vii TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT
(V. M. 1b). By the power of our Lord Jesus Christ we begin to write
the questions and the admonitions of the service of the Altar in all its orders.
Our Lord help me to its completion. Amen.

Request of the questioner: Your Brotherhood, o modest old man,
knows that in this our time which is deprived of men, old and
ancient of days, all the priests, our colleagues took recently possession
of the churches and were not instructed, and (so) did not follow the “Canons and Orders of the service of the Altar”; and
about all the events that took place and occurred to them, now
and then, in their own churches and outside, everyone of them
speaks according to his own knowledge of the events that took
place. And sometimes they neglect them from carelessness and
do not accurately investigate them nor do they show themselves
to be experienced leaders and heads and do not set right the in-
juries and events which take place. (V. 2a) And if someone blames,
rebukes (M. 2a) and admonishes them, they pout and speak
derisively.3 Or otherwise they say: “Who has made thee a head,
master and judge over us?” And (thus) he becomes, instead of an
admonisher, a culprit among them, and lacking in knowledge and
without experience in this. I wish to appeal to the witness4 of the
very old men, ancient of days, in order that I may speak with con-
fidence and without hesitation, in accordance with the testimony
of our Saviour, that the witness of two men is true. Therefore answer
me wisely about all the questions which I shall put to you on every
subject, in the measure (V. 2b) in which the Holy Spirit grants you
wisdom and confirms your words, according to the grace of the
love of God.

Further an apology of the old man to the student. Great is the heavy
burden which you imposed on me, o esteemed brother. May our
Lord enrich you in all scriptural and natural sorts of wisdom! I am
not able to bear (that burden) (M. 2b) and I am loath to refuse
the request of your love, and ashamed not to heed your high com-
mand. And lo, I am standing in the middle of the sea and a tempest
is tossing me from every side and I who am not an accomplished
swimmer fear that in executing swimming-movements I should

(1) V. om.  (2) V.: “foolishly”. (3) Or: “trained”; V. adds: “in the Sanctuaries”.
(4) V. om.  (5) V. adds: “Where did this one pick up this perfect knowledge?”
(6) V. plural.  (7) V. om.  (8) Following V.; M. has: “your request and your
love”.

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fail and sink, and by refraining from the swimming-movements I should sink in the depth as lead in deep waters. And I implore the (V. 3a) Lord to hold my hands and to draw me out of the tempestuous sea and bring me into a peaceful harbour, in order that I may be enabled to answer the request of your love and that your trust in me may not be in vain; not as though I am versed in knowledge, nor did I serve in the service of the church, but like one who has tried and seen things from the old men, ancient of days – [blessed be their memory!] – before whom I laboured and performed the service of the Sanctuary and of the Church, those of whose churches I did not even dare (M. 3a) to call myself a doorkeeper in their days, I answer [your question], in the measure vouchsafed by (divine) Grace and allowed me by the Spirit. Not that the greatness of your knowledge and training needs the demonstrations of my ignorance (V. 3b) and wretchedness, but that your greatness may be extolled and your humility may be exalted and your wisdom may be revealed before the eye of every man. But I [will act as a man] under command and order, and as a disciple serving your Brotherhood which is dear to me. To everything about which you ask me, I will give an answer, not from myself nor from my own knowledge, but from the old men whom I saw and questioned with accuracy.1

1 Questioner: I ask you to describe to me with accuracy the consecration of the altar and all its signings in good order, as you have seen the deceased Metropolitan and Bishops consecrating. (V. 4a).
Answer: Go to the Churchbook and examine the Order of Mar Isho’yab (M. 3b) the Catholicos. You shall not add anything to it nor shall you diminish anything from it and it may be sufficient to you to see and to learn it.

2 Question: I have seen many people who were consecrating the altar in another way, and one added to and another took away from its consecration and signings. Solution: Everyone performs a certain act according to his knowledge and in the measure of his capacity, power and ability. In short, consecration is performed by those who participate in it; and if only the sign of the cross were made over the altar, it would be consecrated. In the same way when saying orally: “The altar is desecrated”, it becomes desecrated. Through

(1) V. om. (2) V. om. (3) V. adds: “poor”. (4) V.: “meanness”. (5) V.: “I shall be as a slave”. (6) V. adds: “ancient of days”. (7) V. adds: “(with) great (accuracy). But if it pleases you, the Spirit will investigate the matter; but if otherwise, leave . . . (?!)”. (8) V. adds: “(who left) this world”.

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his word, when the altar is defiled, it becomes bound and reconsti-
crated. (V. 4b).

3 Question: How many times is the oil which the Bishop consecrates
to be oil of the altar, signed and on how many occasions? Answer:
Every consecration, either of oil of the altar, or of the Paghra and
Dema, or of Baptism, or of the Ordination, or of the Betrothal
(M. 4a) and Marriage-service, needs three signings and three times
they use to sign over it.

4 Question: I have seen many people consecrating oil and reciting
only one prayer of inclination over it. How do they sign three
times? Answer: Those who recite one prayer of inclination, say
first: “The grace of the Lord”, and sign it once and recite: “Celestial
Treasury.” And at the end of its canon the second sign is made.
(V. 5a). Then the third sign is made with the three fingers which
are near his thumb, while saying: “This holy oil is signed and
sanctified by the sign of the living and life-giving Cross that it may
be used for the signing of the consecration of this altar; in the name
of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost”. Then the
three signings are (in this way) completed.

5 Question: Those who consecrate the oil by reciting three prayers
of inclination, how do they sign, and on how many occasions?
Answer: In the case of those who recite (M. 4b) three prayers of
inclination, the first (prayer) is: “O Lord, omnipotent God, help
Thou my infirmity”, a prayer which is said before the altar and
during which the Consecrator makes a sign over himself. When
they place (V. 5b) the vessel of oil on the altar, they cover it with
a napkin. At the first prayer he makes a sign over himself and after
that the Archdeacon intones the “Peace be with us” and (the
Consecrator) says: “The grace of . . .” and makes a sign over the
oil. Further he recites: “Our Lord Jesus is the Treasury”; and at
the end of it he makes a second sign. He recites: “Celestial Treasury”
and at the end of its canon he makes a third sign. Next he signs
again a fourth sign with his three fingers. In support (of their view
about) this fourth sign they refer to the Paghra and Dema. After having
signed them three times they sign the Dema with the Paghra and
the Paghra with the Dema. About this question we have no
quarrel with them. Accept what seems (M. 5a) good to you.

(1) V. takes these words to the preceding sentence. (2) V. om.
(3) V.: “Treasury which enriches its receivers”. (4) V. om. (5) V. has the acts in a
reversed order.

