v. THE FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS WRITING: QUAESTIONES

Before passing on to a research of the style and form of this book it will not be superfluous to give a survey of its contents. We informed the readers already of the description given by Assemani in his “Catalogue” (cf. p. 64–65). But comparing his analysis with the treatise itself one will find that actually the subjects mentioned by him are found there, but that his statement prevents us from getting an exact idea of the nature of the matters under discussion; and this may be expected from such a report. We will give another one, more in accordance with its contents. Fullness of detail is inevitable because of the great number of questions raised.

Introduction: p. 1–2: The writer is asked to give the exact liturgical rules according to tradition concerning various points, because many people deviate from them at the present moment. Reluctantly since he does not think himself the right man to do so, he promises to reproduce what he saw the previous generations doing.

i. Q. 1–71 Concepcion of the altar: where the right practice is found (1–2); how many signs of the Cross and Gehanta’s must be made over the oil (3–5); how the sign of the Cross should be made over holy vessels (6); an addition to one of the Gehanta’s (7).

ii. Q. 8–51. Violation of the holiness of the altar or of the Eucharistic elements in the liturgy through various mistakes:

8–9 Closing of the curtains of the Apse.
10 Placing of a wrong chalice on the altar.
11–14 Falling down of Eucharistic elements on the altar.
15 Consequences of wrongly mixing the chalice.
16–17 Consecration while Eucharistic bread is reserved or left by accident.
18 Eating Eucharistic bread during the ablutions.
19 The Sacristan takes the Eucharistic bread to distribute among the people before the proper time.
20–22 Touching or kissing of paten and chalice by laymen.

(1) The numbers refer to the questions in my translation, but are not found in the Syriac text.
23–25 Communion of paten (23) and chalice (25) the officiant being without girdle or while the communicants do not kiss nor ask for forgiveness.
26 Difference in solution between 23 and 25.
27 Censing by a priest who is not fasting.
28 Entering the altar without girdle.
29–31 Entering of the altar by a pagan or a Christian child.
32 An angry communicant returns the Sacrament.
33 Cooked food next to the Eucharistic bread on the paten.
34 Drinking at the ablutions in the altarplace.
35 The altar without Cross or Gospel.
36 Communion by a single priest.
37 Leaving of Eucharistic bread.
38 Ordering of the Sacrament by a single priest.
39 Entering the altar without sandals.
40–41 Eucharistic elements touching the ground.
42 A pagan receives a host.
43 Communion of wine only.
44–45 Desecration by a flood.
46–48 Mixing the chalice in cases of lack of wine.
49–50 Taking more pieces at the ablutions than is allowed; exception on Maundy Thursday.
51 Carrying the Eucharist outside the church.

Preparation of the Eucharistic elements for Consecration.

52 Baking of the Eucharistic bread.
53–55. Impure oil in the dough.
56 Dough falling to the ground.
57 Water on the dough.
58 The bread touched by a layman after baking.
59 Water on the bread.
60 A small particle is the same as the whole bread.
61 Offering a piece that had fallen on the altar.
62–63 Unlawfully entering the altar at the Prothesis without girdle or sandals.
64 How much of the unconsecrated bread may be distributed.
65–67 How and how much bread should be offered on the altar.
68–69 What must be done if too small a quantity is offered and the punishment of the priest.
70–71 Eucharistic bread damaged.
72–75 A mistake in composing a chalice.
76 Adding afterwards Eucharistic bread in cases one thinks there is too little.
77 What must be done with the bread that is not destined for the altar but is put upon it.
78–79 Cleaning of altar and censer.
80–81 Difference between bread for the altar and the Eulogia.
82–84 Mistake in kneading the dough.
85–86 Desecration of the oven after baking.

iv. Q. 87–104. Some acts and objects in the mass.
87–89 How many times and where should the sign of the Cross be made over the elements in the liturgy and deviation from it.
90–93 The whole number of signs, which and where.
94–95 The habit of deacons to say “Bless, o my Lord” in receiving the chalice.
96 A wrong way of making the sign of the Cross.
97–99 Cross and Gospel; censer, and elements on the altar on the right- or lefthandside of the priest.
100 Mystagogical meaning of the fans beside the altar.
101 Difference between Cross and Gospel.
102 How many times the priest says “Peace be with you”.
103 Place of the Cross beside the Bishop.
104 Mystagogical meaning of the “Throne”.

