God…”¹⁹²

Though later, Irenaeus interprets Isaiah 61:1/Luke 4:18 Christologically, but then proceeds to say that: "For our bodies have received unity among themselves by means of that laver which leads to incorporation; but our souls by means of the Spirit,”¹⁹³ showing that the Pneumatic act could be interpreted as part of the water ritual itself, or as part of an anointing that could have been the second step in the baptismal ritual.

**Conclusions**

This section has shown some of the diversity baptismal rituals and understandings in the second and third centuries, as well as some of the similarities within the various regions. The Syrian rites are already showing discrepancies between the Greek and Syriac speaking Syrians, as can be seen in the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, which will only manifest in disassociated rites after the fourth century between the Syriac speaking Christians and the Greek speaking Christians. Both Greek and Syrian baptismal rituals of the second and third centuries contain only pre-baptismal anointings. The *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the Baptism of Gundaphorus and the Baptism of Mygdonia, from the *Acts

¹⁹¹ Thomassen, “Baptism among the Valentinians,” 897.
of Judas Thomas contain two pre-baptismal anointings; the first is cranial and functions as a sealing or adoption and is interpreted Christologically, and the second is either poured on the head or is smeared on the body. Unfortunately, none of these examples provide a function for the full body anointing, only that it is Trinitarian. The Baptism of a Woman Possessed by the Devil, the Baptism of Sifir, and the Baptism of Vizan and Certain Women, all from the Acts of Judas Thomas, contain only one pre-baptismal anointing, though the interpretations are different in all of them. The pre-baptismal anointing found in The Baptism of the Woman Possessed by the Devil is exorcistic, though in the Syriac the association is Christic, while in the Greek the association is Trinitarian. The Baptism of Sifur and the Baptism of Vizan and Certain Women are both interpreted Christologically, though with Sifir, the anointing acts as a sign of ownership, while the account of Vizan functions as a cleansing and remission of sins.

The northern African rites are similar to the Roman rites for the most part. What we see in the case of Tertullian and Cyprian, both of Carthage, is a Christological association with a single post-baptismal anointing and a Pneumatic association with the imposition of hands by the bishop after the anointing. Hippolytus's Commentary on Daniel mentions only a post-baptismal anointing associated with the Holy Spirit. Origen's liturgical sequence is unclear, though his does associate the Holy Spirit with the chrism and imposition of hands and considers anointing to also be associated with Christ and the anointing of priests and kings. The baptismal attestations provided by the Apostolic Tradition attributed to Hippolytus is the fullest account of baptism of the first three centuries, though it is likely that some of the material is later. The Apostolic Tradition contains two pre-baptismal anointings, one with the oil of thanksgiving,
followed by the oil of exorcism. Two post-baptismal anointings are also found in this work. The first is Christic, while the second post-baptismal anointing is accompanied by an imposition of hands with oil with a Trinitarian association. The main themes that will be incorporated into fourth century baptismal understanding, are cathartic (purifying), Pneumatic, sealing, and exorcistic uses of the baptismal anointing oil.
CHAPTER V
FOURTH CENTURY: SYRIAC REFERENCES

The earliest Syrian baptismal rites were distinguished by the presence of only a pre-baptismal anointing, known as the *rushma*, or 'mark,' which was associated with ownership followed by an immersion. Brock argues that in the earliest forms, the *rushma* most likely acted in light of the Jewish circumcision practice and its understanding of adoption; the mark usually took the form of a cross on the forehead, reflecting the cross shaped *tau* of Ezekiel 9:4. It is important to note here that Brock seems to be viewing circumcision in light of Jewish proselyte ceremonies that included the circumcision, followed by an immersion in a *mikvah* for adult converts. Evidence for early Syrian understanding of the baptismal ceremony as a whole in association with the practice of circumcision can be seen in authors such as Aphrahat, though it is very difficult to point to a specific aspect of the ceremony itself as correlative with circumcision.

It is possible that the later duplication of the pre-baptismal anointing in the Syrian liturgy was introduced by contact with other liturgical traditions that associated the pre-baptismal anointing with exorcistic and protective qualities. Most extant Syrian texts from the fourth century speak of two separate baptismal anointings, one before the

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consecration of the oil, and one located after. However, many of the references are not as concrete as we see in the Western and West Syrian baptismal homilies, making it difficult to locate which anointing is being referenced. The post-baptismal anointing is more common in the Greek Syrian baptismal accounts, while the Syriac liturgy most likely did not contain a post-baptismal anointing.

With the introduction of a second pre-baptismal anointing into the Syrian liturgy came various interpretations of the practice. The prayer preceding the anointing of the head is a prayer of protection against the devil, as well as a grafting into the good olive tree of the Church. Brock advocates that the Romans 11 imagery of the olive tree found in later Syrian baptism formulas was originally from the Jerusalem rite. Bradshaw mentions that a small number of Syrian sources mention only a pre-baptismal anointing associated with the gift of the Spirit, which could be the remnants of the earlier tradition. The first baptismal anointing of the head was associated with the 'oil of gladness,' which serves to make the candidate worthy of adoption or rebirth. However, references to the second pre-baptismal anointing are common in the West Syrian baptismal understanding, and will be discussed in the next chapter.

Three principle sets of relationships can be seen in both Western and Eastern Syrian initiation: 1) the relationship between the Christian and the activity of the Holy Spirit; 2) the relationship between the Christian initiation and the baptism of Jesus in the

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200 *Apostolic Constitutions* 2.32.2. John Chrysostom also associates the first anointing of the head with the 'oil of gladness.'
Jordan; 3) the baptismal immersion and anointing with oil.\textsuperscript{202} While the West Syrian tradition will be discussed in the next chapter, this chapter will give examples of how the East Syrian baptismal tradition understood these three concepts with relation to the baptismal anointing.

The East Syrian tradition became associated with the Paschal event, though it never strayed far from the association with John 3:5 or Jesus's baptism as the dominant paradigms. The epiclesis over the oil speaks of its role as imparting to those anointed with it the pledge of their resurrection, showing the emphasis on the Pascha.\textsuperscript{203} Also unique to the Syriac speaking tradition, is the retention of much of its female Pneumatological references of the womb and Holy Spirit, as well as the Church, as mother,\textsuperscript{204} which we will see most poignantly in Ephrem's Hymns.

**The Syriac Acts of John**

The *Syriac Acts of John*, also known as the *History of John the Son of Zebedee*, dates to the fourth century and currently exists in Syriac, though it is debated as to whether the original language was Syriac or Greek.\textsuperscript{205} Two baptismal accounts can be observed.

The account of the baptism of Tyrannus presents a detailed ritual in which the Trinity is invoked and the sign of the cross is made over the scented oil, fire blazes over the oil, and angels spread their wings over the oil and chant the Sanctus:

And the holy man came near and kneeled down [next to the vat of oil], and looked up to heave, and cried out in the midst of the theatre: 'Holy is the Father and the Son and the Spirit of holiness for ever. Amen.' And the whole assembly answered, 'Amen.' Then John made the sign of the Cross over the oil, and said with a loud voice: 'Glory be to the father and to the Son and to the Spirit of holiness for ever. Amen.' And again the third time he said: 'Holy is the Father and the Son and the Spirit of holiness. Amen.' And straightway fire blazed forth over the oil, and the oil did not take fire, for two angels had their wings spread over the oil and were crying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord Almighty…'  

Meyers notes that the baptismal liturgy here lacks a formal ritual of renunciation of the devil and adherence to Christ, as is seen in other baptismal liturgies of the fourth century, but it does mention the consecration of the oil and water, profession of faith by the procurator (Tyrannus), and the anointing prior to the descent into the font.  

The Syriac Acts of John uses fire for both oil and water. Fire is considered consecratory in this work, though, as Brock notes, it is more common to see flames over the water, as opposed to the oil. The candidate was then stripped of his garments and anointed on the forehead, followed by a full body anointing:

And when he had stripped, the holy man came near, and took oil in his hand, and made him a cross on his forehead, and anointed his whole body, and brought him to the cistern…  

Similarly, the account of Artemis includes a doxology, followed by fire blazing over the oil with the wings of angels spread over the oil as the assembly chants the Sanctus. However, the water is given precedence in the second baptismal account,

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208 Brock, The Holy Spirit in Syrian Baptismal Tradition, 14. Myers argues that the Spirit hovering over the waters of creation is a later Syrian tradition, but that in the primitive Syrian account, it is over the oil that the angels spread their wings. Susan E. Myers ‘‘Come, Hidden Mother’: Spirit Epicleses in the Acts of Thomas,” PhD diss. (University of Notre Dame, 2003), 156.  
whereas the oil is emphasized more in the first. The presence of fire and the appearance of angels are always associated with the oil.

Unlike the double anointing specifically mentioned in the baptism of Tyrranus, the baptism of the priests only says that the men were anointed:

And John drew near, and washed them clean of the soot [which they wore in token of grief], and anointed them with oil, and baptized them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Spirit of holiness…210

It is difficult to tell whether or not this anointing includes the double anointing because of the passing nature of the comment.

The tradition found in the Syriac Acts of John shows a considerable emphasis on the blessing of the oil, as is the case with Ephrem. The blessing is confirmed by angelic beings who participate in the ritual, but in the heavenly realm. Spinks argues that the ritual pattern found in the Syriac Acts of John presupposes and reflects the fifth century texts of Brock's Commentaries,211 showing that the baptismal interpretations were most likely circulated beyond the fourth century.

Aphrahat

Aphrahat (ca. 270-345), often known as the 'Persian Sage,' lived in the Adiabene region of Persia at the edge of the Persian Empire, east of Nisibis.212 Aphrahat is thought to have been a member of an ascetic group of ecclesiasts in East Syria known as B'nai Qy'ama and is regarded as being one of the least Hellenized of the Syrian theologians.213

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210 Ibid., 26.
213 Spinks, Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism, 51.
Winkler notes that the Syriac connections with Armenia in the period between the second and fourth centuries allowed for little, if any, Greek influence.  

Duncan reconstructs the baptismal sequence from Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* as: anointing, water baptism, followed immediately by the consecration of the Eucharist and Communion.  

Johnson argues that the phrase "circumcise thy heart," is possibly a reference to the pre-baptismal anointing in Aphrahat based on *Demonstration* XII.  

After he circumcises his heart from the evil deeds, then he progresses to baptism, the fulfillment of the true circumcision, is joined with the people of God, and added to the body and blood of the Messiah.

However, if we read a little further in *Demonstration* XII, the pattern changes, leaving us unable to determine a ritual pattern from this text:

Joshua (Jesus) our redeemer a second time circumcised the people who believed in him with the circumcision of the heart, and they were baptized and circumcised with 'the knife which is his word that is sharper than a two-edged sword.' Joshua the son of Nun led the people across to the Land of Promise; and Joshua our redeemer promised the land of the living to whomever passed through the true Jordan, believed, and circumcised the foreskin of his heart…Blessed are those whose hearts are circumcised from the foreskin and who are born through the water, the second circumcision, for they are inheritors with Abraham.

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214 Winkler argues that the Armenian ritual follows, at least in the oldest form, the same baptismal structure that can be found in the Syrian baptismal rite. She uses evidence from the Acts of Thomas, which Winkler confirms with later Armenian sources, to conclude that the original Syrian pre-baptismal anointing consisted only of the anointing of the head. Winkler, Gabriele. “The Syriac Prebaptismal Anointing in the Light of the Earliest Armenian Sources,” in *Symposium Syriacum 1976: célébré du 13 au 17 septembre 1976 au Centre Culturel “Les Fontaines” de Chantilly, 317-324, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 205* (Roma: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1978). Because the Armenian sources exist only in Armenian, they will not be covered here except in passing.


218 Heb 4:12.

The bigger problem with this hypothesis is that the words 'oil' and 'anointing' are not present at all in the text, in which the circumcision of the heart could be referring to any number of things: the catechumenate period, a renunciation, etc. It seems possible that Aphrahat is harkening back to Acts 7:51: "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit…" The difference is that Aphrahat associates the circumcision of the heart to be done at the hand of Christ, whereas in Acts, the circumcision is clearly Pneumatic. It could be that a common ancestry for the concept of a circumcision of the heart exists, but it is understood with different subjects in this case.

Scholars have located other places in Aphrahat's Demonstrations that more concretely refer to an anointing or 'mark' (rushma). Spinks notes that the rushma mentioned by Aphrahat has no obvious association with the Holy Spirit, as we see in the Didascalia; instead, the rushma has Christological, or messianic, connotations, and the Holy Spirit is associated with the water. Duncan's work shows a number of anointing references. Demonstration XII references a signing or sealing in the form of a cross that comes prior to the baptism. Demonstration XXIII references a rushma, though, as Duncan notes, it is unclear as to whether the 'mark' refers to the entire rite of baptism.

Aphrahat's witness to the fourth century baptismal anointing practice in Syria shows first hand the reliance on Hebrew initiation practices associated with Christian initiation. It is not uncommon in baptismal references in nearly every Christian land to associate baptismal anointing with the anointing of kings and priests of the Old

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220 Spinks, Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism, 51.
221 Duncan, Baptism in the Demonstrations of Aphraates the Persian Sage, 110.
222 Ibid., 115.
Testament at some point, but it is only in Syria that we really see the emphasis on circumcision as the precursor to the baptismal practice.

Ephrem the Syrian

Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306-373) shares the traditions of both East and West Syria, though many of his baptismal anointing references are unique to him. Most of his life was spent in Nisibis until the city fell to the Persians, which is when he moved to Edessa. The primary texts in which Ephrem speaks about baptism are in his Hymns on Epiphany and his Hymns on Virginity. Since no theological treatise or liturgical manual exists from Ephrem, much of the scholarship concerning the order of the rite is speculative.

Mitchell argues that the liturgy consisted principally of a chrismation and a washing from evidence found in Ephrem: "...the priest used to seal him with oil, and to lead him to the water spring." Ephrem also seems to be alluding to a liturgical sequence of anointing, water bath, and Eucharist, in his Hymns on Epiphany 8.21:

> with the unction you have been anointed; – you have put Him on in the water; – in bread you have eaten Him; – in the wine you have drunk Him; – in the voice you have heard him; - in the mind you have seen Him.

Seppälä argues that the closest we can get to a procedure of the actual ritual from the time of Ephrem is in a fifth century baptismal commentary preserved in Syriac.