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6 Question: Indicate clearly, how he signs the Altar, the Sanctuary, (V. 6a) the walls, the Temple and the doors, naming each one separately.\(^1\) Answer: He dips his three middle fingers in the oil, found in the vessel, and signs the top of the altar from East to West and from North to South, and says: “This altar is signed and consecrated to the service of the Mysteries etc.”\(^3\) He signs the Eastern wall\(^4\) with his first finger from top to bottom and from right to left, and says: “This Holy of Holies is signed and consecrated etc.”\(^5\) He signs the small altar as he has signed the large one; (V. 6b) and signs the northern wall with one finger, and in the same way the southern wall. Thus he signs over the altar (which is) outside in the Temple, and says: “This Temple is signed…”. Some people sign the western side of the altar\(^\text{place}\), \(\text{while they themselves are}\) in (M. 5b) side and not outside. Then he returns to the altar under the candle which is in the middle of the altar\(^\text{place}\), turns his face to the West, lifts his hand in the air, and says: “It is set apart etc.”.

7 Question: I have seen some people who add to the prayer of inclination: “Celestial treasury”, “O Lord, mighty God”.\(^7\) What is this addition, by whom was it made, and is it correct to say it or not? Solution: Of every consecration, whether of the Paghra and Dema, or of Baptism or of Ordination, the opening words at the beginning of the prayers of inclination are: “God and Lord”.\(^8\) But in the prayer of inclination: (V. 7a) “Celestial Treasury” there is not the name of God and\(^9\) Lord. Well did Mar ‘Abdisho’, the Catholicos,\(^10\) order this addition: “O Lord, mighty God,” Celestial Treasury”, and command under pain of excommunication that it should be said in this way, in order that it may not be without the name of God and Lord.

8 Question: If it happens that the sacristan in ordering the Qudasha,\(^11\) forgets to draw the curtains of (M. 6a) the Sanctuary, and he has ablated the chalice outside the altar\(^\text{place}\)\(^11\) or in the Sacristy, is

\(^1\) V. adds: “and the doorposts”.  \(^2\) V. adds: “by its designation”.  \(^3\) V.: “holy (Mysteries) of the omnipotent Lord, in the Name of the Father and of the Son, etc.”  \(^4\) V. adds: “beyond the altar”.  \(^5\) V. adds in stead of: “etc.”: “to the service of the holy Mysteries of the omnipotent Lord, in the Name of the Father and of the Son etc.”  \(^6\) V. om.  \(^7\) V. adds: “omnipotent, fill it…”  \(^8\) V.: “Lord and God”.  \(^9\) V. om.  \(^10\) V. adds: “who added it to it”.  \(^11\) V. inserts: “to” (reading: “O Lord, mighty God”) to: “C.T.”.  \(^12\) V. adds: “and ablates the Chalice”.  \(^13\) V. adds: “or inside the altar (place)”.  

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he allowed to enter the altar (place) and draw the curtains of the Sanctuary?  
*Answer:* He is not allowed to return to the altar at all, but if there be anyone who is fasting, the latter must enter and draw the curtains of the Sanctuary.

9  
*Question:* But if there is nobody who is fasting, and it is (therefore) urgent for the sacristan to enter the Apse, is he allowed to enter or not, in case he carries a spear (V. 7b) or a cane to draw the curtains of the Sanctuary?  
*Answer:* If he stands outside the door of the apse, and with the cane or the spear which is in his hand, he draws the curtains of the Sanctuary, he is allowed to do so. But he is not allowed to enter inside the threshold. Let him be careful that the spear should not touch the altar and cause any injury!

10  
*Question:* I have seen a sacristan who mixed two chalices, one with wine and water and the other with wine only. At the moment of the Qudasha the deacon made a mistake and offered (M. 6b) the chalice in which the water was. What should be done with the altar; and what should be done with the Paghra he offered thereon?  
*Answer:* The altar is to be consecrated with oil, and that Paghra must be distributed among the faithful as an Eulogia (blessing). They must provide another Qtsatha and renew its Leaven.

11  
*Question:* If it happens, that, in offering the Paghra and Dema on the altar, the chalice is spilled over the altar before the consecration, is the altar injured?  
*Answer:* If they are careful, that what is spilled does not touch the altar, (V. 8a) but is poured out on the altarpieces and the vessels, since no damp has affected the altar, it is not injured. But if damp has affected the altar, it needs consecration with oil.

12  
*Question:* If it happens, that a chalice is spilled and a drop falls round about the altar and they wish to throw water on it, and it happens, that water (M. 7a) sprays fall on the altar, what should be done with it?  
*Solution:* They shall not throw water on it, but dip the sponge in water and wipe the place (V. 8b) carefully and not touch the base of the altar.

13  
*Question:* What if a Gemurta falls round about the altar?  
*Solution:* They shall carefully wipe that place with the sponge.

14  
*Question:* If the Dema is spilled out of the chalice, when the chalice

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1 V. adds: "or not".  
2 V.: "shirts".  
3 V. om.  
4 V.: "together with".  
5 V. adds: "in perfection".  
6 V.: "they must bring a Leaven from another place. The water in the Chalice must be sprinkled over leathern bottles which have not been touched by anybody".  
7 V.: "or".
is consecrated, is the altar injured? Solution: The altar is not injured by what is consecrated, but they shall wipe the place with the sponge.

15 Question: It happened once to a sacristan that he mixed wine and water in the chalice, but by mistake he mixed olive-oil instead of wine. The sacristan placed it on the altar as such, and it was consecrated and the Epiclesis was said over it. In the moment of the signing he noticed (it) or before the administration. Show me clearly with exactness: if (the chalice) has not been consecrated, what must be done with the Paghra and with the chalice containing oil and water? But if (M. 7) it has been consecrated and the Spirit has been invoked over it, what must be done (V. 9) with the Paghra and also with the chalice? Solution: If the Spirit has not been invoked over it, the Paghra must be distributed as an Eulogia for the faithful, and the water and the oil of the chalice must be kept to be mixed with the flour which is kneaded for the Qetsatha. The altar should be consecrated with oil. But if the Spirit has been invoked over it, and they notice it at the moment of the signing, they must bring another chalice with the mixture of wine and water, and the priest who has consecrated must take the Qetsaja de-Bukhra, and sign that chalice, far from the altar, and speak in this way: "This chalice is signed with the precious Paghra, in the name of the Father and of the Son", and he must place the chalice on the altar and complete the Mysteries and distribute to the people as usual. And the former chalice should be kept so that it may be kneaded with the Qetsatha. Or they must light (V. 9) the lamps with it. But on the morning of the next day they must consecrate (M. 8) the altar with oil.

16 Question: If the Gazza is left over to (the charge of) the sacristan and he guards it with care till the next morning, and it happens that on the morning of that day there is in that church a commemoration of a saint or a service of "Consolation", and a priest comes and consecrates the Mysteries, not knowing that the Paghra is in the House of the Treasury from the previous day; show me: is the altar injured or not; does it need consecration? Answer: This accident is not reprehensible, but is an oversight and forgetfulness, because

(1) V. om.  (2) V. adds: "last".  (3) V.: "and".  (4) V.: "the consecration".  (5) V. adds: "this".  (6) V.: "water and olive-oil".  (7) V.: "he".  (8) V. adds: "and of the Spirit".  (9) V. adds: "of oil should be desecrated with a small quantity of water and".  (10) V.: "lamp of the altar".  (11) V. om.
it is not right that two Kings should sit on one Throne; but those who perform the service of the altar must be careful of this. The altar needs no consecration, because (the Paghra) is not something foreign to it. If however anyone says that the altar needs to be signed, we will not quarrel with him, in order that there may be greater (V. 10a) care.