v. Q. 105–116. Why the Lord’s Prayer should be said at the beginning of all services except Betrothal and Marriage and Funerals, while in former times it was never said.
117 Connection of Evening-service and Funeral-service.

vi. Q. 118–123. Place of Cross and Gospel beside Bishop, priest and altar in the mass.
We have summed up in this table the great variety of questions under some heads to get a survey. But it is apparent that this book does not provide a systematic unity neither in the main sections nor in the sequence of the particular questions though some questions actually belong together. The questions are posed pell-mell about various difficulties which may occur or have really taken place in the practical preparation and execution of the liturgy by the officiants. As to the third part (V. iii = M.C) it is even impossible to give the slightest order. Here one is struck by finding more a narrative and it is on the whole more extensive in its questions and answers.

We observed already that the form of our writing is that of Question and Answer or Solution. Besides that we notice a certain uniformity of the questions. Generally they are very short: A question is posed how a certain act should be performed rule; after having received the answer the questioner goes on with: "I have seen people who...", telling a different way of performing it, and asking whether this is right. Sometimes the introduction is: "It happened once that...", then it is simply recording a case with the request to tell precisely what should be done. Many times the student begins with: "If such or such a case occurs, how must it be dealt with?" It is superfluous to give examples; by far the greater part of the questions are treated in this way. Besides that, there are some questions asking information about the meaning of certain objects in the cult (Q. 100 and 104); dogmatical (101) and a long series about the Lord's Prayer, a subject to which so much attention has been devoted since it raised a good deal of dust in the Nestorian church (cf. ad Q. 105–116). The answers are generally very concise, a single time only a reason is given and there is only one place in the questions where the Bible is quoted (Q. 60 in M., omitted in V.).

The whole book gives by the tone of its writing the strong impression that they are real questions about occurrences in the practice of the church. This impression is corroborated if it is noticed that many cases are reactions upon the canons divulgated by the Patriarch John v (e.g. Introduction, Q. 48, 49). The preface fits in very well with the state of affairs in the Nestorian church about 1000 A.D. as was shown before. Are these impressions right?

It is not without importance to study this question more closely

(1) On p. 70 we saw that the latter indications are used interchangeable.
(2) This last clause is often omitted, and the sentence has an elliptical character.
since we are concerned about the value of these documents for our knowledge of the liturgical life of the Nestorians. On account of V. x Mr. Bensly pointed out "that other instances of the catechetical method of conveying instruction may be seen in Cod. Vat. ct. under the remaining titles, and also in one of the Syriac MSS. preserved in the British Museum (cf. Dr. Wright’s catalogue, p. 985a)". This shows that there existed a certain type of literature of Quaestiones dealing with various subjects (V.: liturgical, biblical, dogmatical). It is worth while to examine this form somewhat closer. The question arises whether the form of this book allows us to find here traditional material, literary fiction or freshly formulated questions. The observations of some scholars quoted below point to tradition. It is also suggested by some indications of the treatise itself: the introduction is largely traditional in its expressions; the writer refers over and over to the Fathers; several questions are dealt with elsewhere.

The best way to discuss this matter is by giving a succinct survey of works that have been written in this form and by ascertaining the observations made by various scholars on this point. We confine ourselves within the limits of the ancient-christian, Byzantine and Syriac literature, while keeping in mind that the method of Questions and Answers has remained a favourite one up to now especially for catechetical instructions both in eastern and western Christendom.

Yet we must protest against styling these books “catechisms”, for these suppose a systematically arranged whole of notions in which gradual progress of thought is made by the way of Questions and Answers. But this is not the case here. The questions stand without any connection side by side. If some questions are linked up, the author wants to investigate some possibilities arising from the same situation. But the survey on p. 91–93 shows sufficiently that a logical development of ideas was not aimed at.