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223 Spinks, Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism, 53.
226 Hymns on Epiphany 3.16, quoted in Whitaker, Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy, 53; See also Hymns on Virginity 7:7-8.
227 Hymns on Epiphany 8.21, quoted in Whitaker, Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy, 54.
which predates the East and West Syrian schism (431). Brock argues that both the East and West Syrian baptismal rites contain three anointings, which seem to have been distinguished by different terms from the earliest stages: the first takes place before the sanctification of the baptismal water, the second is a full body anointing prior to the bath, and the third is an imprint or sealing that takes place after the baptism.\(^{229}\) However, the existing fourth century evidence is inconclusive of this theory, especially concerning the post-baptismal anointing.

Ephrem interprets the oil in many beautiful ways, some of which are not seen in other baptismal descriptions. Brock and Seppälä have teased out five basic categories of interpretation for the anointing in Ephrem's work: 1) as a mark of ownership and belonging to Christian fellowship, which could be a reference to the anointing as a replacement for Jewish circumcision; 2) as a sign of protection against evil, perhaps understood in terms of the sign of protection found in Ezekiel 9:4\(^{230}\); 3) anointing as the cause of healing and cleansing, as a kind of intersection between visible and invisible worlds\(^{231}\); 4) anointing as the entry into the spiritual priesthood, which guarantees the

\(^{228}\) See Brock, "Some Early Syriac Commentaries," 23-4; Seppälä notes that the fifth century text seems to Antiochene in origin and originally composed in Greek. He also notes that it circulated widely in the East, but it survives only in the Syrian tradition. The elements of the rite are: 1) Renunciation of Satan, 2) Confession of the Creator, 3) Exorcism, 4) First anointing on the forehead, 5) Kneeling, 6) Baptism in the font, 7) Baptismal formula, 8) Ascent from the font, 9) Crowning, 10) clothing in a white, soft garment, 11) Incensing in front of the baptized, 12) Entry into the Church, 13) Hearing Scripture, 14) Washing the hands of the priests. Seppälä, "Baptismal Mystery, in St. Ephrem the Syrian and Hymnen de Epiphania," 1144.


\(^{230}\) Hymns on Epiphany 5.2.

\(^{231}\) Sebastian P. Brock, Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition, Mōrān 'Ethʾō 2 (Kottayam: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1989), 68-70.
right to stand before God and serve him; and lastly, 5) the anointed become God's children and heirs. These categories are often manifested in various ways in Ephrem's writings and are often overlapping.

Many scholars point to either the anointing or baptism, or the entire ceremony, as a form of circumcision in Syrian baptismal references. We saw in the case of Aphrahat that he understood baptism as a circumcision of the heart and a second circumcision, but it is impossible to tease out the use of oil or the implication of the circumcision as a reference to the anointing specifically. However, Ephrem contrasts the seal of circumcision, which separated the chosen people from the gentiles with the new seal of chrism, showing that he associates the chrism, at least in this instance, with a type of circumcision. In this case, Ephrem is emphasizing that it is the Trinity that dwells in the Christian through the oil with the use of a reference to circumcision. Mitchell notes that the purpose of the seal in Hymns 3-4 On Epiphany is the separation of Christ's people from the people of the world, making the body a Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Ephrem interprets the anointing oil both Christologically and Pneumatologically. In line with the West Syrian tradition is Ephrem's expression of the gift of the Holy Spirit prior to the bath. Ephrem's Hymn on Virginity 7 alludes to the importance of oil for both Semitic cultures and as an association with Christ, as well as explains that the oil

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232 1 Pet 2:5. Brock notes that this seems to be in accordance with the logic of Ephrem who sees the priesthood of John as having been transmitted to Christ in his baptism. Cf. Commentary on the Diatesseron 4.3. Brock, Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition, 68.

233 Brock, Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition, 68-70; Seppälä, “Baptismal Mystery in St. Ephrem the Syrian and Hymnen de Epiphania,” 1154.

234 Hymns on Epiphany 3.16.


236 Mitchell, Baptismal Anointing, 34-5.

forges sins and is a 'dear friend' of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{238} Similarly, Ephrem writes that oil is that which the Holy Spirit marks people, and it is the seal of the Spirit that has the ability to give repentance and freedom from sin.\textsuperscript{239} Ephrem links fire and the Spirit in the incarnation with the fire and Spirit given at baptism in his \textit{Hymn on Faith} 10:

\begin{quote}
When the Lord came down to earth to mortal men
He created them again, a new creation, like the angels,
mixing within them fire and spirit,
so that in a hidden manner they might be of fire and spirit.\textsuperscript{240}
\end{quote}

However, in another instance, Christ is seen as affecting the imprint of ownership through the oil, instead of the Spirit.\textsuperscript{241} Ephrem associates the action of the oil as that of the signet ring on wax, showing clearly the mark that is bestowed in the baptismal anointing.\textsuperscript{242}

Seppälä argues that exorcism is not evidenced in Ephrem's baptismal account.\textsuperscript{243} However, the protective quality of the pre-baptismal anointing can be seen in a number of Ephrem's baptismal references. In one instance, Christ is given through the pre-baptismal chrismation, which is understood to mark the lambs of the Good Shepherd. The mark in turn puts the wolf to flight, but it also has the power to change the wolves themselves into sheep.\textsuperscript{244}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{239} \textit{On Virginity} 7:5; See Spinks, \textit{Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism}, 54.
\textsuperscript{240} \textit{Hymns on Faith} 10:9, quoted in Brock and Kiraz, \textit{Ephrem the Syrian}, 207.
\textsuperscript{241} \textit{Hymns on Epiphany} 3.1; see Brock, \textit{The Holy Spirit in Syrian Baptismal Tradition}, 118.
\textsuperscript{242} \textit{Hymns on Virginity} 7.6; see Brock, \textit{The Holy Spirit in Syrian Baptismal Tradition}, 118.
\textsuperscript{243} Seppälä, “Baptismal Mystery in St. Ephrem the Syrian and \textit{Hymnen de Epiphania},” 1152.
\textsuperscript{244} \textit{Hymns on Epiphany} 3.16; See Mitchell, "Four Fathers on Baptism," 45.
\end{footnotes}
Brock notes a cooperation between oil and water in the process of repainting the 'image' in Ephrem's writings:245

A royal portrait is painted with visible colors, and with oil that all can see is hidden portrait of our hidden King portrayed on those who have been signed: on them baptism, that is in travail with them in its womb, depicts the new portrait, to replace the image of the former Adam who had become corrupted; it gives birth to them with triple pangs accompanied by the three glorious names, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.246

Mitchell notes the intimate relationship between in the oil and water as the agent of washing in Ephrem's baptismal theology, in which the water and oil act outwardly, but God acts inwardly.247

Ephrem associates the oil with cleansing and the forgiveness of sins:

Oil, the beneficial fountain, accompanies the body, that fount of ills; for oil wipes out sins, just as the Flood wiped out the unclean; for the Flood, acting in justice, wiped out the wicked: those who had not subdued their lusts drowned, having brought on the Flood through these lusts; but oil, acting in goodness, wipes out sins in baptism...248

Ferguson argues that the reason Ephrem is able to speak of the oil and water in similar terms is because he viewed the baptismal ceremony as one event that included an anointing, which is common to both East and West Syrian baptismal understandings of the fourth century.249

In his On Virginity, Ephrem uses the language of an artist painting with oil colors and describes how the image of our hidden king, the Anointed One, is painted with oil upon the baptismal candidate:

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246 Hymns on Virginity 7:5, quoted in Brock and Kiraz, Ephrem the Syrian, 189.
247 Mitchell, Baptismal Anointing, 70; Mitchell, "Four Fathers on Baptism," 47.
248 On Virginity 7:9, quoted in Brock, Ephrem the Syrian: Selected Poems, 193.
A royal portrait is painted with visible colors, and with oil that all can see is the hidden portrait of our hidden King portrayed on those who have been signed…\(^250\)

We also see in Ephrem's *On Virginity* 7 that the anointing is performed in order for the image of God, in which Adam was created in Genesis 1:27, is restored through the anointing by the application of the image of the second Adam.\(^251\)

The priestly and kingly language is seen poignantly in *On Virginity* 7 with the reference to the anointing of King David by Samuel after he put on his armor to slay Goliath.\(^252\) Mitchell interprets this scene to say that Christians are anointed as heirs of the Kingdom, and the armor we receive from baptism humbles the devil.\(^253\) The protective quality of the anointing can be seen as well. David was given strength by God, and similarly, the anointing provides protection and strength in baptism where one will meet Leviathan in the depths of the baptismal immersion.

An interesting passage in Ephrem's *Hymns on Fidelity* uses the imagery of the baptized as pearl divers who put oil on their bodies before plunging into the depths to search for Christ, their pearl:

> In symbol and in truth is Leviathan trodden down by mortals: the divers strip and put on oil; as a symbol of Christ they snatched you and came up; stripped, they seized the soul from his embittered mouth.\(^254\)

The protective quality of the Christic anointing allows the person to defeat Leviathan in the baptismal waters.

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\(^{250}\) *Hymns on Virginity* 7:5, quoted in Brock, *Ephrem the Syrian: Selected Poems*, 189.


\(^{252}\) See also *Hymns on Epiphany* 5.9-11.

\(^{253}\) Mitchell, "Four Fathers on Baptism," 47.

\(^{254}\) *Hymns on Fidelity* 82.10, quoted in Brock, *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, 126; *Hymns on Virginity* 7.10 also uses diver imagery.
Ephrem understands the Old Testament instances of anointing as reflections of the mystical pre-figurative presence of the Messiah. Seppälä notes that the etymological connection between the oil and Christ/Messiah, 'the anointed one' would have been apparent for Syriac ears, which makes use of the Syriac terms derived from the root MŠḤ. To 'anoint' would mean to 'christen,' or to become Christ-like. The Christological implications of the etymology can be seen in *Hymns on Virginity* as the oil almost becomes a synonym for Christ. In many cases Ephrem uses the olive oil and olive branches as symbols for baptismal themes, without great detail about the baptismal act.

The Holy Spirit in Ephrem's baptismal references has feminine qualities. Ephrem incorporates womb and birthing imagery into his baptismal theology:

Behold, Fire and Spirit in the womb that gave you birth! Behold, Fire and Spirit in the river where you were baptized! Fire and Spirit in our Baptism; Fire and the holy Spirit in the Bread and Cup!

An ecclesial aspect of Ephrem's womb imagery can be seen with relation to the priest's service to the womb:

The priesthood serves this womb in her giving birth. Anointing hastens before her; the Holy Spirit hastens upon her flood waters; The crown of Levites surrounds her; the High Priest is made her servant. The Watchers rejoice in the lost whom she has found. O to the womb that, having given birth, is nourished

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255 *Hymns on Epiphany* 3.14; *Hymns on Virginity* 7.5-11; Seppälä, “Baptismal Mystery in St. Ephrem the Syrian and *Hymnen de Epiphania*,” 1172-3.
256 Seppala, "Baptismal Mystery in St. Ephrem the Syrian and *Hymnen de Epiphania*," 1152.
257 Ibid.
258 *Hymns on Virginity* 4.5-8.
259 *Hymns on Virginity* 7.13.
and formed by the altar! O to the babes who immediately eat the pure bread instead of milk.\textsuperscript{262}

The ‘womb’ here represents the holy Mother Church. Here we can see Ephrem’s emphasis on Old Testament typology and ecclesiology in his understanding of the Christian Church.

Ephrem provides a unique view into the Syrian baptismal tradition. Many of his references are not found in other baptismal descriptions, and most of the references are distinctly Semitic in character. For Ephrem, the baptismal ceremony was thought of as a united ritual that had different elements, which in many instances were interpreted interchangeably.

\textbf{Conclusions}

The East Syrian Christians, which in this case refers to the Syriac speaking Christians, of the fourth century were an insular Christian group in many ways because of the lack of Greek and Latin influence, due to the differences in language. Many of their baptismal imageries are reminiscent of older Jewish typologies, as we saw in the circumcision language in Aphrahat, and the way in which Ephrem references the womb.

It is also unclear as to which baptismal anointing many of the authors are referencing because they are typically writing hymns and poems, instead of liturgical manuals, as in the West.

Much like the Syrian baptismal descriptions of the second and third centuries, the baptismal descriptions of the fourth century East Syrians also favor the pre-baptismal anointing. The \textit{Syriac Acts of John} mentions a pre-baptismal anointing of the head with a Christic association, as well as second pre-baptismal anointing of the whole body, with

\textsuperscript{262} \textit{Hymns on Virginity} 7.8, quoted in Whitaker, \textit{Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy}, 53.
no interpretation given. Aphrahat, on the other hand, only mentions a single pre-baptismal anointing that acts as a seal and is associated with Christ. Ephrem definitely knew of one pre-baptismal anointing, and could have been familiar with more, though it is unclear from his writings. From Ephrem's writings, we are able to conclude with certainty that the anointing functioned as a form of ownership, protection, healing, cleansing, and a sealing, and the association of the anointing is Pneumatic, Christic, and as a form of priestly and kingly anointing.

The next section, referred to as the 'East' also involves Syrians. The distinction between East and West Syrians is primarily a language and location distinction, though language and location factored into the theological discussions and interpretations. The West Syrians, understood here as the Greek speaking Syrians, contain different theological understandings and anointing practices that are not seen in the East Syrian tradition. In the next section, we will discuss the West (Greek speaking) Syrian baptismal tradition in more detail.
The early Eastern baptismal rite is difficult to reconstruct because none of the early rites of Cappadocia have survived. Some scholars look to Origen for evidence of an Eastern ritual, though he proves to be somewhat unhelpful. Though the Cappadocians did not leave an exact ritual sequence or manual, they did compose works containing baptismal theology that can give clues as to the ritual, e.g. Gregory of Nazianzus's description of baptism as a "gift, grace, illumination, anointing, clothing of immortality, bath of regeneration, seal, and everything that is honorable."\(^{263}\)

All three of the Cappadocians use John 3:5 imagery in their baptismal anointing theologies.\(^{264}\) Spinks argues that Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil allude to a pre-baptismal anointing,\(^ {265}\) which if Spinks is correct, according to Johnson, would conclude that the baptismal rite known to the Cappadocians would be similar to that of John Chrysostom in Antioch, i.e. instruction, renunciation, anointing, baptism, clothing in the baptismal garment, followed by the Eucharist.\(^ {266}\)


\(^{266}\) Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 136.
The West Syrian rites in this case refer to the Greek speaking Syrians of Antioch. Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom are the two most commonly associated as West Syrian, though Cyril of Jerusalem and the *Apostolic Constitutions* have been included to help fill in the picture. The West Syrian works are all composed in Greek and had a lasting contribution to Greek liturgical traditions.