17 Question: If by accident a Gemurta or a Qatsaja or a complete Bukhra falls from the paten on the altar, and if it happens that it falls under the vestments of the altar (M. 8b) and among the Books that are on the altar, and the sacristan does not know it, and the Gemurta remains on the altar, one, two, three or more days, what is to be done with the Gemurta or with the Bukhra, if he finds it? How must he put it in order: should he mix it with a new Paghra or give it (without an addition) to one of the people?

Answer: The solution of this case is very difficult and I have never seen nor heard from those who have preceded me anything like it. But I shall speak according to my knowledge. If he finds it after one day and it is his turn to consecrate, and he finds it before the consecration, let him transfer it to another altar and consecrate (V. 10b) the Mysteries, and let him afterwards return it to the paten. He must join with it a portion of what he has consecrated, and give it to one of the faithful and give him the chalice at the end. But if (it remains there) two or three or more days—it is really a grave accident—he shall give it (M. 9a) to the believers, adding to it another portion from what he has consecrated on that day. But if he finds it at the moment of the Ordering, while he shakes and cleans the altar, and does not find anybody to whom he might give it, he should throw it in the chalice and it should be counted as crumbs (of the Eucharistic Bread) which remain on the altar and in the chalice by accident (unwillingly). He must strive to drink it at the ablutions of the chalice. (V. 11a).

18 Question: If it happens that while priests and Levites are ordering the Qudasha in summer or in a time of drought, and in the hand

(1) V.: “This fact is a transgression of the commandment. But they must try to be careful that it will not befall them again”. (2) V.: “Consecrated”.
(3) V. adds: “and afterwards finds it”. (4) V. adds: “Qatsatha”. (5) V. om.
(6) V. adds: “it is not right to order it; because they have not given it to him. But if there is a deacon with him, he may order it, because nobody is allowed to receive Qudasha twice nor is it allowed to leave it till the next day. He shall not desecrate it, but clean it”. (7) V.: “to receive”.

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of them are three or more Gemurta’s, a Gemurta remains in the throat of one of them and he cannot swallow it and is about to die, what must they do to make (him) swallow the Gemurta? What must be done with the part of the Paghra remaining in his hand? Answer: If his fellow sees that he is about to die, he must throw the Paghra which is in his hand into a chalice and give him the chalice that he may drink until his trouble (M. 9b) has passed and the portion in his throat has gone down; then he shall return the chalice to his fellow and they shall desecrate the chalice with water and take the water (that served) to take away (the trouble of) his throat.

19 Question: If it happens that a priest has consecrated (V. 11b) the Qudasha, and before making the last sign, (viz.) of the Paghra over the Dema and of the Dema over the Paghra, the sacristan comes in a state of agitation carrying a paten and he takes Bukhra from the paten on the altar and breaks it on that other paten in his hand. The priest who has consecrated, says to him: “I have not yet signed it”, and (the sacristan) returns the Qetsaja’s to the paten on which is the Paghra, and he signs the Paghra, and then the sacristan takes again the Qetsaja’s and gives them to the people. Tell me: is the altar injured or not? Answer: If they take the Bukhra before the Epiclesis and break it on another paten, they cause a great injury. But if they break it after (M. 10a) the Epiclesis and return the Qetsaja’s to their rightful place and if they have been signed (V. 12a) together with all the Paghra, (they do not cause) a great injury, but a small one, and the altar does not need signing.

20 Question: A priest takes the paten to distribute to the people, and one of the faithful comes and throws a Zuza on the paten and his hand touches the Paghra which is on the paten. Because of his joy about the Zuza the priest neglects the fact and returns the paten to the altar. Show me the kind of injury inflicted on the Paghra and that on the altar. What must he do with the paten and the altar? Answer: These things happen to many priests, and because of their joy about the gift they become careless about the accident and the injury that proceeds from the gift; but a priest must be careful and examine exactly the person who threw it on the paten. If he threw it from a dis-

(1) In V. (2) M. has: “to the world”; V. rightly: “to the people”. (3) V. adds: “by his deed”. (4) V. adds: “great”.

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tance (V. 12b) there is no harm in it; but if he threw if from close by (M. 10b) and his hand touched the paten or the Paghra, he shall not return the paten to the altar, but it must remain in its place, until he has completely distributed it to the people. He must clean it with another chalice and give the contents of that chalice to one of the deacons outside the altarplace.

21 Question: When they give the chalice to the women, they (the women) are veiled, lest they should be seen; and they hold the chalice with both hands and (in this way) they communicate. Show me: is the chalice injured and should the priest return it to the altar? Answer: When the chalice is touched by a profane hand, a great injury affects it without any doubt. And when this happens the priest must (V. 13a) take a Qetsaja to sign with from the paten before returning the chalice to the altar and sign the chalice in the presence of the deacons and say: “This chalice is signed with the holy Paghra, in the name of the Father and of the Son etc.” If no priest is near, the deacon (M. 11a) must of necessity sign it alone, and reprimand the women who have done this.

22 Question: I have seen faithful who kissed the paten, when they received the Qudasha, and their hand touched the paten, and the priests by negligence did not admonish them, and they did not know what they had done with the paten of the Mysteries. Answer: The faithful are not allowed to touch the paten at all. The priest who carries the paten must be careful to hedge the paten well with a veil on all sides, so that nothing uncovered is seen on it. They should kiss the veil and not the paten. But if the priest does not take care (V. 13b) of the paten and the faithful touch it, the sin redounds on the priest and the faithful are set free from the blame.

23 Question: If it happens that, when a priest or a deacon carries the paten to distribute to the people, his girdle is loosed from his loins; since he cannot (M. 11b) bind it with one hand, and it is not admissible for him to put the paten on the ground, and it is impossible for him to bring it back to the altar going without girdle, because the Paghra is injured, and if he brings it back


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to the altar, the altar too should be injured, what must be done with the Paghra and the altar? How is it to be safe-guarded? 

*Answer*: When the girdle of the one who carries the paten is loosed and falls, he must summon a priest or a deacon, if such a one is present, and he must give him the chalice, and then put on his girdle and carry the paten in his hands and they must distribute it to the people.\(^1\) (V. 14\(a\)) Because the Paghra is injured, he should not bring it back to the altar, lest the altar might be injured. And he must order it outside the altarplace in the Baptistry or in the Temple, but only after having ordered the altar and having drawn the curtains of the Sanctuary, lest any injury might affect the altar.

24  *Question*: I have seen some faithful who, in receiving the Qurbana, did not kiss the feet of the priests (M. 12\(a\)) of Christ neither did they ask forgiveness of their sins from them. *Solution*: I think, there is for them loss and not gain, and they do not receive anything from the hands of the priests neither Paghra nor help.