Prof. Jordan whose “Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur” as

(1) R. L. Bensly, ap. H. B. Swete, Theodori . . . Moposteseni . . . Commentariorii, Cambridge, 1880, i, p. xii n.—G. P. Badger, ii, p. 164, n. quotes, in discussing the Nestorian opinion about the influence of an unworthy priest on the administration and efficacy of the Eucharist, a "Query" and "Answer" from "an ancient manuscript in the possession of Kasha Mendi of Anemedia. The book appears to be a sort of general catechism, but is so much mutilated that I was unable to discover the title of the work or the author’s name" (I could not trace elsewhere the quotation he gives).—Likewise Th. J. Lamy, p. 62, n. 1, says that there exists such a form and gives some examples, but he did not go further into the matter; he styles it catechetical; cf. the quotation of Bardenhewer below p. 97.
a whole is built upon the principle of the formal characteristics of the writings under discussion, and Prof. O. Bardenhewer in the summaries at the head of the 3rd and 4th part of his “Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur” have concerned themselves with this class of books and ordered the material falling within the limits of their works. The first scholar referring to the researches of Prof. Heinrici pointed out that there had come into being among the Greeks a kind of exposition “welche schwierige Stellen griechischer Autoren dadurch erklärte, dass man Widerspräche . . . aufdeckte und dann löste, and das literarisch in der Form fingeriter Gescpräche, in Rede und Antwort . . . mit dem Titel ἔρωτισες πένθες καὶ ἀποκρίσεις, ἀπορία καὶ λύσεις, lateinisch quaestiones und ähn-
lich”. The Jewish philosopher Philo was the first to apply this method to the Bible; several times it is found in the commentaries of Origen and the Homilies of Chrysostom. The first among the Christian scholars who published a whole book in this form was the churchhistorian Eusebius in his: “On the Discrepancies of the Gospels” in two volumes. Besides that this kind of literature was used in the works of Theodoretus of Cyrus and in various pseudo-athanasian and -augustinian, anonymous writings; later on by Byzantine authors. Jordan observes in a footnote that this form seems to be specially used in the well-known Antiochene School who applied it to dogmatical and similar subjects, e.g. the four pseudo-justinian tracts. He concludes saying that it is important to see “dass im diesen Aporien sich eine lebendige Tradition geltend machte, sodass ‘Frage’ und ‘Lösung’ von einem bis zum anderen weitergegeben wurden und dann gesammelt oft hinsichtlich ihres Autors nicht mehr be-
stimmt werden können” (italics are mine).

Bardenhewer has taken this over in substance though he re-

(1) H. Jordan, Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, Leipzig, 1911, S. 409–411, § 69 Die Aporienliteratur. – O. Bardenhewer, Geschichte der altkirchlichen Litera-
literatur, in: Abhandlungen der h. sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse, 1909, S. 841–860. (3) It dealt with the various traditions about the Birth-
and Resurrectionstories; nothing but fragments are left, cf. O. Bardenhewer, a.a.O., iii, S. 257, and: G. Beyer, Die evangelischen Fragen und Lösungen des Eusebius in jakobischer Überlieferung und deren naszarianischen Parallen, in: O.C., 1927, S. 86–97 and 284–292 (he does not say anything about the form). (4) O. Barden-
hewer, a.a.O., ii², 1913, S. 240–246 (a mixture of exegetical, apologetical, dogmatical, cosmological and other questions); they are well known because A. von Harnack thought to have discovered in them the lost writings of Dio-
dorus of Tarsus.

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cognized in it an "autochthones Gebilde" of the Christians built up from real questions. He added a number of titles, mainly Latin, and pointed out that the Greeks afterwards used this form for dogmatical and ascetical purposes. Next to this kind of literature which is essentially exegetical occurs this form of questions in another category of writings, viz. "Schriften populär-didaktischer, katherchismusartiger Tendenz" as the two Monks rules of St. Basil. "Hier sind die Fragen reine Fiktionen". Ten years later he distinguished this form sharply from the dialogue; the latter consists of a discussion of a central theme, while the Quaestationes contain a variegated series of different topics. It is allotted to exegetical literature.

As a matter of fact most of the books written as "Quaestiones et Responsiones" deal with the Holy Scripture. In an extensive series of articles M. G. Bardy has carefully investigated this form. It is not necessary for our purpose to give an exact account of them all. But it is worth while to give his, what seems to me, undisputable result: "Encore pouvons-nous distinguer deux catégories de questions. Les premières sont purement artificielles: c'est l'exégète lui même qui les pose, afin d'avoir l'occasion de les résoudre, et, s'il suit, comme il est fréquent, l'ordre même des livres saints, nous nous trouvons en présence d'un commentaire plus ou moins suivi... Les autres sont vraies questions; elles ont été posées à un interprète en renom, à un savant évêque, à un ami, par des correspondants réels, et l'exégète n'a rien autre chose à faire qu'à fournir la solution des problèmes soulevés par son correspondant".  