What we will see in this section is a conglomeration of liturgical practices and theologies concerning the baptismal anointing in the fourth century East (Greece, Antioch, and to some extent, Jerusalem); the reason for isolating the individual liturgical examples is to show possible similarities, but also to show the difficulties in assigning one specific liturgical practice to a region this early in history. Another reason for this exercise in historical liturgy is to possibly follow the liturgical development in the specific regions.

The fourth century is marked with Christian development. The legalization of Christianity in the early fourth century allows for the growth of Christianity. The Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) were primarily Greek councils that show attempts at Christian unification, which plays a role in the understanding of liturgical theology and practice as the identifying factor for Christian unity against the heresies. Finn notes that in the context of John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia we begin to see the use of the Trinitarian formula, which, as Finn argues, shows a change in the traditional Syrian baptismal liturgy and originated in the fourth century Trinitarian controversies.\(^\text{267}\) Finn also argues that, at least in the case of Chrysostom and Theodore, the Trinitarian formula is used to assert the unity of the divine nature and equality of the

divine persons and to emphasize the role of ministers of the baptismal rites as dispositive, instrumental, and ministerial, while focusing attention to the action of Christ and the Trinity. However, the Trinitarian debates with regard to baptismal theology are most closely seen in the Cappadocian Fathers.

Some Theories Concerning the Evolution of the Antiochene Rite

The West Syrians are Greek speaking Syrians, typically associated with Antioch, such as Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom. Cyril of Jerusalem, while located closer to the East Syrian lands, is liturgically closer to the Antiochene baptismal tradition and language, and so will be included in this section. Language plays a large role in liturgical development. The Greek speaking Syrians of Antioch are influenced by Hellenistic concepts, whereas the Syriac Christians avoid Hellenization, at least this early in history, because of the language and cultural barriers between themselves and the Greeks. Brock notes that the areas more exposed to Greek bathing practices added a second anointing of the full body prior to the bath, which led to the division of labor between the deacon and priest. The earliest mention of a post-baptismal anointing in the East is seen in Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Apostolic Constitutions, which shows that the West Syrians are evolving differently with regard to liturgy than the East Syrians in the fourth century.

However, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia do differ in their interpretations of the significance of the anointings. Cyril incorporates a

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268 Ibid.
post-baptismal unction that is understood as imparting the gift of the Holy Spirit; Theodore incorporates a post-baptismal anointing that is symbolic of the result of the water baptism; and Chrysostom is silent on the post-baptismal anointing because the rite was most likely not known to him. Conflicting theories exist that try to show how this came to be. A brief outline of these theories can show the practical and theological evolution of the baptismal anointings in West Syria and can shed light on why the region is so diverse, as well as show the inability to know the exact evolutionary path of the Eastern baptismal liturgy.

E.C. Ratcliff poses a chronological evolution of the baptismal anointings and classifies the liturgies of Jerusalem and Antioch together as 'Syrian' Christianity, even in the case that they are not Syriac speaking. His theory assumes the notion that the earlier evidence contains only a pre-baptismal anointing, and that a second pre-baptismal anointing was incorporated after the renunciations of the devil at a later date. Ratcliff goes on to argue that Cyril of Jerusalem was the innovator and reshaped the Jerusalem ritual pattern, so that the anointing followed the baptism, in which the innovations would later make their way to the liturgies of Antioch.

The result of Ratcliff's theory is that the anointing then comes to reflect the Spirit alighting on Jesus after the baptism. Ratcliff assumes that Cyril abandons the Romans 6 imagery of being baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ for rebirth imagery. Ratcliff's theory hangs on the importance of Jerusalem as a prominent pilgrimage location, meaning that the new pattern originated in Jerusalem and was copied elsewhere.

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In her article, "The Original Meaning of the Pre-Baptismal Anointing," Gabrielle Winkler further extends Ratcliff's theory by showing that the developmental pattern of 'moving the Spirit' can be seen in the *Acts of Judas Thomas*. First, the Spirit is associated with the messianic adoption in a single anointing of the forehead, and was later duplicated with the full body anointing that signified protection. Winkler's theory goes on to conclude that the result was that the water briefly incorporated the Pneumatic act, as in the case of John Chrysostom, and then was later incorporated into the post-baptismal anointing. Winkler writes that:

> Once the preparatory rites assumed a predominantly cathartic and exorcistic character, attaining at the same time the indispensable condition for the reception of the Spirit, it was associated. Only when the catechumen was thoroughly cleansed and his sins washed away could the Spirit enter his heart.

Sebastian Brock builds upon both Winkler and Ratcliff in his theory that suggests that older Syrian ritual pattern of anointing followed by a bath is modeled on the Jewish practice of proselyte baptism that incorporates a circumcision followed by a ritual bath. Brock's thesis assumes that the Syriac speaking Christians and the Antiochene Christians were once united liturgically, which is problematic when viewed through the lens of the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, which shows that the Greek and Syriac liturgies were probably understood and practiced differently very early in history. Brock argues that the move away from the identification of the *rushma* as the mark of ownership, which he equates to Jewish circumcision, was caused by the Hellenistic interpretations of anointing as

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protective and cathartic. He argues that it was later, under a strict interpretation of the baptism of Jesus, that the revival of the Pauline imagery of dying and rising, which he considered older pre-baptismal anointing themes, were transferred to the post-baptismal anointing. Brock concludes that it was after the incorporation of the post-baptismal anointing that the pre-baptismal anointing became associated with exorcistic and protective interpretations.

Bryan D. Spinks disagrees with the theories proposed by Ratcliff, Winkler, and Brock. Spinks argues that the problem with Ratcliff's theory is that there is no evidence that Cyril made any innovations; it is an historical speculation. Spinks points to the Gospel of Philip, a third century apocryphal work found in the Nag Hammadi corpus, as an early witness to the ritual pattern of baptism followed by an anointing. However, it is perhaps more likely that because of the influx in pilgrims to Jerusalem with the end of empire-wide Christian persecution, Cyril came into contact with the Western liturgy that incorporated a post-baptismal anointing very early, as opposed to looking to a Gnostic practice for guidance, especially during the heresy debates. Kretschmar, however, claims that Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Apostolic Constitutions show that the adoption of the post-baptismal anointing in the satellite areas of Antioch is something more than an importation from Jerusalem based. Spinks argues that the problem with Winkler's theory is that it not only rests on a questionable reading of the Acts of Judas.

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275 See section on Aphrahat in Chapter four for another explanation of the circumcision references. It is more likely that the circumcision referred to the entire baptismal ceremony, not only the anointing.  
277 Ibid.  
Thomas, but it sees Chrysostom as a passing, temporary theologian interested in defending an older baptismal pattern.

The problem with Brock's appeal to the Jewish proselyte baptism is that the earlier proselyte baptismal liturgy does not mention any sort of spiritual meaning behind the initiation; the early Jewish proselyte liturgy was not concerned with the state of the person's soul, only the initiation into the community. Cohen notes that it is not until the seventh century that eternal, or spiritual, aspects of the Jewish proselyte liturgy are seen. As we clearly saw in the case of Aphrahat, many of the Syriac speaking Christians did associate the baptismal ritual with Jewish circumcision, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to make the connection between the specific act of anointing and the act of circumcision, except in the case of Ephrem, who is more likely looking at the meaning of circumcision, as opposed to the practice itself. It is more likely that someone like Aphrahat was viewing the entire baptismal rite as the Christian equivalent to the Jewish initiation, which included circumcision.

Thomas M. Finn argues that the double pre-baptismal unctions found in Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia were originally united as one unction, though they were separated in time, just not in symbolism or effect, based on a semantic and ecclesial approach that points to discrepancies in Chrysostom's text for evidence of a single anointing origin.

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280 Finn, Thomas M. The Liturgy of Baptism in the Baptismal Instructions of St. John Chrysostom, 119.
Finn shows that the title of the minister for the first pre-baptismal anointing is the 'priest' (ὁ ἱερεύς). Finn then points to third instruction of the Papadopoulos-Kerameus series of Chrysostom's work, which says that it is God himself who anoints by the hand of the priest, and to second instruction of Stronikita series that states: "the priest anoints you on the forehead with the oil of the spirit and signs you [with the sign of the cross]." Finn notes that Chrysostom often uses the term 'priest,' but really means 'bishop,' and goes on to argue that the second anointing could not have been performed by the bishop because "…He [the bishop] causes your whole body to be anointed with that oil oil of the spirit." Finn concludes that because there is not a change in minister between the anointings, that they are theologically understood as being part of the same rite, meaning that they originated from a single anointing.

Paul F. Bradshaw first proposes that the case could be that the practice of anointing heads and whole body, as seen in John Chrysostom's baptismal liturgy, was imported from Jerusalem into the Syrian rite at the same time as the post-baptismal unction and placed immediately before the immersion. Bradshaw notes that if this hypothesis is correct, it would mean that Chrysostom is building upon a rite that had only one anointing of the head alone that took place prior to the consecration of the water. However, Bradshaw then contrasts the custom known to Chrysostom with Pseudo-Dionysius and the rites found in East Syria and later Byzantine practice to argue that

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281 Ibid., 125.
282 Chrysostom, Baptismal Instructions 11.27.
283 Chrysostom, Baptismal Instructions 2.22.
284 Chrysostom, Baptismal Instruction 2.24.
285 Finn, The Liturgy of Baptism in the Baptismal Instructions of St. John Chrysostom, 127; Finn's argument assumes a more formalized ecclesiology that may not have been present to the fourth century Chrysostom. It is likely that Chrysostom's interchangeability between the terms 'priest' and 'bishop' could be the result of the priestly role not being well defined in Chrysostom's time and place.
286 Bradshaw, Reconstructing Early Christian Worship, 91.
287 Ibid.
Chrysostom shows continuity with earlier varied traditions of the region, where some communities knew of a head and body anointing associated with healing, while others had just an anointing of the head associated with the Messiah.\textsuperscript{288}

Bradshaw goes on to finally argue that Chrysostom's rite is usually thought to be the result of a transfer from an earlier association with a single pre-baptismal anointing only that was split into two anointings,\textsuperscript{289} though if one traces Chrysostom's liturgical parentage to one of the earlier varied traditions of this region, the \textit{Acts of Judas Thomas} and the \textit{Didascalia} for example, then it is not so much a matter of development as it is a continuing fidelity to an older tradition.\textsuperscript{290}

Juliette Day argues that the different uses of the term 'seal' in Cyril of Jerusalem's \textit{Catechetical Lectures}\textsuperscript{291} and \textit{Mystagogical Catechesis},\textsuperscript{292} as well as Cyril's explanation of the nature of the function of the oil, shows the beginnings of the exorcistic anointing associated with baptism in Syria.\textsuperscript{293} Day argues that only one liturgical tradition can be associated with Jerusalem based on fourth and fifth century evidence.\textsuperscript{294} However, it is likely that the Jerusalem rite and the rites known to the pilgrims interacted and influenced one another with relation to interpretation, which could have changed the nature of the rite itself. The liturgy of the second and third centuries, as well as the beginning of the fourth, was much more local and fluid than the way we think of and experience liturgy today, though second and third century liturgical variances can be seen as early as the

\textsuperscript{288} Ibid., 91-2.
\textsuperscript{290} Bradshaw, \textit{Reconstructing Early Christian Worship}, 91-2.
\textsuperscript{291} See Cyril of Jerusalem, \textit{Catechetical Lectures} 1.2 (sign of ownership), 3.4 (the entire rite), 4.14 (protection from evil through a sealing with the cross) 5.6 (Christian counterpart to circumcision).
\textsuperscript{292} See \textit{Mystagogical Catechesis} 2.3 (oil in relation to exorcism), 4.1 (post-baptismal anointing).
\textsuperscript{294} Ibid., 70-1.


*Didascalia Apostolorum* and the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, showing that the Syrian rites (Greek and Syriac) were most likely only briefly, if ever, liturgically united.

**West Syrian Rites**

**Cyril of Jerusalem**

Cyril of Jerusalem's (313-386) only surviving literary work is his *Catechetical Lectures*, which provides a view into the fourth century baptismal liturgy of Jerusalem. Cyril's description of the liturgy includes a pre-baptismal anointing of the whole body and a post-baptismal anointing ritual that is explained in various ways. Cyril's writings share similarities with both the Eastern and Western baptismal rites.

The full body pre-baptismal anointing occurs inside the baptistery after the initiate has been stripped off his or her clothing and acts as an exorcism, as well as a symbol of the initiate's share in the life of Christ. Cyril describes Jesus Christ as the olive tree onto whom those who are baptized are grafted and reunited with during the baptismal ceremony:

...Jesus Christ, who is the cultivated olive tree. For you have been separated from the wild olive tree and grafted on the cultivated tree, and given a share in the richness of the true olive.

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296 Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 2.3.


The 'true olive' reference sounds similar to the East Syrian 'olive tree of the Church' tropes. Cyril also explains that the exorcised oil acts as a fiery purificant that cleanses the person of sin before baptism, as well as wards off the Evil One.²⁹⁹

The post-baptismal anointing found in Cyril's writings is modeled after the Spirit's descent onto Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan.³⁰⁰ Cyril explains that Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit, which he also links to David's reference to the 'oil of gladness' found in Psalm 45:6–7.³⁰¹ The 'oil of gladness' shows that the neophytes have become sharers in Christ:

…”so too in the matter of anointing, Christ was anointed with the spiritual oil of gladness because he is the author of spiritual joy; and you have been anointed with chrism because you have become fellows and sharers of Christ.³⁰²

Cyril associates protective qualities with the post-baptismal anointing in conjunction with the liturgical practice of anointing the faculties, which is similar to the Canons of Hippolytus and Ambrose of Milan.³⁰³ Cyril anoints the neophyte on the forehead, ears, nostrils, and chest.³⁰⁴ All of the anointings have specific meanings and uses, some of which are associated with Old Testament typologies, while others are clearly New Testament references.³⁰⁵ Cyril explains the anointing of the faculties as a

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²⁹⁹ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures 2.3.
³⁰⁰ Is 61:1; Cf. Lk 4:18; Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures 3.1.
³⁰¹ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures 3.2.
³⁰² Ibid.
³⁰³ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures 3.4. While the practice itself is similar between Cyril, Ambrose, and the Canons of Hippolytus, the faculties that are anointed are different; Cf. Ambrose, On the Sacraments I.2-3, Canons of Hippolytus 19.
³⁰⁴ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures 3.4.
³⁰⁵ Ibid., quoted in Yarnold, The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation, 81-2: "First you were anointed on the forehead so that you might lose the shame which Adam, the first transgressor, everywhere bore with him (Gen 4:15), and so that you might 'with unveiled face behold the glory of the Lord' (2 Cor 3:18). Next you were anointed on the ears, that you might acquire ears which will hear those divine mysteries of which Isaiah said: 'The Lord has given me an ear to hear with' (Is 50:4, LXX). Again, the Lord Jesus in the gospel said: 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear' (Mt 11:15). Then you were anointed on the nostrils, so that after receiving the divine chrism you might say: 'We are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are
form of armor in conjunction with the Holy Spirit anointing Jesus at his baptism, which provided protection for Christ in the desert against the enemy.  