25  *Question*: When the girdle of a priest or deacon who carries the chalice falls in the Temple or in the Baptistry or in the altarplace, and he is unable to put on his girdle in the altarplace \(^1\)with one hand,\(^4\) nor to return the chalice to the altar, what must he who carries the chalice do and how must he extricate himself from this situation? *Answer*: If the girdle of him who carries the chalice falls in the Temple or in the Baptistry, (and) if a priest or deacon is present, he must give (V. 14\(b\)) the chalice in his hand, remain in his place, bind his girdle and bring the chalice close to the altar and sign it with a Qetsaja and say thus: “This chalice is signed (M. 12\(b\)) with the holy Paghra, in the name of the Father \(\text{and of the Son etc.}\)” \(^4\) But if there is nobody present, he must leave the chalice inside the threshold of the altarplace and then bind his girdle and take the chalice in his hand, bring it before the altar and sign it with a Qetsaja of Paghra and return it to the altar.

26  *Question*: What do you say? If the priest brings the Paghra and places it on the altar, the altar is injured together with the Paghra. But in the case of the chalice you say that he must sign it with a Qetsaja and return it to the altar, while (thereby) neither the

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\(^{1}\) V. om. \(^{2}\) V. adds: “from him”. \(^{3}\) V. adds: “that they may order it”. \(^{4}\) V. om.
chalice nor the altar is injured? Answer: When the chalice is injured, (V. 15a) it must be signed with the Paghra, and then it returns to its holiness. But when the Paghra is injured, it must not be signed with the Desma; and if it comes, when injured, near to the altar, then the altar is injured as well.

27 Question: If it happens that a priest or deacon burning incense in the time of (M. 13a) the service by negligence goes to the altar, when he is not fasting, what must be done with the altar? Solution: If he has reached the lamp which is in the middle of the altar there is no injury. But if he goes beyond the lamp, the altar needs the consecration with oil.1

28 Question: If a priest or deacon comes to the altar and by negligence he has not his girdle on him, and other people see him and rebuke him, what must he do? And what must be done with the altar? Solution: If he has forgotten to gird his loins and enters accidently, (V. 15b) one step or two, immediately after remembering this he must take his napkin from his shoulder or his stole, and gird his loins; he must return backwards outside the altarplace and gird his loins1 with his girdle, and go to the altar as usual. But if he has reached the lamp which is in the middle of the altar, the latter needs consecration with oil. But if he willfully commits this insolence (M. 13b) and contumely,1 he must be reproved for his impertinence1 by the head1 of the Church.4

29 Question: If a pagan1 has gone1 to the altar, some three steps, is the altar injured? Solution: Some people say that the altar is not profaned by a pagan. But in order that we may not treat the matter4 lightly, let the one who signs the altar stand in the middle of the altarplace under the middle-lamp, when the curtains of the Sanctuary (V. 16a) are drawn, and say: “This altar is signed1 and consecrated, in the name of the Father1 and of the Son etc.”8

30 Question: What if he goes beyond the curtains of the Sanctuary and touched the altar? Answer: The altar must be consecrated9 with oil.

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1) V.: “the Consecration of the Altar”. 2) V. om. 3) V.: “insolence”. 4) V. om.; but adds: “and they must consecrate the altar”. 5) V.: “goes”. 6) V.: “the matter may not be treated”. 7) V. adds: “and is rejoiced” (sic!) it should be read: “Iψυλακο” = “is renewed”. 8) V. om. 9) V.: “signed”. 10) V. om.
31  Question: What if one of the children of the Christians, a child under the age of discretion, comes and reached only the threshold? Solution: There is no blame attached to him, because he is under the age of discretion and reached only the threshold.

32  Question: I saw a sacristan who, in giving the Qudasha to one of the faithful, rebuked (M. 14a) him because of his carelessness in the communion; and the faithful became angry and returned the Gemurta and threw it on the paten and said: "Let your Qudasha be a curse to you!" What must the sacristan do with the paten (V. 16b) and with the Paghra which is on it? Solution: The Gemurta which that foolish person returned, must be given to another person, and the sacristan must give another from the paten together with it, and the paten must be carried with his hands, until nothing from the Paghra which is on it is left. He must clean it with another chalice and desecrate it, that is to say: he must order it with a deacon.

33  Question: What if a sacristan takes a paten on which the Paghra is placed, and puts cooked food on it? Solution: That paten must not go to the altar, and the sacristan must be rebuked for his insolence.

34  Question: I have seen sacristans drinking in the altarplace (the water used for) the desecration of the chalice. Solution: They are not allowed to drink the water, used to desecrate the chalice, in the altarplace, but in the Baptistry or if (M. 14b) the Sacristy or in the Temple.

35  Question: I have seen altars (V. 17a) on which was a Gospel, but no Cross, and the Qudasha was consecrated on them. Solution: The Cross and the Gospel must not be removed from the altar, and the Qudasha may not be consecrated, when there is no Cross and no Gospel.

36  Question: Many priests found in the church, (act in this way): when they consecrate the Qudasha, the one who consecrates with them gives them the Paghra at the Morning Service, and they distribute it till the end; and then the priest orders alone. Solution: This is a reprehensible tradition from the beginning. The Fathers have allowed it in the villages in which there is only a single priest who consecrates in two or three villages for lack of


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priests. But when there is a deacon (V. 17b) in the village, the priest must consecrate with him and deliver the paten and the chalice to him, and then return to his own village to complete (M. 15a) his Mysteries. This is only allowed in case of necessity, poverty of the church and absence of priests.¹

37  Question: I saw very old priests of a very high age who consecrated in the Morning Service of Friday and Wednesday in the Hebdomada of the Apostles and of Elijah, and they entrusted the Mysteries, according to their careless habit, to a sacristan who gave them to the people the whole day; and at bedtime the sacristan took from the paten what appeared to him (to be a sufficient quantity), and he ordered the chalice and desecrated it. He kept till the next day what was left on the paten. In the Morning Service of that day he signed the chalice with the Paghra and distributed it to the people. Answer: ‘Fy, this is a doubly reprehensible thing. The foolish sacristan had to distribute the Paghra which was on the paten at the end of the day, and to order what was left. But he is not allowed (V. 18a) to leave anything for the next day. I saw a man who received the Qudasha one day and left something of it for the next (M. 15b). This is also greatly reprehensible.

38  Question: I saw a priest who made Qudasha and distributed to the people the whole day, and at the end he ordered the Qudasha alone, while there was no deacon with him to whom it could have been given. When they rebuked him for what he had done, he said: “I did it by an oversight”. Solution: The altar must be signed and the priest must be rebuked for his insolence.

39  Question: When a priest or deacon by an oversight goes to the altar barefoot or with pierced sandals, what must be done with the altar? Solution: The altar must be signed.

40  Question: A sacristan took a chalice to pour the mixture into it; and by an oversight he placed it on the ground. How must he bring it back to the altar, (V. 18b) after he had placed it on the ground? Solution: It is never right to place it on the ground; but it is sufficient to place the chalice on the ledges.