He points out that there are many standing questions; that afterwards they become absolutely traditional; he draws a parallel with the Florilegia and Catena from which they are only distinguished by their form. Actually this last observation is a very suggestive one. For these commentaries in Florilegia and Catena have been made to collect the authoritative exposition of the Fathers about certain places in Scripture and they are a marked feature of the Byzantine

(1) Besides those categories mentioned before I should like to draw attention to the "Responsa Canonica" of Timothy of Alexandria (381-385) in the same form (O. Bardenhewer, a.a.O., iii, S. 104); it is not clear to what class they belong according to Bardenhewer. This writer does not say a word about the genuinity.

(2) G. Bardy, La littérature patristique des "Quaestiones" et "Responsiones" sur l'Écriture sainte, in: Revue Biblique, 1933, p. 331 (the whole series in the volumes of 1932 and 1933).

(3) G. Heinrici, Catenae, in: P.R.E.², iii, S. 755-767; xxiii, S. 295-298, gives a short but clear summary. Of course some more work has been done in this field during the last twenty years; but it is superfluous for the present purpose to cite more titles.
Theology. It is well known that these writings have been drawn up from various sources and that their tradition and filiation is extremely complicated: in copying, names have been omitted, quotations shortened or left out. But they are very important since they contain many fragments of Churchfathers (even heretics) which would otherwise have been lost. Here we have a case where older traditions have been preserved through later compilations! Are we right in saying: the same holds good for these “Quaestiones”? We saw before that the traditional element is stressed both by Prof. Jordan and M. Bardy. If the “Quaestiones” are traditional in the same way as the Catena, the result would be very important. For in that case we might find in them a witness of a stage of the liturgy some ages before the actual compilation, e.g. in this book of the 11th century rules of the 5th century or of Isho’yabab iii.

Before entering upon an investigation of this, we will see the result of the study of some other examples. But at the outset we must keep in mind that the two cases compared before are not quite parallel. For the text of a Bible is a fixed subject without any change. But the liturgy though it is fixed is dependent on different factors from outside when it is performed.

The Byzantine literature has continued the methods of their forefathers, in accordance with the highly traditional character of that Church. It was observed by Ehrhardt that this form needed further investigation;[1] he gives as specimens the “Quaestiones et Responsiones” of Anastasius Sinai and Maximus Confessor dealing with exegetical, dogmatical and moral questions;[2] Photius’ “Amphilochia” discussing without any systematical order all kind of theological and profane subjects showing the state of knowledge at the time of its writer;[3] besides that dogmatical, ascetical and liturgical works.[4] As far as the study of these writings allows a judgement, it seems that the Byzantines did not hesitate to copy their predecessors, as usual.

Without repeating what is contained in Vat. Syr. 150 (liturgical, exegetical, canonical, grammatical questions) we find in Syriac literature books giving answers to biblical questions, among others the “Book of Scholia” of Theodore Bar Koni who also treats grammatical, apologetical and anti-heretical points. Many examples of all these sorts may be found scattered in Baumstark’s “Geschichte”.

As distinct from the former groups it is extremely difficult to demonstrate dependency and imitation here. Even if this can be done in a certain case, it does not necessarily apply to the others. On the other hand it may be and is very likely (since the Nestorians and Jacobites were as traditional as the other Churches) that several writers have largely quoted others now lost so that it is impossible to trace the degree of their plagiarism. We are allowed, I think, to state that tradition as such is not inherent to the literary form of the questions, but that this must be determined for every category in particular and that it depends upon the subject matter.

One more kind of writings was omitted, important though it may be since it is of the utmost value to know whether we have to do here with traditional materials. This is that of the Questions and Answers about the canon law and liturgy (the latter subject is often subsumed under the former), for here we are concerned about the question, how in a certain time such or such a priest or Patriarch of a certain oriental church judged, how a certain rite had to be administered. For this decides to what time these books really belong. Are they living questions, or merely copied from former ages, but without connection with the present liturgy? We know that liturgies that were out of date, were still copied by some people who had literary or historical interest to preserve them.