The baptismal anointing, explains Cyril, is prefigured in the Old Testament in the typology of the High Priest. Cyril explains that the washing and anointing of Aaron and Solomon were prefigurements of the anointing of Christ before the incarnation. For the neophyte, however, Christ is the beginning of salvation that is shown in the anointing.

Similar to what we will see in John Chrysostom, Cyril explains the anointing in both physical and spiritual terms. The anointing is seen as the "spiritual preserver of the body, and the salvation of the soul." We also see a similarity between Cyril of Jerusalem and Gregory of Nyssa regarding the connection between the oil and the Eucharist, which was also seen in Cyprian of Carthage. Cyril paraphrases the Septuagint version of Isaiah 25:6–7 for a Scriptural explanation of the sacramental practice:

'They will drink of wine and gladness, and be anointed with chrism.' To convince you utterly, hear what he says about the sacramental nature of this chrism: 'Give all these things to the nations, for the Lord's council is to all nations.'

Cyril places a large theological weight on the baptismal chrism. He explains that the chrism is what allows the new Christian to be named as such, as a child is given a

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306 Ibid.
307 Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures 3.6.
308 Ibid.
309 Ibid.
310 Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, 3.7.
311 Is 25:6–7 (LXX paraphrased).
312 Is 25.7 (LXX); Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures 3.7, quoted in Yarnold, The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation, 83.
namesake at birth.\textsuperscript{313} The title of 'Christian' can only be given to the baptized person who has been anointed.\textsuperscript{314}

\textit{John Chrysostom}

John Chrysostom (347-407) was baptized in 369 and made a bishop and patriarch of Constantinople in 398. The majority of Chrysostom's baptismal descriptions are found in his \textit{Baptismal Homilies}, composed between 386 and 397. Three authentic compilations of Chrysostom's \textit{Baptismal Homilies}\textsuperscript{315} were recently discovered; the two that are referenced here are from the Papadopoulos-Kerameus (388) and the Stavronikita (ca. 390) compilations.\textsuperscript{316} Chrysostom's description of baptism includes only two anointings, both of which occur prior to the baptism, the first of which was a consignation on the forehead, and the second was a full body anointing. The chrism used in the baptismal anointings is, "a mixture of olive oil and unguent; the unguent is for the bride, the oil is for the athlete."\textsuperscript{317} The use of oil in marriage rituals and for athletes is common to Greek culture.

Unique to Chrysostom, and the cause for much speculation, is the absence of a post-baptismal anointing and the association of the Holy Spirit with the water, though it is likely that Chrysostom associated the Holy Spirit with the entire rite of baptism, as we see in the Cappadocians. Chrysostom associates the Holy Spirit with the sealing in his

\textsuperscript{313} Cyril of Jerusalem, \textit{Catechetical Lectures} 3.5.
\textsuperscript{314} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{315} Scholars often refer to the Homilies as 'Instructions.' They are the same thing.
\textsuperscript{316} The similarities are great between the two compilations with regard to the interpretation of the baptismal anointing. The differences are minor liturgical variances, such as when the initiate is to kneel in the context of the rite.
\textsuperscript{317} Chrysostom, \textit{Baptismal Homily III.27} (Papadopoulos-Kerameus 3), quoted in E.C. Whitaker, \textit{Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy}, Revised and expanded by Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 43; Ferguson notes that Chrysostom is the first attestation of 'myron,' (perfumed oil) used in Antiochene pre-baptismal anointing. Ferguson, \textit{Baptism in the Early Church}, 540.
"And what is 'anointed' and 'sealed'? The giving of the Spirit by whom he did both these things."

Chrysostom understands baptism in terms of a cosmic battle or a spiritual contest, as well as the direct imitation of Jesus's baptism in the Jordan. The first anointing acts as the seal for the contract that the initiate made to Christ, which angers Satan because of the change of allegiance. The first anointing, or consignation, also acts as a marking of God's name that deflects Satan's angry gaze, allowing the initiate to confront the Enemy as athletes of Christ. Much of the language is reminiscent of the gladiatorial style games, which would have been present in fourth century Antioch and Constantinople. The protective quality connects the consignation and the full body anointing.

The second anointing occurs inside the baptistery after the baptizand has been stripped of his or her clothing. Chrysostom mentions a heavenly ascent in conjunction with the nakedness in passing:

Then after this [the consignation] at the appointed hour of the night, he strips you of all your clothes, and as if he were about to lead you into heaven itself by means of these rites…

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319 Chrysostom, *Baptismal Homily* II.22-3 (*Stavronikita* 2).
322 Chrysostom, *Baptismal Homily* II.23 (*Stavronikita* 2), quoted in Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation*, 167: "Now the bishop knows that the Enemy is enraged and is sharpening his teeth going around like a roaring lion, seeing that the former victims of his tyranny have suddenly defected. Renouncing him, they have changed their allegiance and publicly enlisted with Christ. It is for this reason that the bishop anoints you on your forehead and marks you with the seal, to make the devil turn away his eyes. He does not dare to look at you directly because he sees the light blazing from your head and blinding his eyes. From that day onwards you will confront him in battle, and this is why the bishop anoints you as athletes of Christ before leading you into the spiritual arena."
The heavenly ascent is also understood in terms of Paradise: "But why naked? He reminds you of your former nakedness, when you were in Paradise and you were not ashamed…"\textsuperscript{325}

The second anointing also acts as armor against the devil's weapons:

he [the bishop] prepares to anoint your whole body with this spiritual oil so that his unction may armour all your limbs and make them invulnerable to any weapons the Enemy may hurl.\textsuperscript{326}

Chrysostom's understanding of the imitation of Christ manifests itself in a heavenly duplication of the rite. In other terms, what occurs physically on earth occurs simultaneously in the spiritual realm of heaven.\textsuperscript{327} The flesh is associated with the water, but the eyes of faith see the Spirit.\textsuperscript{328} Similarly, when the initiate is anointed, he or she feels the physical anointing, but faith allows them to enter with Christ into the contest with the devil, which happens in the spiritual realm.\textsuperscript{329}

\textbf{Theodore of Mopsuestia}

The majority of Theodore of Mopsuestia's (350-428) baptismal descriptions come to us from his \textit{Baptismal Homilies}, which are believed by most scholars to have been delivered while he was still a presbyter at Antioch, though some scholars place them during his episcopate in Mopsuestia (392-428).\textsuperscript{330} Bradshaw notes that the question of where the \textit{Baptismal Homilies} were given also has some relation to the question of the authenticity of the description of the baptismal rite that refers to a post-baptismal

\textsuperscript{325} Chrysostom, \textit{Baptismal Homily} III.27 (Papadopoulos-Kerameus 3), quoted in Whitaker, \textit{Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy}, 43.

\textsuperscript{326} Chrysostom, \textit{Baptismal Homily} II.24 (Stavronikita 2), quoted in Yarnold, \textit{The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation}, 167; Cf. Chrysostom, \textit{Baptismal Homily} III.27 (Papadopoulos-Kerameus 3).

\textsuperscript{327} Chrysostom, \textit{Baptismal Homily} III.12 (Papadopoulos-Kerameus 3).

\textsuperscript{328} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{329} See Chrysostom, \textit{Baptismal Homily} II.23 (Stavronikita 2).

anointing of the forehead associated with the gift of the Holy Spirit because the practice is not mentioned by Theodore’s contemporary, John Chrysostom, or any other Syrian source in the first five centuries with the exception of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which is similar only in practice and not in meaning.  

Bradshaw speculates that this discrepancy is possibly an interpolation or innovation that eventually became a standard part of the later Syrian baptismal rites; or it could be that it is not a literal anointing with oil.

Similar to Chrysostom, Theodore references a double pre-baptismal anointing, separated by a linen cloth that is spread on the forehead, symbolizing freedom. It is likely that the first baptismal anointing occurred on the day prior to the baptism. The first anointing is performed by the bishop with the 'oil of anointing,' which comes after the renunciation of Satan:

Then he signs your forehead with the oil of anointing saying: 'N. is signed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' This is the first instalment of the sacrament he is administering to you.

Theodore uses the context of the first post-baptismal anointing as the platform for explaining the necessity of the Trinity for Christians:

He does so 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,' because he must begin the sacrament with the name from which you hope to

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333 Theodore, *Baptismal Homily* II.19; Meyers argues that Theodore’s language sounds like a two part liturgical rite because of the orarium’s (linen cloth) placement on the head after the signing and before the full body anointing. See Meyers, “The Structure of the Syrian Baptismal Rite,” 37; Bradshaw notes that Theodore understands all of the baptismal anointings to be taking place within the context of the same baptismal rite. See Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship*, 89.

334 Theodore, *Baptismal Homily* III.2, quoted in Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, 49: "These then are the effects of the sealing, and you know all you need to know about the ceremony, for I described it yesterday. Today I must explain the next ceremonies…"

receive all these favours. Already he is prompting you to invoke the Trinity; you must look to it and live your life according to its will in preference to everything else.336

It is the context of the first unction that Theodore associates the 'seal' or 'mark' of the initiate as both soldiers and sheep of Christ: "The seal that you receive at this point [after the renunciation] marks you out forever as the sheep of Christ, the soldier of the King of Heaven."337

The seal provides the mark of ownership and provides protection. The seal is what allows the initiate to participate in the rest of the sacraments, "and so acquire the full armour of the Spirit and your share in the heavenly blessings."338 Finn notes that even though Theodore uses the term 'signed' instead of 'anointed,' for the first anointing, the formula is identical to Chrysostom's first anointing formula.339

The second pre-baptismal anointing described by Theodore was a full body unction associated with a garment of immortality that is completed in the baptismal bath, which occurs directly after the anointing:

First you strip completely…When you have done this, you are anointed all over with the oil of anointing in the prescribed manner. This is a sign of the garment of immortality you will receive through baptism…When this anointing is conferred upon you, the bishop begins the ceremony with the words: 'N. is anointed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'; and the appointed ministers anoint your body all over…340

After the triple immersion, Theodore describes a second sealing that is performed by the bishop. The second sealing, or the post-baptismal, anointing is associated directly

336 Ibid.
337 Ibid.
338 Theodore, Baptismal Homily II.20, quoted in Whitaker, Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy, 49.
339 See Finn, The Liturgy of Baptism in the Baptismal Instructions of St. John Chrysostom, 127.
340 Theodore, Baptismal Homily III.8, quoted in Whitaker, Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy, 49.
with the Holy Spirit's descent onto Christ at his baptism in the Jordan. Theodore explains that Jesus's experience of the Spirit in the Jordan:

shows that the Holy Spirit never leaves him, just as the anointing attaches to those who are anointed by men with oil and never leaves them. You too, then, must be sealed on the forehead.  

Lampe argues that Theodore's post-baptismal anointing was a sign of the imparting of the Holy Spirit, not necessarily the bestowal of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is intimately related to the baptismal water and the post-baptismal sealing, while the first pre-baptismal sealing is Christic in nature. However, all of the actions, anointing, baptizing, sealing, are done using the Trinitarian formula, which reflects the Trinitarian developments in fourth century Antioch with regard to the baptismal liturgy.

Apostolic Constitutions

The Apostolic Constitutions, also known as the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles according to Clement, is a composite work composed in Greek that makes considerable use of the Didaché, which is probably Syrian, the Didascalia, which is Syrian, and the Apostolic Tradition, which is generally accepted as Roman in origin. Grisbrooke argues that this is a controversial work of propaganda with Syrian origins because of its use of the Syrian calendar.

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341 Theodore, Baptismal Homily III.29, quoted in Whitaker, Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy, 50.
343 See Theodore Baptismal Homily III.8; The full body anointing seems to be seen as part of the water rite.
344 See Theodore, Baptismal Homily III.29.
345 See Theodore, Baptismal Homily II.17-20.
Three accounts of baptism are found in the *Apostolic Constitutions*: Book III.16-18 is adapted from the *Didascalia Apostolorum* 16; Book VII.22 is adapted from the *Didaché* 7.1; and Book VII.42 is adapted from the *Apostolic Tradition* 20-21. Book VII speaks of a single anointing associated with the Holy Spirit that follows the profession of faith and precedes the consecration of the water. Bradshaw notes the confusing manner in which the compiler of the *Apostolic Constitutions* reworked the baptismal instruction of the *Didascalia Apostolorum*. Logan notes that the compiler of the *Apostolic Constitutions* understood the Coptic *Didaché* prayer and Ignatius to be alluding to a post-baptismal anointing with myron.

Book III incorporates the anointing from the bishop during the imposition of hands in relation to the anointing of kings and priests and the incorporation into the royal priesthood of the Church:

> But the bishop shall only anoint their head during the laying-on of hands, as was formerly done for kings and priests; not because those who are now baptized are ordained priests, but because as anointed ones in the following of the anointed one, they are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, the Church of God…

The bishop anoints the heads of both men and women, "as a type of the baptism of the Spirit"; however, the female deacon seems to confer the seal directly after the bath, implying that it was a full body anointing, while the second post-baptismal anointing is

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349 *Apostolic Constitutions* VII.22, 42.
350 Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship*, 92. Bradshaw interprets the *Apostolic Constitutions* III to include two anointings of the head, one by the deacon and one by the bishop, as well as a full body anointing.
reserved for the bishop. The compiler goes on to explain in Book III that: "the oil [is] in place of the holy Spirit, the seal [is] in place of the cross, and the chrism confirms the confession." Book VII also seems to incorporate a pre-baptismal anointing and a sealing with chrism, signifying the Holy Spirit and the "seal of the covenants." However, a caveat is mentioned in Book VII, showing that the water bath is completed without the oil in the case that oil is not present and the person fears physical death, which leads to the theological conclusion that the water is what seals the baptism:

But if there be neither oil nor chrism, the water is sufficient both for the anointing and for the sealing, and for the confession [of faith] of him who is dying, or rather is dying together [with Christ].