41  Question: What must be done with the Gemurta that falls from the paten which is upon the altar? Solution: They must take it (M. 16a) with care and give it to one of the people and add another one to it. But it should not be returned to the paten.

(1) V. om.  (2) V.: “a priest”.  (3) V. om.  (4) V. adds: “despising”.  (5) V. om.
Question: If a pagan takes the Qurbana¹ from the hands of the priest who does not know his identity; but afterwards he becomes aware (of the fact)² that he who received and took the Gemurta³ from him was a pagan, what must ¹he do with it (the rest of the Eucharistic Bread)?⁴ Solution: The priest must add another Gemurta to it and give it to one of the people.

Question: If³ one of the faithful comes to receive the Qudasha and he finds that the sacristan has ordered the Paghra⁴ (V. 19ᵃ) and the Dema in the chalice remained ⁵without the Paghra;⁶ may the sacristan give the Dema in the chalice without Paghra? Solution: If he has cleansed the paten with the chalice, and crumbs have fallen into the chalice, they must give them to the communicant. But they must not give the chalice alone without crumbs.

Question: In case there is much rain from which a large flood arises which⁸ goes into the Temple and the Sacristy (M. 16ᵇ) is⁹ the altar⁹ injured? Solution: If it does not reach the altarplace there is no injury to it.

Question: What if the water has penetrated one foot¹⁰ or two into the altarplace. Solution: 'The altar needs signing.'¹¹

Question: If there is no wine found for the mixture (of the Eucharistic Wine), may they take raisins and soak them in water which they would offer on the altar? Solution: In the case of lack of wine they must soak raisins on the same day and in case of great necessity they may offer the juice on the altar.

Question: (What) if the sacristan is obliged (V. 19ᵇ) to consecrate at Morning Service, and the water has no time to get the strength of the raisins, unless they are soaked a day or two beforehand, in order to impart strength and colour to the water? Solution: They must break them to pieces in a mortar, pour water over them and purify them in a vessel, and then offer their juice on the altar in case of great necessity.

Question: How must the mixture in the chalice of wine and water be composed? How many portions of (M. 17ᵃ) wine and how many of water? Solution: According to the "Canons" (Law) equal parts of each. But if there is not enough wine, a third part of it

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¹ Qurbana: The act of offering the Eucharist.
² the fact: the fact that the person who received the Eucharist was a pagan.
³ Gemurta: The rest of the Eucharistic Bread.
⁴ Paghra: The paten used to hold the Eucharist.
⁵ without: The Dema (chalices) remained without the Paghra.
⁶ may: The sacristan may give the Dema in the chalice without Paghra.
⁷ Qudasha: The act of receiving Holy Communion.
⁸ large: A large flood.
⁹ altar: The altar of the Temple.
¹⁰ one foot: One foot of water.
¹¹ altar needs signing: The altar needs to be signed.
¹² raisins: Raisins soaked in water.
¹³ mixture: The mixture of wine and water.
¹⁴Morning Service: A service held in the morning.
¹⁵ strength: The strength imparted by the raisins.
¹⁶ Sacristy: The room where sacred vessels are kept.
¹⁷ Canons: The laws or rules regulating religious or ecclesiastical conduct.

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(must be wine), and if there is not enough for a third part a fourth: five parts of water and one of wine. If there is not enough for a fifth, then ten of water and one of wine.

49 Question: It is written in the "Admonitions" that a priest is not allowed to take more than five Gemurta's, and a deacon (no more than) three. But lo, we see sacristans giving two and three to the people, and more than three to the deacons and more than five to the priests. Solution: This Canon holds good in the monasteries where the sacristan knows the number of the communicants more or less exactly. But (V. 20a) in the churches of the laymen there is no fixed number, as sometimes a hundred draw near and some other time two hundred [and more.] Because the priests cannot know the quantity of the Gazza which might remain for them, they distribute it to the people [as without their will.]

50 Question: I saw on Maundy Thursday that the sacristans (M. 17b) gave more of the Paghra than is due to the deacons and the clerics. Solution: Because of the carefulness of the sacristan that nothing of it should remain till the next day he distributes it because (it is) the Passion (of our Lord), I mean.

51 Question: Is it allowed to bring the Qudasha outside the church to the sick [and the invalid] and to take it to the houses of the faithful? Answer: The Qudasha should not be brought outside the church and be taken over unclean places, except in case of necessity till the outer-door of the church with lights and incense. But it should never be taken outside the outer-door of the church.

52 Question: I saw sacristans who kneaded a Qutsatha with ordinary leaven, in the time of the Evening-service, and at the time of the Night-service they took half of the dough and baked therewith Purshana's in the ordinary way; they signed the other half with the holy Leaven and baked this dough and offered it on (V. 20b) the altar under the pretext that they would give from those Purshana's (M. 18a) to the pagans and children who are not careful with them and with the crumbs that fall from them, because sometimes they eat them after their food and drink. Answer: The Qutsatha must be kneaded in the middle of the night, when the

(1) M. and V. use different words to express the same thought. M. litt.: "receivers". V. litt.: "those who draw near". (2) V.: "of the towns". (3) V. om. (4) V. om.: reads: "of his carefulness". (5) V. om. (6) V. has plural: "censers" (the Syriac has both meanings). (7) V.: "is not allowed". (8) V. om.; consequently its text is without meaning.
cock cries; this is fit and right. But those who desire to sleep knead it in the evening, under a pretext which is not valid. If they want the truth, they must knead the dough of the Purshana’s in the time of the Evening-service and bake both parts in the Morning-service after having impressed a stamp in that profane part, that it may be distinguished from that dough that is kneaded when the cock cries; thus he shall make a Qetsatha with the holy Leaven intended for the altar, and that ordinary one for distribution.\(^1\)

53 Question: If a sacristan by mistake puts oil of the lamps in the Qetsatha in stead of olive-oil and he notices his mistake soon after while kneading the Qetsatha, what must he do? Solution: He must leave that dough to make Purshana’s (from it) and prepare another dough (M. 18\(^b\)) with another leaven.\(^3\)

54 Question: If a sacristan brings oil from the grocer and makes a dough with it, and the smell of the oil is (V. 21\(^a\)) different from that of olive-oil, what must he do? Answer: He must make from it Purshana’s, and prepare another dough with other olive-oil and leaven to make a Qetsatha.\(^3\)

55 Question: If impure olive-oil bought in the market is brought into the church and the sacristan does not notice it and makes a Qetsatha with it, is the Qetsatha profaned and the altar injured? Answer: If the sacristan does not notice it, he is set free from blame and the sin is on the one who adulterated the oil because of a higher price.

56 Question: If a piece of dough falls from the hands of the sacristan to the ground, ‘after he has signed the Qetsatha,’ and it is covered with dust, what should be done with it? Solution: The sacristan must make a mark on it, in order that when it has been baked he should not bring it on (M. 19\(^a\)) the altar.