Besides that the Eastern books of Canon Law are simply large


(2) But the present state of our knowledge makes it impossible to decide the question whether they are composed of older traditions or not. Cf. A. Baumstark, L.G., S. 60, 116, (not preserved), 127 (idem), 129 and Ak. (idem), 218-219, 200 (not preserved), 286 (published), 295 (preserved), 310. Ascetical works e.g. in: A. J. Wensinck, Mystic Treatises of Isaac of Ninov, chapter xxxv, p. 152-180. W.S. vii, p. 165-168, cf. p. 146. (3) Th. Schermann, Ägyptische Abendmahls-liturgien des ert. a. Jahrtausends, Paderborn, 1912, S. 7; cf. the interesting question in: A. Rücker, Das dritte Buch der Membr des Kyriakos von Antiochien und seine Väter-zeitate, in: O.C., 1934, S. 114, about the question, why the “Testament of our Lord” is not used any more.
collections of older material. They are totally different from Western "Corpora Juris Canonici". They consist of canons and decisions of Synods and Patriarchs brought together in chronological order, but without much system (sometimes under special headings). Consequently comparatively young books contain ancient material (cf. e.g. Riedel, Bar Hebraeus' "Nomocanon", "Synodicon Orientale").

In the ancient church only the Responsa of Timothy of Alexandria can be compared, but nothing special is said about their origin. But a parallel is offered in the 2 Regulæ Monasticae of Basil. We heard that Bardenhewer called them fictitious. Against this statement a severe objection is that these rules are not in systematical order, what should be expected in this case. On the contrary the subjects are very loosely connected. Quite rightly Mr. Clark observed in his examination of the ascetical writings of St. Basil: "This very lack of order is a strong proof that we have before us a bona fide record of real answers to real questions". We can safely stick to this opinion as long as the proof of the opposite has not been given. Bardenhewer fails to show that it is a fiction.

We return to the Syrians. We find that there existed a translation of Timothy of Alexandria. An offspring of the Syriac church itself are both the "Resolutiones Canonicæ" of John of Tellā (519–538), where questions put by a disciple Sergius are answered, and those of James of Edessa (7th–8th century). The first editor Th. J. Lamy remarks that this literary form exists, but he did not go further into the matter. The translator of the latter work Kayser facing the question whether they were written by James himself, leaves it open. He thinks that it is not certain that this form of tradition is genuine, as the MSS. show variations and Bar Hebraeus has incorporated them in another form in his "Nomocanon", the big collection of all previous canonical work of the Jacobite church. "Es fragt sich nun, hat Jakob selbst diese Zusammenstellung gemacht, oder hat er erst ein Späterer nach den Entscheidungen und Anordnungen dieses Bischofs, die er in seinen Briefen und Akten fand, unsere Sammlung veranstaltet und dabei die Fragen zu

Grunde gelegt, welche in den Klosterschulen mit den jungen Geistlichen gewöhnlich verhandelt wurden" (S. 76). He considers it certain that real questions are at any rate the basis. The heading of the book is rather explicit on this point: "Fragen, die der Presbyter Addai Philonous an den Bischof Jakob von Edessa richtete und auf welche derselbe (nachstehende) Antworten gab. Einige von diesen Fragen regten zwar Andere bei dem besagten Presbyter an, andere aber war fe von selbst auf..." (Kayser, S. 11).

I cannot see why this reference to a later schoolmaster is necessary (perhaps it is the outcome of a certain type of historical and literary criticism of the end of the 19th century). The deviations of the manuscripts cannot possibly militate against the authorship of James. Why is it impossible that James himself should have answered these questions and that Bar Hebraeus, the great compiler, should have made an extract from them? A similar case may be found in Bar Hebraeus' treatment of George, Bishop of the Arabs. He wrote several letters on liturgical matters. Prof. Rysel, the editor of his works, said that the Canons of his were not culled from a special book of churchlaw, but "wahrscheinlich solche Stellen aus seinen Schriften... welche Entscheidungen über Fragen des Kultus und des Kirchenrechts enthalten und die von Spätereien, eventuell sogar erst von Bar Hebraeus, der sic in seinem Nomokanon aufgenommen hat, in die für Kanones nötige präzise Form gebracht wurden". So we may safely conclude that there is no reason to throw doubt upon the authorship of James who gave in it real questions of the practice of the church. We have discussed this in such a detailed form because we meet with the same question on the Nestorian side.