A little later in Book VII, the pre-baptismal anointing is alluded to again in the blessing of the oil, which shows a purgative effect.

The post-baptismal anointing accounted for in book VII incorporates the smell of the chrism with the knowledge of the Gospel:

…the Lord of all, the scatterer of the scent of the knowledge of the gospel in all the nations, grant now that this chrism may be efficacious on him that is baptized, that so the sweet odour of your Christ may continue upon him firm and fixed…

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354 Apostolic Constitutions III.16.4.
355 Apostolic Constitutions III.17.1, quoted in Grisbrooke, The Liturgical Portions of the Apostolic Constitutions, 64.
358 Apostolic Constitutions, VII. 42.3.
359 Apostolic Constitutions VII.44.2, quoted in Grisbrooke, The Liturgical Portions of the Apostolic Constitutions, 69.
The odor as an identifying factor in someone's identity seems to be reminiscent of the ancient Hebrew understanding that the odor of the God of Israel is incorporated into the anointing of holy objects and people, which makes them His property.\textsuperscript{360}

\textit{The Council of Laodicea}

The Council of Laodicea (ca. 343-381) was a regional council comprised of around 30 bishops from Asia Minor who met in Laodicea, Phrygia. Canons 7 and 48 show the importance, as well as the uses, of the chrism in fourth century Western Syria. This council also shows the ways in which the Church tried to unify the anointing practice in the baptismal liturgy.

Canon 48 makes the post-baptismal anointing an official part of the liturgy:

"Those who have been baptized should be anointed with heavenly chrism after their baptism, and become participants in the kingdom of Christ."\textsuperscript{361} Language referring to the royal anointing of Christ is used, though not necessarily the language of the anointing of priests and kings that is found in other baptismal descriptions.\textsuperscript{362} Canon 48 also shows that the post-baptismal anointing was not practiced everywhere in the West Syrian rite, which we also saw in the case of John Chrysostom.\textsuperscript{363}

Canon 7 shows that chrismation was used apart from baptism, though still in an initiatory fashion, by those returning from heretical sects:

Concerning those who return from heresies—Nocatians, Photinians, or Quartodecimans—whether catechumens or faithful in these sects, let them not be received before having renounced all heresies, and in particular those they have left. Those among them who are called faithful in these sects may participate in

\textsuperscript{360} See the section pertaining to Old Testament anointing practices.
\textsuperscript{362} Mitchell, \textit{Baptismal Anointing}, 54.
\textsuperscript{363} Ferguson, \textit{Baptism in the Early Church}, 574.
the holy mystery, after having learned the creed of the faith and having been
anointed with holy chrism.\textsuperscript{364} 

Theodoret mentions that the reason these persons are not rebaptized and only
given the chrism is because these particular heretical groups did not use chrism in their
regular baptismal liturgies.\textsuperscript{365} Theodoret's explanation shows that by the late fourth
century, the West Syrian understanding was that the chrismation completed the baptism,
which is not seen in the East Syrian rite at during this time.

The Cappadocian Fathers

Basil of Caesarea

Basil (ca. 330-379) was baptized shortly after returning home to Caesarea in ca.
356, was ordained a presbyter in ca. 364, and was ordained bishop of Caesarea in 370.
Basil mentions baptismal anointing when speaking about passing down traditions in the
Church, though with no clues that lead to a baptismal sequence or the liturgical
association of the baptismal anointing:

\begin{quote}
We also bless the water used for baptism as well as the oil of anointing and the
very person being baptized. Now where is it written that this should be done? Is
it not by reason of a tradition that is secret and mystical? Even the anointing with
oil, where is this written down? The triple immersion? From where does that
come? And everything else that is done at baptism: for example, the renunciation
of Satan and his angels?...\textsuperscript{366}
\end{quote}

Basil's affiliation with the Trinitarian debates can be seen in his baptismal
theology:

\begin{quote}
If then in baptism separating the Spirit from the Father and from the Son is
dangerous for the person who baptizes and harms the person being baptized, how
then would it be safe for us to separate the Spirit from the Father and the
Son...Just as we believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, so it is that
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{365} See Theodoret, \textit{Compendium of Heretical Stories} 3.5.
baptism is conferred in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. First comes the profession of faith which leads to salvation. Yet baptism, the seal of our assent, closely follows it. \[^{367}\]

Basil refers to the baptism itself as a type of seal and is wary of separating the action of the Holy Spirit from the baptism, which was occurring in heretical sects, who only baptized in the name of Jesus. It is likely that Basil understands the baptismal rite to incorporate anointings as part of the rite, instead of as separate chrismations, which we see most profoundly in the Jerusalem and Western rites:

It is by means of baptism, which ransoms captives, which remits debts, which is the death of sin, which is a spiritual rebirth, a shining garment, an unbreakable seal, a chariot to heaven, the guarantee of the kingdom, the grace of adoption… \[^{368}\]

All of the liturgical actions are seen as baptism.

**Gregory Nazianzus**

Gregory Nazianzus (ca. 329 - ca. 390) was bishop of Constantinople during the Council of 381. Gregory does not speak at length about the baptismal anointing or the seal, though he interprets the entire baptismal ceremony as a type of Illumination, which is described as: "a Gift, Grace, Baptism, Anointing, Illumination, the Garment of Immortality, the Bath of New Birth, the Seal—in short, all that is excellent." \[^{369}\]

Much like Basil, Gregory does not view the anointing and sealing as separate rites apart from baptism; however, he does prescribe functions, or specific meanings, for the

parts of baptism, in which the anointing is associated with the priestly and royal anointings of the Old Testament, and the seal is understood in terms of preservation.\(^{370}\)

Gregory often uses familiar Jewish typologies to illustrate the meanings of liturgical actions. For example the Jewish Festival of Lights is described as having its origins in Christ, which is a link to John 1:9.\(^{371}\) Basil and Gregory both use the imagery of the chariot\(^ {372}\) leading to God as part of the baptismal liturgy.\(^ {373}\) The protection aspect of the consignment is described in terms of the Passover:

> And if you have fortified yourself through baptism, and if you guard against the future with the most beautiful and secure help for you, namely consigning your soul and body with the anointing and the Spirit—like Israel, who once protected the firstborn on that bloody night…\(^ {374}\)

**Gregory of Nyssa**

Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 330-ca. 395) was the younger brother of Basil of Caesarea, who also acted as one of Gregory's tutors. His friend, Gregory of Nazianzus, also influenced Gregory of Nyssa. Along with Basil and Gregory Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa fought the Arians in Cappadocia, Antioch, and became one of the staunch defenders of the orthodox faith. Gregory of Nyssa's explanations baptism shows how the Trinitarian controversies lead to the articulation of orthodox sacramental theology. While Gregory speaks at length about baptism, he rarely mentions the anointing as a separate liturgical action, though evidence from his writings does show that he knew of some sort of baptismal anointing practice.

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\(^{370}\) Gregory Nazianzus, *Oration* 40.IV.

\(^{371}\) Gregory Nazianzus, *Oration* 40.III.

\(^{372}\) 2 Kgs 2:11.

\(^{373}\) Basil, *Homily on Baptism* 13.5; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 40.III.

Gregory is particularly interested in preserving the Trinitarian nature of baptism, especially with regard to the workings of the Holy Spirit. Gregory explains that the Holy Spirit is present in the entire baptismal ceremony. While many other Christians associate the Spirit with the final baptismal anointing and the completion of the baptism, Gregory explains that the Spirit blesses the body of the person in the bath, as well as completes the baptism, showing the Spirit's role in the entire baptismal ceremony.

While not explained specifically in relation to baptism, Gregory's understanding of Christ's anointing as King is most likely understood in a baptismal context. The anointing of Christ by the Holy Spirit is the prototype for Christian understanding of anointing, which is understood in Trinitarian terms:

That Spirit is indisputably a princely Spirit, a quickening Spirit, the controlling and sanctifying force of all creation, the Spirit that “worketh all in all” as He wills. Thus we conceive no gap between the anointed Christ and His anointing, between the King and His sovereignty, between Wisdom and the Spirit of Wisdom,…should believe on the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

It is interesting that the Spirit is also associated as a King, which is most likely done to show the connection between the Holy Spirit and Christ. Gregory also explains that Kingship of Christ in his anointing is understood only in relation to the Holy Spirit:

Why, that the Unction is not a thing alien to that Kingship, and so that the Spirit is not to be ranked in the Trinity as anything strange and foreign either. For the Son is King, and His living, realized, and personified Kingship is found in the Holy

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375 Gregory of Nyssa, Letter 5: To Those who Doubt that His Faith is Orthodox, quoted in Johnson, Worship in the Early Church Vol. 2, 157: "The power that gives life to those who are born again from death to eternal life comes through the Holy Trinity to those who having faith, are judged worthy of his grace. Likewise, imperfect is the grace when one of these names—whichever it may be—is omitted during the baptism of salvation...We believe in the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the source of life, and in his Son, who us the author of life, as the apostle says, and in God's Holy Spirit concerning whom the Lord said, 'It is the Spirit that gives life' (Jn 6:63)."

376 Gregory of Nyssa, Sermon on the Day of Lights on Which Our Lord was Baptized 69 C.2.

Spirit, Who anoints the Only-begotten, and so makes Him the Anointed, and the King of all things that exist. If, then, the Father is King, and the Only-begotten is King, and the Holy Ghost is the Kingship, one and the same definition of Kingship must prevail throughout this Trinity, and the thought of “unction” conveys the hidden meaning that there is no interval of separation between the Son and the Holy Spirit.\(^{378}\)

This passage shows how Gregory incorporates the unction into the Trinitarian debates as a way to explain orthodoxy with the use of a practice that would have been understood by most Christians who had witnessed the baptismal anointing as part of initiation. Gregory defines the role of the Spirit also as King to show the equality of the persons of the Trinity. The unction of Christ by the Spirit is the arena for which Gregory is able to show the equality of the Son and Spirit. With this in mind, the unction of the baptizand in the baptismal ceremony can also be seen as Trinitarian, as we see in Basil, instead of only understood as a Pneumatic or Christic event.

Because royal language is mentioned specifically in relation to the consignation:

"Those who are poor, those who have nothing, hasten to the distribution of the royal gifts. O sheep, hasten to the signation and to the sign of the cross which brings strength and healing to those in distress,"\(^{379}\) it seems likely that the consignation found in the baptismal liturgy was also understood in relation to Christ's anointing as a King with relation to the Holy Spirit.

Gregory links the baptismal anointing and the Eucharist with the protective quality of the Holy Spirit.\(^{380}\)

Then he prepares the sacramental table which is just the opposite of the table of demons. For it is through idolatry that the demons, who are opposed by the table


\(^{380}\) See also, Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing*, 53.
of the Spirit, strike down human life. This is why your head was anointed with the oil of the Spirit. In addition, there is the wine which gladdens the heart…

Gregory mentions the wine and oil together in his account of the mystery that occurs in sacramental blessings as well, showing the link between the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.

Though Gregory of Nyssa's accounts of baptism rarely mention an anointing, we do see unction being used in ways that coincide with other Antiochene baptismal accounts. The theological grounds for Gregory's anointing references is couched in the articulation of orthodox Trinitarian theology, which shows a way in which the practice of anointing was constituted into the Trinitarian debates of the time, especially with regard to the equality of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Conclusions

Scholars have crafted theories, many of which are conflicting, to explain the differences in baptismal anointing attestations in West Syria and the surrounding areas. It is likely that elements of most of these theories are accurate, though there is no way to say for sure given the extent limited resources. The baptismal anointing examples found in the fourth century West Syria shows the amount of diversity within a single region. It is possible that some of the diversity can be accounted for as by products of liturgical development that occurred in the region during the extensive Trinitarian debates, though we are unable to know for sure how or to what extent the liturgy evolved, only that there are differences.

382 Gregory of Nyssa, *Sermon on the Say of Lights on Which Our Lord Was Baptized* 69.C.2, quoted in Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church* Vol. 2, 155: "Initially it is ordinary bread. But once the mystery sanctifies it, it becomes and is called the Body of Christ. The same is also true for the sacramental oil and the wine; of little values before the blessing, after their sanctification by the Spirit each works in a wondrous way."
The differences in the baptismal liturgy are the greatest amongst the West Syrians, though some similarities can be found. Cyril of Jerusalem's account contains a full body pre-baptismal anointing that acted as exorcistic, or purifying, with a Christic association. His account also contains a post-baptismal anointing associated with the Holy Spirit and Christ that acts as protection for the Neophyte. John Chrysostom only attests to two pre-baptismal anointings, both of which are associated with Christ. The first acts as a sealing, and the second as protection. Theodore of Mopsuestia's account contains two pre-baptismal anointings, the first of the head, and the second of the whole body, as well as a post-baptismal anointing. Both of the pre-baptismal anointings are Trinitarian, while the first functions as a sealing and protection, the second acts to clothe the person in the garment of immortality. The post-baptismal anointing found in Theodore's writings is similar to the Western post-baptismal anointing; it is associated with the Holy Spirit and functions as a sealing. Book III of the *Apostolic Constitutions* contains a pre-baptismal anointing and two post-baptismal anointings, which is also reminiscent of the Western baptismal rites. The pre-baptismal anointing is accompanied with an imposition of hands and functions as an initiation into the royal priesthood. The first post-baptismal anointing functions to confirm the confession made in baptism and is associated with the Holy Spirit. The second post-baptismal anointing is Christic and functions as a seal. Book VI of the *Apostolic Constitutions* provides only a single pre-baptismal anointing and a single post baptismal anointing. The pre-baptismal anointing is associated with the Holy Spirit and functions as a sealing. The post-baptismal anointing portrays the scent of the knowledge of the Gospel and is associated with Christ.
While the Cappadocians give us little evidence of the baptismal liturgy itself, they do give us insight into how the Trinitarian controversies played a role in interpreting the baptismal liturgy. Unfortunately, in many cases it is hard to tell how the unction itself is being interpreted because it is not described in any great detail. However, all of the Cappadocians associate the anointing with the Trinity, Gregory Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa also associate the anointing with a priestly or kingly anointing. The seal acts as a seal for Basil and Gregory Nazianzus, and for Gregory of Nyssa the anointing acts as a preservation and protection.
CHAPTER VII

FOURTH CENTURY: LATIN REFERENCES

In the beginning of the fourth century, baptismal anointing references were not as common in the West as in the East and Syria. It is not until the end of the fourth century that we have firm evidence for the practice of exorcized oil in preparation for baptism (pre-baptismal anointing), while it is still later in 416 with the *Letter of Innocent I to Decentius*, that we see our first reference to a double-post baptismal anointing, first by the presbyter and the second by the bishop with a Pneumatic understanding.\(^3\) Western liturgical sources rely on both John 3 and Romans 6 for baptismal theology.\(^4\) As with Eastern and Syrian baptismal liturgies, Western references to baptismal anointings often mention the anointing of priests, prophets, and kings of the Old Testament.