57 Question: I saw sacristans who in baking the Qetsatha rubbed water on their hands and under (V. 21\(^b\)) the Perishita, and baked it in the oven. Solution: The Qetsatha after having been kneaded with olive-oil and signed by the holy Leaven and stamped with the sign of the Cross should not have any water on it.

58 Question: What if a layman touches a piece of dough or the Perishita, after its being taken from the oven, or a Bukhra from it? Solution: The Qetsatha is desecrated, and they needs must fetch Leaven

\(^1\) V.: “but in this our time since they desire to serve in the Morning-service, they knead it in the Evening-service and take it in the Night-service”. \(^2\) V. om. \(^3\) V.: “oil”.

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from another church, 'if they have no other Leaven preserved besides the one by which to sign,' and prepare another Qêtsatha.

59  **Question:** What if water falls on the Qêtsatha after it has been baked? **Solution:** The Qêtsatha has lost its holiness and they must prepare another one in its place.

60  **Question:** If a drop of water falls on a Perishita or on a Bukhra and the sacristan takes it (M. 19b) and places it on one side, can he perform the Mysteries with (V. 22a) that Qêtsatha? **Solution:** If a layman touches a piece of dough or a Bukhra, all the dough is injured. In the same way when a drop of water falls on a Bukhra, all the Qêtsatha is injured. St. Paul bears witness to this: "And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it".

61  **Question:** If a Bukhra falls to the ground from the basket which is in the hands of the sacristan, what must be done with it? **Solution:** The sacristan must put it aside so that they may not bring it by mistake (on the altar).

62  **Question:** What if it happens that a deacon in helping the sacristan to prepare a Qêtsatha forgets to gird his loins or steals something from the Qêtsatha or from the altar? **Solution:** That Qêtsatha is desecrated and if they bring (something) from it on the altar, the altar is desecrated as well.

63  **Question:** What if he prepares the Qêtsatha without sandals? **Solution:** It is desecrated (M. 20a) as mentioned before.

64  **Question:** (V. 22b) When the sacristan consecrates in the Morning-service of Sunday and brings sufficient Paghra for his need and he is about to bring other Bukhra’s in the Mysteries, and the sacristan wishes to distribute to the people Purshana’s, what must he do? **Answer:** He must single out more than he needs and set it aside for the communion of the Mysteries, and distribute what is left in the basket as he likes it.

65  **Question:** Some people say that it is not right to bring Bukhra’s in pairs on the altar; is this true or not? **Solution:** After having reached the number of three you may bring them in the way you wish.

66  **Question:** In case there are only a few communicants, how many

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(1) V. om.  (2) V. om.; consequently the meaning of the preceding words changes into: "profaned".  (3) V. adds: "because he may not offer it on the altar".  (4) V. om.: "lay".  (5) V. adds: "being baked".  (6) V. om.  (7) Added in V.  (8) V. om.  (9) V.: "It is desecrated in the same way".  (10) V.: "bringing".  (11) V. adds: "the sacristan".

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of them (viz. the Bukhra's) must they bring on the altar? Solution: Less than three is not allowed.

67 Question: If there are no communicants at all, apart (V. 238) from the priests and deacons, how many of them must they bring? Solution: One to sign with and another to be signed; it is not allowed under any circumstance to bring less than two.

68 Question: (M. 20b) And if they bring only one Bukhra, what must be done to them? Answer: Those who bring one Bukhra must be deprived of their office that they may not serve the order of the Priesthood, because they have insulted the holy Mysteries.

69 Question: If the priests who have been insolent have been rebuked, should they be admitted again to their office? Solution: After their rebuke they should stand in sackcloth and ashes in order that all who see them may know their transgressions and admonish them not to repeat their wrongdoing.

70 Question: Are they allowed to bring on the altar a Prishta that is slit (V. 23b) or torn in the oven, or a Bukhra which is defective? Answer: It is not allowed to bring on the altar anything defective and the sacristan must be careful in this (respect) with might and main.

71 Question: If they bring them on the altar by mistake, is the altar injured? Answer: If the thing is done by mistake, they must show condescension to the sacristan; and the altar is safeguarded. But if this was done (M. 21a) by purpose, the sacristan must be rebuked and the altar signed.

72 Question: If a priest comes to pour the mixture into the chalice and by mistake he pours in wine which has not been mixed? Answer: The chalice is desecrated and if they bring it on the altar, the altar becomes desecrated as well.

73 Question: What should be done with it, if he does not bring it on the altar? Solution: He must take a Qetsaja from the paten and sign it, as we have shown above, and say: "This chalice is signed with the life-giving Paghra, in the name of the Father and of the Son etc.".

74 Question: (V. 24a) And what must be done with it, if he brings it on the altar? Solution: He must distribute it together with a chalice that is desecrated to the people, and the next day they must consecrate the altar with oil.

(1) V. om.; but meaningless. (2) V. om. (3) Not in M., but in V. (4) V. has the passive. (5) V. adds: "blameworthy". (6) V. om.
75 Question: And if by mistake he pours water (alone) into the chalice in stead of the mixture? Solution: The same thing must be done as in the case of wine alone.

76 Question: If the sacristan brings Paghra on the altar in (the time of) the Mysteries and afterwards it is seen that there is not a sufficient quantity on the paten, can he (M. 21b) add something to it before consecrating? Solution: They bring the paten of the Mysteries with the Anthem of the Mysteries, and the sacristan may add to it as much as he desires, until they lift the veil from the paten. But after the Officiant has signed it (at the first) "The grace of..." he should never add anything.

77 Question: If the sacristan bakes a Qetsatha and together with it other ordinary (V. 24b) Bukhra's and by mistake he brings one or two of such Bukhra's in the time of the Offertory and if this error is noticed by him at the time of the breaking of the Bread, what must he do with that ordinary part and with the altar? Answer: (In a case like this) he must distribute the ordinary part to the communicants, because the Spirit has been invoked over it, and the next day he must consecrate the altar with oil. 4

78 Question: When the sacristan cleans the altar, what should be done with the dust? Solution: (The altar) must be carefully cleaned, and they must throw (the dust) in the river Tigris or any other river or in a place that is not (M. 22a) trodden by feet, because nothing must remain of the crumbs which are cleaned from the altar.

79 Question: And what about the ashes that are found in the censer? Answer: They must throw them in the river Tigris, because prayers have been recited over them, and their perfumes have been incensed before (V. 25a) the Ark of the Lord.

80 Question: I saw deacons who received the Qudasha in the Mysteries at the time of the hymn: "Our Lord Jesus, the adorable King", and the sacristans then gave them Purshana's which they put in their pockets, and they returned at the last Lord's Prayer and kissed the altar and the priests while the Purshana's were with them. I think that this is reprehensible. Solution: Bukhra's should not be brought to the inner side of the candles which are in the middle of the altarplace, and those who bring them are reprehensible. The sacristan who has to keep order and not disorder must

(1) V. om.  (2) V.: "not".  (3) V. adds: "and it has been consecrated".  (4) V. om.  
(5) V.: "Purshana's".  (6) V. om.
distribute the Purshana’s after the Lord’s Prayer while standing at the entrance of the altarplace and give to everyone who goes away 'his portion' in his hand. (M. 22b) The latter must kiss it and go. In case he has taken anything before the aforesaid time, he may not enter the altarplace, (V. 25b) but must leave the Purshana’s on the outer side of the lamp, and enter, kiss and afterwards go away. In the same way the sacristan should not bring the Q’tsatha, when it is baked, to the inner side of the lamp, but he must put it on its outer side, and there he must single out for the altar what is to be consecrated. He must be careful in the preservation of the altar, in order that the younger deacons may not cause great injury.