(1) Cf. A. Baumstark, L.G., S. 257-258. (2) V. Rysel, Georg der Araberbischof, in: P.R.E.¹, vi, S. 529. (3) As to their outward form, their expression and their "atmosphere" the QQ. of John Tell. and James Edessa are exactly parallel to our book; in this respect they are useful to illustrate the point at issue. But it is not out of place to remark that a great difference in contents exists between the Jacob and Nest. books under discussion, though they all deal with liturgical Questions. The former group gives resolutions about the treatment of the host and other subjects outside the Liturgy, about the intercourse with heretics, magicians, the duties of a deaconess, burial, conditions for admission to the Eucharist etc. (for this reason the title of Lamy's book, Dissertatio de Syrorum Fide et Disciplina in re Eucharistica, is somewhat misleading since the two documents published are for the minor part Eucharistic. A Nestorian parallel to them may be found e.g. in the letter of Isidore Barun to Macarius, cf. p. 131-133). They do not discuss points of the Liturgy proper, as is done in our treatises. In the former group we find juridical questions, in the latter ritual questions.

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The “Synodicon Orientale” has preserved a letter of the Patriarch Ischoyabh i (581-596)¹ to James, Bishop of Darai, in which various points of the liturgy and of its requirements are dealt with. This is a reply to questions put by the said Bishop as appears sufficiently from the introduction: “Und wir, von der Bitte deiner Liebe gezwungen, antworten der Wahrheit gemäss ohne Zögern, wenn auch kurz, auf deine Fragen über die prie- sterlichen Ordnungen und kirchlichen Kanonen des Dienstes des geistigen Lebens”.

Some centuries later we find that the famous Catholicos Timothy i (780-823)² gave the Canons of his first Synod in the form of questions and answers; and some other works about the Canon-law are divided in the same way. Among those published by Prof. E. Sachau, dealing with the law of succession and other secular questions, since the Catholicos was also the head of the Christians in their civil relations, is one about the Reservation of the host.³ In this case too the variety of subjects makes it highly probable that they answered real needs which were generally the cause of convoking a Synod. The same was done by his successor Ischo’barnun,⁴ both in his decisions edited by Sachau⁵ as in his replies to letters which were inserted in the part of the “Synodicon Orientale” that has not yet published. Another specimen of this manner of codification of canon-law may be found in the “Quaestiones Ecclesiasticae” of John Bar Abgare to which a letter is prefixed in which he wrote to his correspondent: “Quod porro spectat ad Quaestiones, quas propousuisti, cupiens discere, quid ad singula quae rettulist, nostrorum canonum leges praescribant; id vero ad praesentium litera- rum calcem a me expositum accipies, ubi ad singulas quaestiones tuas plane distincteque respondeo”.⁶

The Exposition of the Liturgy, ascribed to George of Arbela, is also written in questions and answers. But there is a difference; for they give explanations of what is found in the liturgical books, while the category we have in view tries to solve difficulties arising

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from the performance of the liturgy since theory of the books and practice of the Church were often different; and many cases were not provided for in the liturgical books.¹ In Expos. we find the logical order that is missing in our treatises. It may safely be ranked with the Catechisms.

Surveying the questions mentioned in the last sections the thought suggests itself that we have to do with real questions.¹ The preceding words always suppose an actual questioner; the variation of the subjects¹ shows that these collections are not treatises adorned with a proper name as dedication which is merely a literary fiction.

What reasons may have caused the compilation of these questions in general? What was their “Sitz im Leben”? Besides the facts that can be taken from the introductions to the letters quoted before, some very interesting accounts may be given showing how these various categories came into existence.

In the big collection of stories about Monks of Thomas of Marga it is told that a certain Nares was asked what was the origin of the answers inserted in the Paradise of Palladius. He said: “The holy Fathers were accustomed to sit down with the novices before them and scribes wrote down the questions which were asked and the explanations of them, and counsels, and answers, and they placed them in writing for their own benefit and for the benefit of those who should come after them”.¹ It may be that this statement is not true in regard to the time of Palladius; but at any rate it shows how people imagined that it had happened and this imagination was probably a picture of their own methods.