The pre-baptismal anointing in the ancient western rites was not uniformly understood theologically, and may not have been practiced by all Western Christians. The Roman rite understood the pre-baptismal anointing to be exorcistic; however, the

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\(^3\) Paul F. Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 96. We do see references to double post-baptismal anointings in the case of Hippolytus, but scholars for the most part agree that they are later interpolations of the rite.

Alexandrian and Egyptian tradition did not use the term 'oil of exorcism' in the first five centuries, only 'oil of anointing.'³⁸⁵ The Sacramentary of Sarapion calls the anointing substance 'aleimma,' or 'ointment,' and calls to mind re-creational and healing functions of the anointing.³⁸⁶

Bradshaw challenges the traditional assumption that the early Alexandrian rite was the fundamental western baptismal understanding; instead, he claims that the Alexandrian rite borrowed early from other traditions.³⁸⁷ For example, Didymus the Blind shows a Trinitarian sealing and baptism in his De Trinitate.³⁸⁸ Lampe argues that the sealing and baptism refers only to the water baptism,³⁸⁹ though Bradshaw claims that a more natural explanation is that the sealing refers to a pre-baptismal anointing accompanied by the Trinitarian formula on the basis that a similar pre-baptismal anointing practice is found in Syrian liturgies.³⁹⁰

The origin of the post-baptismal anointing is disputed amongst scholars. Johnson safely claims that it is possible that the Canons of Hippolytus and the Prayers of Sarapion are the first witnesses to a post-baptismal anointing in the Egyptian tradition.³⁹¹ Lampe's thesis that almost all Gnostic sects practiced anointing in a way to seal believers is built upon by Alastair Logan, who claims that a post-baptismal anointing existed in second

³⁸⁶ Bradshaw, "Baptismal Practice in the Alexandrian Tradition," 12.
³⁸⁷ Ibid., 5–11.
³⁸⁸ Didymus the Blind, De Trinitate 2.15.
century, went out of practice, and then reappeared in the fourth century.\textsuperscript{392} Joseph G. Mueller, S.J. shows that Lampe's, as well as Logan's, theory concerning the origins of the post-baptismal anointing in western liturgies are built upon the assumption that the Gnostics formed their practice under pagan or Jewish influence, rather than Christian.\textsuperscript{393} Mueller also points out that there is no 'orthodox' Christian evidence from the writings of theologians such as Irenaeus that points to the disputation of the anointing practices of the Gnostics and that Lampe's research was conducted prior to the popularization of the Nag Hammadi corpus.\textsuperscript{394} It is most likely that the post-baptismal anointing, much like the pre-baptismal anointing, formed organically in the West from contact with other liturgical traditions and eventually became a solidified part of the western liturgical tradition.

**Italy**

**Ambrose of Milan**

Ambrose of Milan (ca. 337-397) gives us a peek into the fourth century baptismal drama of ancient Italy, and to some extent North Africa, due to the similarities in the descriptions of liturgies from the fourth century. Ambrose's account of baptism is similar to the \textit{Apostolic Tradition}, though with some revisions. Three baptismal anointings were known in Milan around Ambrose's time: 1) an exorcistic/strengthening pre-baptismal anointing performed with olive oil, which was sometimes full body; 2) a post-baptismal anointing with chrism to confer the Holy Spirit\textsuperscript{395}; 3) another anointing with either olive oil or chrism, of which the position and purpose varies.\textsuperscript{396}

\textsuperscript{393} Mueller, "Post-Baptismal Chrismation in Second-Century Syria," 78.
\textsuperscript{394} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{395} Ambrose moves this to the consignation after the first post-baptismal anointing.
The baptismal ceremony begins with an Effeta rite that takes place outside the baptistery. The first clearly attested anointing in the baptismal ceremony is an exorcistic full body anointing, which takes place inside the baptistery. The catechumen facing west and renouncing the devil and his works follows the first anointing. The catechumen then turns toward the east and speaks his/her allegiance to Christ. After the triple immersion in the baptismal waters, chrism is poured onto the heads of the newly baptized as they emerge from the font, using the imagery of the Old Testament practice of anointing priests, prophets, and kings. The consignation follows the clothing in white garments, in which the newly baptized are signed with oil in the form of the cross using the Trinitarian formula. Ambrose describes the consignation as the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

It is unclear whether oil was included in the Effeta rite, which was modeled after Mark 7:32ff, and scholars disagree as to whether matter other than the bishop's hand was used in the Effeta rite. Yarnold argues that Ambrose's silence concerning oil or spittle with relation to this rite is not evidence that it did not exist as part of it. Mitchell similarly argues that Ambrose's silence leaves little chance that oil was part of the rite.

However, the aroma associated with the rite could be from the aromatic anointing

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399 Ambrose, *Homily* 1.5.
400 Ambrose, *Homily* 1.6.
402 Ambrose, *Homily* 3.8-10.
403 Ambrose, *Sermons on the Sacraments* III.8-10.
404 Yarnold, "The Ceremonies of Initiation in the De Sacramentis and De Mysteriis of S. Ambrose." 455.
oil on the bishop's hand, which would be evidence for an aromatic oil as part of the gesture:

He touches the nostrils so that you may receive the sweet fragrance of eternal goodness; so that you can say as the holy apostle said: 'We are the aroma of Christ to God'; and so that the full fragrance of faith and devotion may dwell in you.

Ambrose's account of baptism is the only place where the pre-baptismal unction is clearly attested to in Milan. Bradshaw questions whether Ambrose's account of baptism was an import or imitation from another location's liturgy. Ambrose explains the full body anointing using the imagery of an athlete being anointed with oil before a contest:

A Levite came to receive you, and a priest as well. You were rubbed with oil like an athlete, Christ's athlete, as though in preparation for an earthly wrestling-match, and you agreed to take on your opponent…

Ambrose's description of the pre-baptismal anointing precedes the renunciation of the devil, whereas in the *Apostolic Tradition* and the Eastern rites, it follows the renunciation. The descriptions of the full body anointing found in Ambrose and the *Apostolic Tradition* are similar to the third century Syrian examples. Bradshaw argues that this shows a liturgical development that could have travelled from East to West, or that both regions were influenced by similar uses of oil in contemporary pagan uses.

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406 2 Cor 2:15.
409 Ibid., 96.
The first post-baptismal anointing harkens back to the Old Testament language reminiscent of priestly and kingly anointing with the blessing from the priest and combines the themes of new birth and forgiveness of sins: "God the Father Almighty, who has brought you to a new birth through water and the Holy Spirit and has forgiven your sins, himself anoints you into eternal life."\(^{413}\) The anointing of Aaron by David is mentioned specifically with an explanation of why this anointing is performed on the head:

Understand why this is done, because the wise man's eyes are in his head.\(^{414}\) It flowed down into the beard – that is, unto the grace of youth – even unto Aaron's beard, for this purpose, that you may become a chosen generation, priestly precious\(^{415}\); for we are all anointed with spiritual grace unto the kingdom of God and the priesthood.\(^{416}\)

Ambrose's use of this prayer is the first time we see it used anywhere.\(^{417}\) Because the oil is described as flowing down Aaron's beard, it is likely that the oil was poured onto the initiate's head, rather than traced in the form of a cross.\(^{418}\) Ambrose interprets the post-baptismal anointing as an enrichment of the senses by grace and the embodiment of the baptismal rite, and alluding to the Song of Songs, connects the anointing with the resurrection by comparing the fragrant smell of the ointment with the odor of resurrection.\(^{419}\) The Christic function of this anointing is seen in the explanation of the

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\(^{413}\) Ambrose, *Sermons on the Sacraments* I.24, quoted in Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation*, 119.

\(^{414}\) Eccles 2:14.

\(^{415}\) 1 Pet 2:9.


\(^{419}\) Ambrose, *On the Mysteries* 6.29; Cf. Song of Songs 1:2-3.
fragrance, which, as Riley and Satterlee explain, is the symbol of the resurrected Christ.420

The second post-baptismal anointing, also known as the consignation, or sealing, is the Pneumatic act in the baptismal ceremony described by Ambrose, though a Trinitarian aspect of the rite is used in opposition to the Arians:

How? God anointed you, the Lord puts his sign on you and placed the Holy Spirit in your heart. So you received the Holy Spirit in your heart. But there is another point: just as the Holy Spirit is in your heart, so too Christ is in your heart. How can this be? You have it in the Song of Songs, where Christ says to the Church: 'Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm.' God anointed you, then, Christ put his sign on you. In what sense? You were given a sign in the form of a cross and of his passion. You received the seal in his likeness to enable you to rise again in his form and live after the model of the one who was crucified to sin and lives to God….

The spiritual sealing concludes the baptismal rite, which was performed by the bishop, and was considered a sign of possession and strengthening.422 The sealing most likely concluded an imposition of hands, similar to Tertullian, along with a second post-baptismal anointing, as in the Apostolic Tradition, though it is unclear whether oil was used in the sealing.423

Ambrose associates the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which he associates with the reading for that particular day, with the baptismal sealing:


421 Ambrose, Sermons on the Sacraments VI.6-7, quoted in Yarnold, The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation, 151.


423 Yarnold, Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation, 124-5; Yarnold mentions that a sign of the cross or a kiss could have also accompanied the imposition of hands and second post-baptismal anointing; see also, Gordon P. Jeanes, The Day Has Come!: Easter and Baptism in Zeno of Verona, The Alcuin Club (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 212.
The spiritual sealing follows. You have heard about this in the reading for today. For after the ceremonies of the font, it still remains to bring the whole to perfect fulfillment. This happens when the Holy Spirit is infused at the priest's invocation: 'the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and piety, the Spirit of holy fear'. These might be called the seven 'virtues' of the Spirit...These are the seven virtues you receive when you are sealed. For, as the holy apostle says, the wisdom of our Lord has many forms, and the wisdom of God has many forms so also the Holy Spirit is multiform and has a whole variety of virtues.424

Because the later Milanese liturgy lacks a sealing, we are unable to tell whether Ambrose reflects the Milanese usage or the Roman usage of his day.425

Zeno of Verona

Zeno (ca. 300–379 or 380) was bishop of Verona (Northern Italy) in the second half of the fourth century when Ambrose was still a civil servant, Jerome was young and experimenting with asceticism, and Augustine was a youth.426 Zeno offers us the oldest surviving collection of Latin sermons. Gordon P. Jeanes reconstructs the baptismal liturgy of 4th century Verona from Zeno's sermons, and concludes that the order of the ceremony was: first pre-baptismal anointing, renunciation, entry into the baptistery, stripping of the clothing, immersion into the baptismal waters, post-baptismal anointing, and sealing, the clothing of the neophyte in the white garment, which was followed by the neophyte's first Eucharist.427

Zeno juxtaposes Romans 6 theology with John 3:5 in his understanding of the baptismal anointing.428 Zeno also links the oil used in the pre-baptismal anointing with

426 Jeanes, *The Day has Come!* 2.
427 See Jeanes, *The Day has Come!*.
the end of winter sin: "And so today for our *competentes* the winter of sin is finished; they will rejoice in the consecrated oil..." As Jeanes notes, the dispelling of the winter sin may be referring to the devil in the rite. However, a more natural reading of the sermon shows that Zeno says to rejoice in it, not receive it, meaning that the baptizands will understand in the future what they received on Saturday in the anointing. Zeno's sermon is difficult to interpret because it is shaped by the seasons instead of liturgical structure. It is also curious that Zeno associates the forgiveness of sins with the oil of gladness, as opposed to the more common association with the oil of exorcism.

The first post-baptismal anointing found in Zeno is Pneumatic, which is understood differently than Ambrose, who sees the first post-baptismal anointing as royal and priestly. Ambrose also adds an additional post-baptismal anointing that is not found in Zeno's accounts. As in most other Western baptismal descriptions, the seal refers to the sign of the cross on the forehead.

**Egypt**

**Canons of Hippolytus**

The *Canons of Hippolytus* (ca. 360) is part of the Pseudo-Hippolytus corpus that insists on Nicene faith over Arianism. This work only survives as an Arabic translation of a Coptic version of a lost Greek original. Mitchell argues that the arrangement of the post-baptismal ceremonies in the *Canons of Hippolytus* supports the thesis that the double chrismation after baptism is a Roman ceremony in origin because

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429 Zeno, II.13, quoted in Jeanes, *The Day has Come!*, 167.
430 Jeanes, *The Day Has Come!*, 168.
431 Ibid.
433 See Jeanes, *The Day has Come!*, 184-5.
the practice is unfamiliar to the Egyptian compiler, who wished to portray the liturgical practice of his Church. Bradshaw argues that it is likely that the double post-baptismal anointing, first by the presbyter, followed by the bishop, is a later interpolation.

Prior to the anointing, the bishop exorcises the catechumens, breathes on their face, and signs their breast, forehead, ears, and nose. The bishop then blesses the oil of exorcism and gives it to the presbyter, who then stands to the left of the bishop. The oil of anointing, also called the 'oil of thanksgiving,' is then blessed and given to another presbyter, who then stands to the right of the bishop. The baptizand turns to the west, renounces Satan, and is anointed by the presbyter with the oil of exorcism. Upon ascending from the water, the presbyter anoints the forehead, mouth, breast, and all of his body with the oil of thanksgiving using the Trinitarian formula. The baptizands are then taken to the church where the bishop lays his hands upon them and invokes the Spirit and signs their forehead with the oil of anointing, followed by a kiss.