81 Question: What must be done, when a Q’tsatha is baked and they consecrate a part of it in the Morning-service, and they have need of consecrating another part of it in the Mysteries and the sacristan wants to distribute Purshana’s from it to the children and the faithful? Answer: When the sacristan is consecrating in the Morning-service, he must single out what is necessary for the Mysteries on one side, and then distribute the rest.

82 Question: If a priest of the church sits down to make the Q’tsatha, and in putting olive-oil and flour into it and kneading them together forgets (M. 23a) to put (V. 26a) salt into it, and remembers somewhat later that he did not put salt (into it); and afterwards, being perplexed in his mind and wishing to ascertain whether he had put salt (into it) or not, he takes a little of the Q’tsatha and puts it in his mouth to taste it. Having observed that it is without salt, he returns the small portion of dough which he had put in his mouth to the Q’tsatha and spits what he had masticated out of his mouth on the ground, and throws salt on the Q’tsatha and finishes his work of baking, and consecrates (a part) of that Q’tsatha and distributes it to the people. What do you say about this? Answer: It is a Jewish practice and not that of true Christians. That wretched man committed many irregularities in his diabolical deed.

83 Question: Show me clearly the nature of his irregularities. (Answer:) The first irregularity is that he tasted the Q’tsatha and desecrated the Leaven; the second that he broke (V. 26b) his fast; the third that he brought back to the Q’tsatha what he had masticated

(1) V. om. (2) V.: “go away”. (3) V. om. (4) V. adds: “tell me”. (5) V. om.

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and made it dirty (M. 23b) with his saliva; the fourth that he desecrated the altar by bringing a Qētsatha that was profane and dirty, and consecrated it. All this is unlawful.

84 Question: What if someone asks: “How can this wound be healed, and what must be done with his Qētsatha and with the altar to return its holiness unto it? Answer: Leaven must be brought from another church, the sacristan of which is of an established reputation in virtue and carefulness and well known in the service of the altar. They must consecrate the altar, and the priest should henceforth never be trusted with the service of the church. He who admits him again to serve the altar is reprehensible in the same way.

85 Question: A (V. 27a) sacristan baked a Qētsatha in the oven, and because the oven was not heated as it ought to have been, the Qētsatha stuck to the oven and he could not take it out, because it was not yet baked. He brought dry vineshoots and threw them in the oven and set fire to them and heated the Qētsatha which became baked; and he took it out as he wished. What would you (M. 24a) say about this? Is the Qētsatha injured or has it been saved? Answer: I have never heard of such a thing. But I think that the Qētsatha is not injured.

86 Question: What if after the sacristans have baked and taken the Qētsatha out of the oven, they bring some straw and throw it in the oven that it may loose its holiness, and a sacristan takes pieces of wood to which he sets fire; is the Qētsatha not injured? Solution: When the Qētsatha has been taken out of the oven, we throw some (V. 27b) wheat-straw and desecrate the oven, in order that no layman may touch it; then we throw pieces of wood into it and set fire to them. As long as the Qētsatha is in the oven, the latter is not desecrated.

87 Question: How many times do we sign over the Paghra and Dēma? Answer: Three times; apart from the signing of the Paghra with the Dēma and of the Dēma with the Paghra.

88 Question: Which are these signs and in which places (of the Liturgy) should they be made? Solution: The first at: “The grace of...”; the second at: “And for all...” (M. 24b) and the third at: “...lifting up...”.

89 Question: I saw some of the old men who did not sign at the

first “The grace of...” while the rest signed (there) and (do so) up till now. Solution: Those who do not sign at the first “The grace of...” say this: “Three signs only should be made and not four; one at: “And for all...” (V. 28a), the second at: “...lifting up...”, and the third with the Paghra over the Dema and with the Dema over the Paghra. But the rest sign at the three Canons, and say that the fourth sign is separated from these three, because it is the union of the Paghra with the Dema and of the Dema with the Paghra. (They take) their argument from the Ordination-service, when the Ordainer signs three times over the Ordinand, the fourth time being when he says: “N.N. is set apart, consecrated and perfected for the work of priesthood, in the name of the Father”. The same is the case with the fourth sign over the Qurbana which is (that of) the (above) union.

90 Question: How many are the signs which the priest makes in the time of (M. 25a) the Qudasha? Solution: Nine.

91 Question: Which are they? Solution: Three over himself; three over the Paghra and Dema; and three over the people.

92 Question: Mark them clearly for me. Solution: Over himself: (V. 28b) the first at: “...and that we may raise...”; the second, when he signs the Bukhra; and the third, when saying “One holy Father, one holy Son,...”.

93 Question: Those over the Qurbana are known as they have been spoken of above; (but) those over the people which are they? Answer: The first is at the second: “The grace of...”, when the priest raises his voice, and although he signs over his own person, he lifts his hands upwards, in order that he may sign the Cross over the people; and then the people bow and adore, because the Mysteries were finished at the “The grace of...”, and kiss the Cross with the symbol of which they have been signed. The second is at: “The gift of the grace of...”; and the third at: “He who has blessed us...”.

94 Question: I saw deacons who said in receiving the chalice to bring it out to the people: “Bless, o my Lord”, and took the veil from the chalice and (M. 25b) immediately they returned it (V. 29a) and so went out. What symbol does this represent (lit. is this mystery)? Answer: The deacons are following unknowingly a tradition which they see from one another.

(1) V.: “his”. (2) V. om.

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Question: Show me clearly what symbol is therein? Solution: The deacon says: "Bless, o my Lord" and he bows his head, because he expects to participate in the signing which the priest makes over the people, together with them.  

Question: I saw some priests who in taking the Bukhra said in the moment of the last signing: "We draw nigh, o my Lord, in the true faith" and signed the symbol of the cross over the Bukhra which was in their hands, with their thumb. Answer: This is blame-worthy and practised only by men of the villages and of the mountains. But you, o Brother, be careful never to let a man practise this!  

Question: When the deacons come (V. 29b) from the Bema carrying the Cross and the Gospel, on which side must he who carries the Cross stand, and on which side the one who carries the Gospel? Solution: He (M. 26a) who carries the Cross must stand on the righthand side, with his face turned towards the people, because coming out first he enters first, and they go to meet him and kiss him.  

Question: Why must the censer in the time of the Qudasha stand on the lefthand side and not on the righthand side? Solution: Because the censer must be at the righthand side of the priest, as he is the consecrator of the Paghra and (also because they burn perfume) in honour of the Qurbana and of the priest and of the holy words that come forth from his mouth.  