One example may suffice to show at what ancient date the treatment of ritual questions which necessarily arise through the expansion of the ritual, came into being. Hieronymus replied to a correspondent: “De sabbatho quod quaeris utrum ieiunandum sit, et de eucharistia an accipienda quotidie... scriptis quidem et

¹ The “Questions du patriarche Timothée sur l’office”, mentioned in: A. Baumstark, L.G., S. 325, Ak. 8, are the same as his book on the Mysteries and not real questions, as Dr. Mingana kindly informed me, Letter-Birmingham, 9-3-1950.
² For only in very few cases Canons of former churchmen are quoted, while the Nestorians, too, were used to cite them, if possible, cf. e.g. Elias of Nisibis, Letter, tr. Vandenhof, in: O.C., 1919, who fills several pages with a long array of rules against simony; Ishoyabi, i, Letter to James of Durai, Can. iii (O. Braun, Syriac Lit., S. 243) quotes Nicea, Can. xviii; the compilations in: ‘Aldisho’, Nicsacan.
³ The various topics are not systematically exposed, but only casually (the next chapter § ii offers a good many examples). (4) Budge, B.G., ii, p. 547-548.
Hippolytus vir disertissimus et carptim diversi scriptores e variis auctoribus edidere’.

With regard to the subsequent history we confine ourselves to some examples from the Syrians. In 538 some eastern Jacobites asked their co-religionists in Constantinople for information and the answer is still extant; it was edited by Mgr. Rahmani. Another instance of this kind is found in the correspondence of Ish'o'yabh iii (as a matter of fact this is the only one in all his letters).

The history of the Patriarch John vi (cf. p. 87–88) furnishes another example. In his time a king of the Turks had been converted to Christianity since he had been saved in a wonderful way by a Christian saint when he had gone astray. His people lived on milk and meat. The question which the Bishop of Merw wanted to be answered, was: what must be done by these people in Lent as the ordinary regulations for fasting were impossible in this case. The Patriarch decided that they should abstain from meat and if they were used to drink sour milk they should take sweet milk as a change of habit. This shows clearly how all kind of difficulties arose from practice. Certain conditions, laid down by the lawbooks, are or cannot be fulfilled; the decision built upon these conditions cannot be applied and the question is: what should be done?

Mutatis mutandis we find the same case in our treatises. In the second part (V. iii and iv = M. C.) the author mentions several times the origin of these questions. So ii 15 deals with a sacristan who finds crumbs and now goes to ask a priest what he should do. The questioner is not satisfied with the priest’s answer and wishes the decision of our author. ii 23 informs us that by accident something

(1) Hieronymus, Epistula 71, 6, in: M.S.L. 22, col. 672. Some interesting parallels may be found in the Old Testament, cf. Haggai ii 12 and 13 with the note of E. Sellin, Das Zwölfprozentebuch², Leipzig, 1930, S. 463: "Der Prophet soll die Priesterchaft um die das kultische Leben betreffende Thora anheben; man sieht, dass die mündliche Thoraerzählung durch ihre schriftliche Fixierung noch nicht verdrängt war, vgl. Mal. 2, 7; Hos. 4, 6; Deut. 17, 9, 11 usw."
(2) I. E. Rahmani, Vetusta Documenta Liturgiae, in: Studia Syriae iii, Sharfeh, 1908, p. 5–23 (text) = p. 30–48 (transl.). The text we read here is only the Answer in the form of Canons, without the Questions. The heading and ending in a codex of the Library in Sharfeh informs us about the authors of the questions and of the answer, published p. 87 (tr.); the codex Paris-Sang. 62 followed by Rahmani in his edition of the text misrae it. (3) Ish'o'yabh iii, Liber Epistularum, ed. R. Duval, C.S.C.O., ii 64, p. 244 (t. = 177 verso). (4) Giamondi, p. 100; Bar Hebraeus, Chr. Eccl., col. 279–281; A. Mingana, Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia, p. 16–17.
was poured over the altar and people went to ask the Bishop about it. The teachers as authorities in these matters are mentioned in ii 17 and 35; they were asked for instruction but their answer seemed to be highly disputable. The same is supposed in the Introduction, when it is said that everyone speaks about all the events according to his own knowledge (cf. also ch. vi, i). These statements give us an insight into the church-practice and show vividly how they used to act. These questions were put in the school; but they arose when in a certain church the conditions necessary for performing the Eucharist were not fulfilled because of the ignorance or negligence of the priests. What has been done in the Nestorian church with regard to these subjects? What part did the schools play in them? These questions form the theme of the next chapter.