The pre-baptismal anointing with the oil of exorcism after the renunciation and before the confession of faith is the same sequence as in the Apostolic Tradition. However, the presbyter's instruction to anoint using the Trinitarian formula during the first pre-baptismal anointing is different from the Christic formula used in the Apostolic Tradition, showing evidence of the development of the Trinitarian theology with regards to baptism.

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436 Ibid., 59.
437 Bradshaw, Reconstructing Early Christian Worship, 96.
438 Canons of Hippolytus 19. The entire rite is shown in Canon 19.
439 Whitaker notes that one MS calls this the 'sign of charity.' Whitaker, Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy, 131.
440 Bradshaw, Reconstructing Early Christian Worship, 95.
It is difficult to determine whether or not the *Canons of Hippolytus* reflect the actual practice in Egypt in the fourth century or simply a fidelity to a principal source, though Bradshaw points to later Coptic rites that contains an anointing of the chest, arms, heart, and hands immediately after the profession of faith as evidence for its authenticity.\(^{441}\) Bradshaw argues that the changes that are made to the post-baptismal prescription of the *Apostolic Tradition* seem to point to an actual practice in fourth century Egypt, even though the post-baptismal unction may not have been part of the practice of the patriarchal see at Alexandria.\(^{442}\) It is likely that liturgical innovations are present in smaller diocese before they are seen in the patriarchal church, such as the see of Alexandria.\(^{443}\)

A unique parallel can be seen between the *Canons of Hippolytus* and the Jerusalem rite. Both share a common post-baptismal unction of various faculties, though they are not the same ones, and the Pneumatic function of the anointing in the Jerusalem is not found in the *Canons of Hippolytus*.\(^{444}\) The Jerusalem rite and the descriptions found in the *Canons of Hippolytus* both use the exorcized oil for the pre-baptismal anointing. These resemblances alone are not sufficient for a determinative direct relationship, but it implies the possibility of a similar source.\(^{445}\)

**Prayers of Sarapion**

Sarapion was Bishop of Thmuis (Egypt) in the fourth century. He sided with Athanasius in the Arian controversy and was a friend of St. Anthony. The *Prayers of*  

\(^{441}\) Ibid., 94. 
\(^{442}\) Ibid. 
\(^{443}\) Bradshaw, "Baptismal Practice in the Alexandrian Tradition," 16. Bradshaw notes that the same could be true in the case of the *Sacramentary of Sarapion*, but it could also be possible that it was composed or revised later in the fourth century. 
\(^{445}\) Ibid.
Sarapion, also known as the Sacramentary of Sarapion of Thmuis, were composed in Greek and originated in Egypt. The dating of the prayers is still contested, though recent scholarship has argued that the prayers for the Eucharist, ordination, initiation, burial, and the liturgy of the word could have been written and compiled by Bishop Sarapion Thmuis in the mid fourth century.\(^{446}\) The 'Sacramentary' only contains prayers; there are no rubrics to give us an explanation of the liturgical process of the anointings, though allusions to the functions of the oils do give us clues. Johnson argues that prayers 15–17, the prayers regarding baptismal anointing, represent a separate and independent stratum in the text.\(^ {447}\) Johnson goes on to argue that prayers 15–17 (the prayers regarding the oils) are from a different time as the baptismal prayers (prayers 7–11).\(^ {448}\) Barrett-Lennard acknowledges the challenges in the dating of the Prayers but concludes that the Prayers can be attributed to Sarapion of Thmuis, meaning that they should be dated between 339 and ca. 360.\(^ {449}\)

*Prayer* 15, entitled, "Prayer for the Oil of Those Being Baptized," shows the emphasis that is placed on the re-creative and healing aspects of the pre-baptismal anointing, as well as the exorcistic and purificatory qualities of the rite:\(^ {450}\)

And we anoint with this oil those who approach this divine rebirth, imploring that our Lord Christ Jesus may work in it and reveal healing and strength-producing power through this oil, and may heal their soul, body, spirit from every sign of sin and lawlessness or satanic taint, and by his own grace may grant forgiveness to them so that, having no part in sin, they will live in righteousness. And, when

\(^ {446}\) Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, 124.


\(^ {448}\) Johnson, *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis*, 137.


\(^ {450}\) Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 149.
they have been molded again through this oil and purified through the bath and renewed in the Spirit.\footnote{The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis, quoted in Whitaker, Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy, 126.}

As seen in the Canons of Hippolytus (Canon 19), Sarapion's Prayer 16, entitled, "Prayer for the Chrism with which the Baptized are Anointed," is associated with a post-baptismal anointing, explicitly seen as a 'gift' or a 'seal': "they may also become sharers of the gift of the Holy Spirit and, having been sealed in this seal…"\footnote{Ibid., 127.} The mention of 'chrism' in the Canons of Hippolytus and the Prayers of Sarapion could be the first attestation of a post-baptismal chrismation in the Egyptian liturgy, despite the mention of it in the Apostolic Tradition, attributed to Hippolytus.\footnote{Johnson, The Rites of Christian Initiation, 152. Various portions of the Apostolic Tradition are disputed as later editorial work, including the portion concerning the post-baptismal chrismation.} Similarly, Johnson mentions that the introduction of a post-baptismal chrismation to Theophilus of Alexandria (patriarch of Alexandria from 385-412) could also be a fourth-century addition to the Alexandrian liturgy around the same time its introduction to the Egyptian liturgy.\footnote{Ibid.}

Though it cannot be used as proof of the liturgical addition, Bradshaw points to later Coptic legends that could possibly show the memory of the fourth century addition of a post-baptismal chrismation.\footnote{Bradshaw, "Baptismal Practice in the Alexandrian Tradition," in Living Water Sealing Spirit, 97. Bradshaw writes that: "The 'Book of the Chrism' contains two legends concerning the origin of the post-baptismal anointing. The first asserts that its use was traditional at Alexandria, the chrism itself having been obtained from the embalming of Jesus, but that it eventually fell into neglect and the supply of chrism disappeared, so that Athanasius had to write to the bishop of Rome and to the patriarchs of Antioch and Constantinople asking them to compose prayers to read over the baptismal oils, Basil being credited with the composition of those adopted. The second legend…maintains that it was Theophilus who originated the use of chrism. He received from an angel the order to bring balsam trees from Jericho, plant them, extract the balsam and cook the spices, and to do this 'on the Friday of the sixth week in the monastery of St. Macarius, if possible, if not at Alexandria, according to the rite which the angel had made known. He wrote it about it to all the patriarchs.'" Quoted in Johnson, The Rites of Christian Initiation, 152.}


**Alexandria**

**Augustine of Hippo**

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) does not speak at length about baptismal anointing, or chrismation; however, we are able to get a glimpse, albeit a small glimpse, into the North African baptismal anointing procedure and theology through his work. Known to Augustine was a post-baptismal chrismation and an imposition of hands: "He was baptized, he was sanctified, he was anointed, the hand was laid upon him."\(^{456}\) No direct evidence exists that Augustine knew of a pre-baptismal unction.\(^{457}\) Augustine describes theunctions in both Christic and Pneumatic terms. It is likely that the Christic function of the oil was understood in the anointing directly after the bath, while the Pneumatic function of the oil was associated with the laying on of hands, which by this time would have incorporated the use of physical oil.

Augustine explains that the baptismal anointing is what allows us to be called 'Christian,' which is directly linked to David's anointing in the Old Testament:

>'A Psalm of David before he was anointed.'...He alone was then anointed king and priest...An anointing befits all Christians...It appears that we are the body of Christ because we are all anointed and in that body we are all both of Christ and Christ, because in a certain way the whole Christ is head and body.\(^{458}\)

The physical sign of the Cross, either in the water, on the oil, or on the foreheads of the neophytes, accompanies the spiritual grace that allows 'Christians' to be named as such.\(^{459}\)

Augustine often describes the baptismal waters as cleansing, and the oil as the joy and fire of love, which are associated with the Holy Spirit:

\(^{456}\) Augustine, *Sermon* 324, quoted in Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, 149.

\(^{457}\) Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing*, 84.


\(^{459}\) Augustine, *Tract on the Gospel of John* 118. 5, quoted in Turner, *Sources of Confirmation*, 75.
Baptism and water have come. You have been penetrated, as it were, so that you may come to the form of bread. But it is not yet bread without fire. What therefore does the fire represent? It is chrism. For the oil of our fire is the sacrament of the Holy Spirit.\footnote{Augustine, \textit{Sermon} 227. 1, quoted in Turner, \textit{Sources of Confirmation}, 15.}

Harmless notes that linking fire with chrism would have been an obvious connection for Augustine and his hearers because they used olive oil in the lamps that lit their homes and churches.\footnote{William Harmless S.J., \textit{Augustine and the Catechumenate} (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 311.} It is not uncommon to link chrism with fire, especially in the Syrian examples. Augustine also seems to be linking chrism and the Eucharist, which we have also seen in some of the Eastern and Syrian traditions.

Grace and 'sacramentality'\footnote{Augustine is one of the first to use the word 'sacramentum' in relation to baptismal anointing. His understanding of sacraments was more concerning the sacred sign and interworkings of the Spirit, which was not as defined as it is today's sacramental theology.} play a significant role in Augustine's theology pertaining to the baptismal unctions:

It is written that God anointed him with the Holy Spirit, not indeed with visible oil, but with the gift of grace, which is signified by the visible unguent with which the Church anoints the baptized. Nor indeed was Christ anointed with the Holy Spirit when at his baptism he descended upon him as a dove – then indeed his body was anointed, which he deigned to prefigure his Church: but it is to be understood of that mystic and invisible anointing by which the Word of God was made flesh…By this we confess to be born of the Holy Spirit from the Virgin Mary.\footnote{Augustine, \textit{De Trinitate}, 15.46, quoted in Mitchell, \textit{Baptismal Anointing}, 83.}

The physical anointing is only the sign of the invisible grace that God bestows on us in baptism. A clear distinction is made between the visible and invisible aspects of the unction, in which the invisible is what nourishes the Christian: "The visible oil is the sign, the invisible oil is in the sacrament, the spiritual oil is inward (\textit{intus})."\footnote{Augustine, \textit{Enarratio in Psalmum 44.19}, quoted in Mitchell, \textit{Baptismal Anointing}, 84.} Augustine is one of the first to use the language of sacramentality with regard to baptismal unction,
showing the beginnings of what would later constitute Confirmation and the sacramental theology associated with it.

**Athenasius**

Athenasius (ca. 296/298 – 373) was a bishop of Alexandria from 328 until his death on May 2, 373. Athenasius is best known for his role in the Arian controversy. References to baptism in Athenasius's works are always interested in the Christological and Trinitarian nature of the practice, and references to baptismal anointing are very few. Athenasius does not give clues as to a liturgical sequence, though it can be assumed safely that he and Augustine share a similar rite, if not the same, consisting of a post-baptismal anointing, followed by a consignation that included the laying on of hands and probably oil.

Athenasius associates the anointing oil found in Psalm 45 with the descent of the Spirit at Jesus's baptism in the Jordan, which is in turn associated with the salvation of humanity in his *Discourse One Against the Arians* (339–340):

> If then for our sake He sanctifies Himself, and does this when He is become man, it is very plain that the Spirit's descent on Him in Jordan was a descent upon us, because of His bearing our body. And it did not take place for promotion to the Word, but again for our sanctification, that we might share His anointing, and of us it might be said, 'Know ye not that ye are God's Temple, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' For when the Lord, as man, was washed in Jordan, it was we who were washed in Him and by Him. And when He received the Spirit, it was we who by Him were made recipients of It.\(^{465}\)

Athenasius's understanding of the Spirit at Jesus's baptism is similar to Augustine's in the association of Christ's anointing at His baptism with our identity as 'Christians.'\(^{466}\)

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\(^{465}\) Athenasius, "Four Discourses against the Arians," in *ANPFP* second series, 4: XII. 47.

\(^{466}\) Cf. Augustine, *Interpretations of the Psalms* 26:2.2.
Interestingly, Athanasius explains that Jesus's anointing is not just associated with the priestly and kingly anointing, but that his anointing was greater in stature associated with the 'oil of gladness':

And moreover for this reason, not as Aaron or David or the rest, was He anointed with oil, but in another way above all His fellows, `with the oil of gladness,' which He Himself interprets to be the Spirit, saying by the Prophet, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me'; as also the Apostle has said, 'How God anointed Him with the Holy Ghosts.' When then were these things spoken of Him but when He came in the flesh and was baptized in Jordan, and the Spirit descended on Him? And indeed the Lord Himself said, 'The Spirit shall take of Mine'; and 'I will send Him;' and to His disciples, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' And notwithstanding, He who, as the Word and Radiance of the Father, gives to others, now is said to be sanctified, because now He has become man, and the Body that is sanctified is His.  

Athanasius combines the descent of the Spirit imagery with the anointing of priests and kings imagery known to most baptismal descriptions in order to argue for the eternal nature of Christ against the Arians.

Athanasius goes on to explain that Jesus's unction by the Holy Spirit in the Jordan is the basis for the Christian practice:

From Him then we have begun to receive the unction and the seal, John saying, 'And ye have an unction from the Holy One'; and the Apostle, 'And ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.' Therefore because of us and for us are these words.  

Athanasius's emphasis on the Christology of the baptismal anointing is not necessarily a reflection of the practice in his time, rather it shows the role that baptismal theology played in the Christological debates.

**Papal Letters and Council Decrees**

By the end of the fourth century, we begin to see an evolution of Western ecclesiology, indicating an obvious growth in the church population and the number of

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467 Athanasius, "Four Discourses against the Arians," in ANPFP second series, 4: XII. 47.
468 Ibid.
clergy. As a result, local councils begin to solidify the rites of initiation and the specific roles the clergy must play within the liturgy. The Roman Church was involved in a debate as to who can consecrate the chrism.