To this it may be added that it appears very clearly that we have not to do with fictions of the writer. See e.g. Q. 85: a case is told; but the answer cannot be given properly as the author has never heard of such a thing from the Ancients. In ii 24 he says that he will record what he has seen, concerning the consecration of the altar, and a story follows from the time that he was a deacon. All this shows what meaning must be attached to his "I have seen or heard". It implies real facts.

Their treatment seems sometimes to tend to casuistry when a solution is followed by: "But if . . .". But it is not absolute casuistry, since it gives so many examples from real life which are not specially constructed. Besides that we find only comparatively few instances of it, and we may make the same remark as is done on p. 95 about the catechisms.

From the foregoing investigation we may conclude that there existed a type of literature in the form of questions dealing with various subjects. In many cases Q., and A. were handed down from generation to generation. But the Questions of practical Theology go back to real questions unless the opposite is definitely stated (it will be shown in the next paragraph, that "Ancients", "Fathers" etc. are not a sufficient warrant to date these Q.Q. some centuries before the actual time of their publication ± 1005-1015). But it goes without saying that this fact does not exclude the existence of

(1) These questions will be found quoted in the commentary ad Q. 15, Q. 17, Q. 24 and Q. 35–ii is throughout this book: V. iii + iv = M.C.; my numbering begins at M. fol. 51 b. 11.–Cf. Isho'Barnun, quoted in: B.O. iii 1, p. 224: "Many teachers do not allow it at all and some of them . . . ."
parallels in other liturgical sources which will be quoted in the commentary. But they are not of a nature to necessitate the supposition that our author merely copies predecessors. The similarity must be explained by the fact that the author wished to maintain the traditions of former times. Besides that it is quite probable that the same case took place several times in the course of some ages! It cannot be concluded from the mere form of these writings that it contains older layers.

This does not preclude the possibility of a certain tradition in regard to the shaping of these questions. Both in the Jacobite questions of John of Tella and those of James of Edessa as in our Nestorian ones is found a particular way of putting the questions, \( \text{?} \) or \( \text{?} \) at the beginning (their meaning will be discussed later on) is frequently occurring. The Greek equivalent is found in those of Timothy of Alexandria. This shows the same form of expression in the course of six centuries (these are not the only (formal) resemblances, see p. 114, n. 1 and: commentary, passim). Nevertheless this does not prove anything about the contents, for it should not be forgotten that this material is canonical which reveals a strong traditional form as is also found in every juridical expression. The same is true for other words that are often found in these treatises, e.g. to qualify the actions of opponents as stupidity which is typical for antithetical treatises.

It remains a noteworthy fact that proofs from Scripture are missing, the more so as this occurs in other replies to liturgical questions (so in Timothy i and Isho′Bar Nun). It is possible that this was omitted because the purpose of the writer was only to give the heritage of the Fathers without their foundation.

As to the style this is on the whole very abrupt, sometimes obscure, especially for those who are not well informed about the Nestorian liturgical usage, though this was naturally no drawback for its first hearers or readers. On the other hand it is somewhat verbose so that V. shortens by omitting epithets etc. (p. 73). After all it shows a kind of style which is typically Syrian. Whether it has some peculiarities of its own or is characteristic for a special time, I do not dare to decide.

(1) A very striking example of the use of Scriptural prooftexts may be found in: W. Riedel-W. E. Crum, The Canon of Athanasius of Alexandria, London, 1904 (since this book will be quoted in the Commentary at several occasions, and has such an illustrious author’s name, it is not out of place to refer to O. Bardenhewer, Geschichte der altkirch. Lit., iii, S. 68–69 who considers it spurious. “Sicher aber ist, dass diese Kirchenordnung aus Ägypten stammt, und wahrscheinlich, dass sie der Zeit des Athanasiius nicht fernsteht”).