Letter of Pope Innocent I

Pope Innocent I's Letter to Decentius (416) shows that at the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth century the baptismal liturgy and ecclesial roles began to be more solidified. This letter is the first witness to the episcopal hand laying and the second post-baptismal anointing as official parts of the Roman rite.\footnote{Johnson, The Rites of Christian Initiation, 162.} Earlier we discussed the emphasis that Ambrose placed on the consignation, and here Innocent I places an even further emphasis by reserving it for the bishop alone. Finn argues that the designation and separation of the baptism from the consignation is the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation.\footnote{Finn, Thomas M. Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate, Message of the Fathers of the Church, ed. Thomas Halton (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 78.} The post-baptismal anointing and the consignation are both associated with the Spirit, though the bishop's consignation is associated specifically with the Paraclete. A separate anointing oil is used for the bishop's consignation than is used for the post-baptismal anointing performed by the presbyter. The ecclesial dimension of the Bishop's anointing is seen in the reference to Acts 8:

About the signing of the newly baptized: it is quite clear that no one may perform it except the bishop. For although presbyters are priests (sacerdotes), they do not have the highest degree of the priesthood (pontificates). It is not only the custom of the Church which demonstrated that the signing and the gift of the Holy Spirit is restricted to bishops (pontificates), but the passage in the Acts of the Apostles which are already baptized. For when presbyters baptize, whether in the absence of a bishop or in his presence, they may anoint the baptized with chrism (provided that it is consecrated by the bishop) but they do not sign the forehead with this
same oil. That is reserved to the bishops when they give the Spirit, the Paraclete.\textsuperscript{471}

While Pope Innocent I does not expound greatly on the theological significance of the post-baptismal anointing, his letter does show the development of the ecclesial dimension of baptismal anointing.

\textit{Third Councils of Carthage II (ca. 390) - IV (ca. 398)}

The Second, Third, and Fourth Councils of Carthage show that the consecration of the chrism is reserved to the bishop:

It is decreed by all the bishops, that the making of chrism and the consecration of young girls may not be done by presbyters. This pleases all, that a presbyter is not permitted to reconcile anyone with the public dismissal.\textsuperscript{472}

Similarly, the Fourth Council of Carthage states that:

Presbyters who govern Churches throughout diocese ask for chrism before the solemnity of Easter. They ask not from whatever the bishop they please, but from their own, and not through a junior cleric, but either by themselves or through the one in charge of the sanctuary.\textsuperscript{473}

Augustine refers to presbyters as the ministers of the complete rite, which assumes that the presbyters were consecrating the chrism in Alexandria during his time.\textsuperscript{474}

\textit{First Council of Toledo (398)}

Canon 20 of the First Council of Toledo determined that presbyters, instead of deacons, should perform the anointing in the absence of the bishop, though the blessing of the oil used in the anointing was reserved for the bishop.\textsuperscript{475} Canon 20 reads:

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{473} Council of Carthage IV, \textit{Canon 36} in Turner, \textit{Sources of Confirmation}, 56.
\textsuperscript{474} Johnson, \textit{The Rites of Christian Initiation}, 189.
\end{footnotesize}
Although the custom is almost everywhere preserved, that none but the bishop blesses chrism, yet because in some places or provinces the presbyters are said to bless chrism, it was agreed that none but the bishop shall henceforth bless chrism: and he shall send it into his diocese in such fashion that deacons and sub-deacons shall be sent from each church to the bishop before Easter, so that the chrism which the bishop has blessed shall arrive in time for Easter. While the bishops have the undoubted right to bless chrism at any time, presbyters may do nothing without the knowledge of the bishop: it is decreed that the deacon may not give chrism but the presbyter may do so in the absence of the bishop, or in his presence if he commands.476

_Canones ad Gallos (ca. 400)_

The _Canones ad Gallos_, or the Canons to the Gauls, was the reply of a Roman synod to questions from Gallican bishops.477 Canon 8 is concerned with the pre-baptismal anointing only. The exorcised oil is directed to be used after the third scrutiny, though the council is not concerned with how frequently the oil is administered.478 The Canon is only interested in the anointing of the head; a full body anointing is not mentioned. According to Johnson, Canon 8 is the first clear indication of the Roman use of 'exorcised oil' within the baptismal rite.479 It should be noted that this anointing is not done at the time of the baptism, rather it is performed at the third scrutiny.480 Canon 8 reads:

Concerning the exorcised oil, whether it should be administered on a few days or many matters less than its meaning. For who shall be cleaned by the sufficiency of his faith? For if the chrism poured upon the head imparts its grace to the whole body, in the same way also if he who is scrutinized at the third scrutiny is touched with the oil only once and not many times, God [nevertheless] acts upon his [whole] life.481

476 The first Council of Toledo, 398, quoted in Whitaker, _Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy_, 155.
477 Johnson, _The Rites of Christian Initiation_, 161.
478 Mitchell, _Baptismal Anointing_, 96.
479 Johnson, _The Rites of Christian Initiation_, 161.
480 Ibid., 167.
481 The 'Canones ad Gallos,' quoted in Whitaker, _Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy_, 205.
Conclusions

The Western baptismal liturgy typically involved a post-baptismal anointing associated with the anointing of priests and kings, with a Christic association, followed by a consignation with strong Pneumatic ties, and some involved an exorcistic pre-baptismal anointing. Ambrose of Milan and The Canons of Hippolytus include a pre-baptismal anointing and two post-baptismal anointings. In both instances the pre-baptismal anointing is exorcistic, while the two post-baptismal anointings are only slightly different. In Ambrose's case both post-baptismal anointings act as a consignation; the first is Christic and associated with priests and kings, and the second is associated with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the Canons of Hippolytus, the first post-baptismal anointing is Trinitarian, and the second acts as a consignation and is attributed to the Holy Spirit, though not necessarily the seven gifts. Zeno of Verona and the Prayers of Sarapion provide accounts of a pre-baptismal anointing associated with healing and forgiveness of sins and a Pneumatic post-baptismal consignation. Augustine provides only two post-baptismal anointings. The first is Christic, while the second is accompanied by an imposition of hands and is Pneumatic.

Many of our practical liturgical examples come to us in the form of canonical statements that were interested in explaining the ecclesiological aspects of the baptismal rites, in particular the consignation. The consignation found in the Western rites eventually evolves into a separate sacramental sign altogether, though the debates concerning the lapsed time between the baptism and consignation are not at their peak until the sixth century.
CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSION

This project is intended as a tool for theological inquiry, as opposed to a conclusory work regarding modern liturgical issues. It is intended to give a comparative overview of anointing practices and how Christians interpreted these practices in the first four centuries, as well as situate the Christian practice of baptismal anointing in the greater context of ancient Jewish anointing in the initiatory practice of anointing priests and kings. I sought to show the variances, as well as the similarities, of the Christian interpretation of the practice of baptismal anointing. The three questions that I use in the interpretation of the early texts are: 1) How does the anointing fit within the context of the particular baptismal ceremony, 2) How are the anointing, or anointings, interpreted? For example, are they interpreted Christologically, Pneumatically, or in some other way? 3) What is the function of the anointing? For example: is it exorcistic, strengthening, used as a seal, cathartic, etc. From these questions, patterns of interpretation arise, which can be seen clearly in the conclusions to the sections, and one is also able to locate the theological and liturgical developments in many cases. I organized this thesis both chronologically and by location when speaking of the early Christian liturgies, with the understanding that the groupings are in large part artificial, though language barriers did influence the communication between various groups, and in turn affected the transmission of tradition.
Part I locates and provides an explanation of the practice of anointing priests and kings in the Old Testament in order to give the foundation for the New Testament understanding of Christ. This part also gives the background of the interpretation of priests, prophets, and kings that was common to early Christian baptismal theologies.

Part II focused on the New Testament periscopes that were understood by many Christians as the foundation of their baptismal practices, the most obvious being the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. Alongside the New Testament texts, I provided instances of Heavenly Ascent literature, the Testament of Levi and 2 Enoch, that contains certain similarities to later Christian initiatory practices in order to show possible Jewish antecedents to the Christian practice of baptismal anointing. While the pseudepigraphical Jewish ascent stories do not bare a one to one representation of the later Christian anointing theology, aspects of the liturgy, such as the purification, anointing, and clothing in heavenly garments, are similar in practice with some of the later Christian anointing traditions.

Chapter IV focused on the primitive Christian baptismal practices of the second and third centuries. This part was divided by region: Syria and Asia Minor, North Africa, and Rome and Spain. In many cases prior to the latter third century it is difficult to tell whether or not the references to baptismal anointings are physical, or only figurative. Many scholars argue that the figurative anointing predated the physical anointing, though this is difficult to prove from the extant sources.

Chapter V was reserved for the Syriac speaking Christians; Chapter VI for the Greek speaking Syrians and Cappadocians; and Chapter VII was reserved for the Latin
speaking, or Western, Christians. It is easy to see the difficulty and disputes in scholarship regarding the discontinuities amongst the Greek speaking Christians and between the Greek and Syriac speaking Christians with regard to the origins of the baptismal anointing practice. The Western Church is unique from the Eastern and Syriac Churches with regard to its second post-baptismal consignation reserved for the bishop. The consignation would eventually evolve into the modern Sacrament of Confirmation.

The biggest difference, at least in the Syrian and Western traditions, is the location of the seal. From as early as the second and third centuries, Syrians primarily located the seal in the pre-baptismal anointing, whereas in the Western liturgies, the seal is located in the post-baptismal anointing. Many of the associations are similar in the East and West, such as the association with the anointing of priest and kings and the descent of the Holy Spirit onto Jesus in the Jordan, though with the difference in liturgical placement, the sacramental theological interpretations are bound to differ.

A broad study such as this shows possible ways in which the liturgical theologies and practices evolved and became more standardized as the Church grew in number and ecclesially, and developed doctrinally. Many of the ancient anointing theologies were articulated for the purpose of warding off heretical practices, such as the elimination of water in some of the Gnostic circles.\textsuperscript{482} Many of the ancient theologians emphasize the importance of one aspect of the rite in order to make clear the correctness of the interpretation and the practice, bringing to fore the accepted meaning in a particular

location in the case of apologetic works, which is seen most prominently in the Cappadocian Fathers. 483

By the end of the fourth century Christianity had been legalized, persecution had mostly stopped, and the Councils of 325 and 381, along with numerous local councils, had helped to delineate many of the liturgical practices, which on some occasions solidified the theological interpretations within the various regional traditions. The councils and heresy debates also helped to unify the liturgical practices on many occasions, which is seen primarily in the East and West. The Syriac speaking Christians were often unaffected by the council decrees and heresy debates this early, primarily due to location and the language barrier.

An overview of the historical liturgy of various locations and tongues can serve modern theological inquiry into the historical roots of our current practices, as well as provide a theological depth to the modern practice that may not be present otherwise. The depth of meaning found in the ancient Jewish practice at times brings the ancient Christian practice and interpretation to life in its proper context, which in turn can also show the ancient context of the modern practices and interpretations. A study such as this also brings out places in modern liturgical practice that may need to be evaluated critically in order to fit the Church's theological tradition a little closer. An example of this can be seen in the current debates surrounding the reordering of the Sacraments of initiation in the Roman Catholic Church, where the theological pattern does not always match the liturgical practice. Another example is the deletion of the first post-baptismal anointing if the Sacrament of Confirmation follows in the same ceremony.

483 See section four regarding Irenaeus.
The Second Vatican Council preempted liturgical changes that affected the way baptism is understood in the West. In 1969 the Roman Catholic Church, under Pope Paul VI, produced the *Ordo Baptismi Parvulorum* (The Rite of Baptism for Children); in 1971 the new *Ordo Confirmationis* (Rite of Confirmation) was announced; and in 1972, following the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*'s call for the revision of adult initiation, promulgated the *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum* (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, abbreviated RCIA), which became official in the United States in 1988. The RCIA re-instituted the catechumenate period. The common thread running through these three liturgical revisions is the re-implementation of some of the Church's early baptismal practices and theologies that serve to strengthen the modern understanding of the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

One result of the post-Vatican II liturgical revisions is a calling by many bishops for the re-ordering of the Sacraments of initiation, which entails moving the Sacrament of Confirmation prior to the reception of first Eucharist in the case of child baptism. This move more closely models the practical and theological understanding of baptism held by the early Church, which understands the baptism, and all of its anointings associated with it, as the initiation to the Eucharistic sacrifice. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's recent praise and approval of the of the reordering of the Sacraments of initiation shows the Roman Catholic Church's interest in reuniting with the liturgical and theological depth of the historical Church in the West, as well as bringing the Church more in line with our Eastern brethren. Consequently, the flurry of interest in the practice of the baptismal liturgy itself and the theological implications thereof has sparked an interest in the baptismal practice of the early Church for many scholars.
Interestingly, in the case of the post-baptismal anointing prior to Confirmation is optional when Confirmation immediately follows the baptism in the same ceremony,\textsuperscript{484} though in the Roman Catholic infant baptismal sequence, when Confirmation is delayed until the time of reason, the post-baptismal anointing associated with the anointing of priest, prophets, and kings is present in the liturgy. The theology of having been grafted into the ecclesial community of priests, prophets, and kings remains with adult baptism, even though the gesture is not present in the liturgy.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to delve too far into conclusions regarding modern liturgy. However, research in the area of historical liturgical development can help shed light on the uses and meanings of seemingly redundant liturgical actions. For example, Aidan Kavanagh argues from the ritual structure of the \textit{Apostolic Tradition} and the \textit{Apostolic Constitutions} that the modern practice of removing the post-baptismal chrismation prior to confirmation when confirmation directly follows is not structurally sound because it takes out the Christic completion of the baptism and makes it a Pneumatic prayer, not only in confirmation, but in the Eucharist as well.\textsuperscript{485} I would also add that to delete the reference to the anointing of priests, prophets, and kings from the liturgy does not show the fullness of the baptismal theology that is still present in the liturgical tradition and the current theology.

\textsuperscript{484} CCC 1291 states that: "A custom of the Roman Church facilitated the development of the Western practice: a double anointing with sacred chrism after Baptism. The first anointing of the neophyte on coming out of the baptismal bath was performed by the priest; it was completed by a second anointing on the forehead of the newly baptized by the bishop. The first anointing with sacred chrism, by the priest, has remained attached to the baptismal rite; it signifies the participation of the one baptized in the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices of Christ. If Baptism is conferred on an adult, there is only one post-baptismal anointing, that of Confirmation." CCC 1242 explains that: "In the liturgy of the Eastern Churches, the post-baptismal anointing is the sacrament of Chrismation (Confirmation). In the Roman liturgy the post-baptismal anointing announces a second anointing with sacred chrism to be conferred later by the bishop Confirmation, which will as it were "confirm" and complete the baptismal anointing."

While the scope is this thesis is primarily informative, rather than conclusory, the information presented can possibly be used for modern sacramental inquiry. It is possible to trace our current sacramental practices back to the early Church with regards to both practice and the interpretation of these practices. Early baptismal anointing theologies provide theological depth to the modern sacramental understanding.
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