Question: Why must the Paghra, when placed (on the altar) be placed on the lefthand side and the chalice on the righthand side? Solution: Because when the priest turns his face (V. 30a) towards the altar and the East, his (right) hand consecrates the Paghra and absolves the people.  

Question: What symbol is there in the two fans which are in the hands of the two deacons which stand round about the altar, on the righthand side of the priest and at his left, when he consecrates? Solution: Because they fill the place (M. 26b) of Gabriel and Michael who were at the sepulchre of our Lord. Although there are many angels these two only have charge of the service of the altar and of the priest who consecrates.

(1) V. om.  (2) V. om.  (3) V. om. the negative; but the meaning is the same: "beware of letting a man practise this".  (4) V. om.  (5) V.: "the priest".  (6) V. om.  (7) V.: "(although there) were (many angels) there. So also there are many deacons present."
Question: There was once a dispute as to which was greater the Cross or the Gospel. Answer: Some people say that the Cross is not greater than the Gospel, nor the Gospel greater than the Cross. These two are one. The Cross fills the place of Christ, while the Gospel is His message, His word and His commandments. (V. 30b)

Question: How many times does the priest say in the Mysteries: “Peace be with you”? Solution: Three times; once before the Gospel, the second time after the Canon: “… and that we may raise…”; and the third time before: “One holy Father”. Their meaning is the peace which our Lord gave unto His disciples after His resurrection: once on the Sunday of the Resurrection, another time on the New Sunday, and the third time at the Sea of Tiberias when John said: “It is the Lord.”

Question: (M. 27a) If a Metropolitan or a Bishop be present at the beginning of the Mysteries, and the priest takes the Cross, when (the procession) comes out for the Bema, where must the priest who carries the Cross stand, on the righthand or on the lefthand side? Solution: The Bishop stands before the altar, his face (looking) to the West, and the Cross on the righthand side on the righthand (V. 31a) of the Bishop. The Cross comes out first and they kiss first the Cross and then the hand of the Bishop. Those who make the Cross stand at the lefthand side, do it for one of the two following reasons: either from ignorance or pride, as they consider themselves higher than the Cross.

Question: Show me the meaning of the Throne in the Temple or in the House of Prayer, and of its decorative work and its coverings. Answer: The Throne in the church is like Golgotha on which it is believed that the Cross of our Saviour was fixed. The big cross at its head (represents) the wood on which (M. 27b) our Lord was crucified. The Cross on the Throne which is at the top of Golgotha is the image of Christ on the Cross. The Gospel which is at the side of the Cross (V. 31b) represents the word of Christ our Lord with His Gospel and commandments, in the likeness of a king holding in his hands the scepter of the reign. The purple-coloured covering which is over the Cross is the likeness of the purple with which the priests covered our Saviour when they brought Him out to be crucified. The two fans at the two


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sides are the two robbers at the right and at the left (of Christ).

**Question:** Why do all the services begin with the Lord’s Prayer, while in the services of Betrothal and Marriage and in the Funeral-service they never say the Lord’s Prayer, neither at the beginning nor at the end? **Answer:** You must know that in former times they never said the Lord’s Prayer, neither at the beginning nor at the end. There was once a Jacobite monk who began to dispute with a Catholicos of ours in the East, and that (M. 28a) monk wrote in one of his books (V. 32a) words of insult against us, saying: “You Nestorians do not recite in your services the prayer which our Lord has taught His disciples, as we recite it at the end of our services”. And when the Patriarch heard the insult of the heretic, the Catholicos ordered that this prayer: “Our Father which art in heaven...” should be recited at the beginning and at the end of our services: a thing which is more than the Jacobites do, because they recite it only at the end of their services.

**Question:** How did formerly the service begin in the Evening, at Night and in the Morning? **Solution:** The deacon intoned: “Peace be with us”, and the priest recited in the Evening-service: “Let us confess, O my Lord, thy Godhead...” and began the Marmitha. In the Night-service the deacon said: “Let us arise to prayer. Let us pray. Peace be with us”; and the priest prayed: “Let us arise, O my Lord, in thy power” and began (V. 92b) the Hulala’s.

**Question:** Who wrote the addition to (M. 28b) the Lord’s Prayer? **Solution:** Formerly this prayer was recited without the addition as the Jacobites recite it. But when the Patriarch Mar Timothy was ordained, he added this Canon: “Holy, holy, holy art Thou, our Father which art in heaven, full are...” in it. He took two words from its beginning which he joined to the Canon and added at the end of the prayer: “Glory be to the Father... From everlasting...” He then returned to the first two words which he made to follow the Canon: “Holy, holy”, as they farce the Mar-mitha’s with the canons. This Canon (rule) was handed down in all the churches of the Nestorians.

**Question:** It is good that this prayer is said in all (V. 33a) the services and there is a great advantage in it. But why do they not recite the Lord’s Prayer in the Rituals of Betrothal and Marriage,

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(1) V. om.  (2) V.: “monk”.  (3) V.: “the”.  (4) V. om.
Baptism and Burial? Solution: We have spoken at some length about Baptism and shown that it is necessary that the Lord’s Prayer (M. 29a) should be recited in that service at the beginning, in the middle and at the end as it is recited (also) three times in the Mysteries.

Question: Name clearly these three times to me, because it seems that it is only recited twice. Solution: The first time at the beginning of the service; the second time after the consecration of the oil, because he signs it with holy (previously consecrated) oil and says: “Fit us ever, o our Lord and our God,...” and they respond with the Lord’s Prayer. The third time when they desecrate the water of Baptism, (V. 33b) they recite in responses the Lord’s Prayer and the rest and they sing in praise: “One is the Lord etc.”. They describe the power of the Lord’s Prayer fully in those two antiphons. A clear demonstration and confirmation of these (prayers) is the prayer that accompanies it: they pray after these: “O Compassionate One whose name is holy” and its alternative prayer, and the Priest seals.

Question: What is the reason that this prayer is not used in the Ritual of Betrothal and Marriage? Solution: We have (M. 29b) asked many people about this, and everyone gave his own explanation.

Question: Mention them to me. Solution: Some say that the Lord’s Prayer comes from the mouth of the Saviour and must be recited by the mouth of the whole congregation, when they are calling for help, hallowing His name, magnifying His heavenly kingdom and asking for (V. 34a) food for the sustenance of their lives and deliverance from evil. But in the Betrothal- and Marriage-services every prayer and supplication is for two persons, that their doing may be successful and their consent and betrothal may be blessed and their drinking-cup may be consecrated; and at a Marriage that their wedding may be blessed and their bed consecrated and their conjugal intercourse perfected. They do not ask at that time for the forgiveness of sins nor for the abundance of food. But others say that they do not recite the Lord’s Prayer because of the laziness of the priests.

Question: But you, (M. 30a) what do you say about this? Solution: I say that all things that happened to the faithful in ancient
times were performed in the church and accomplished in the middle of the congregation of the faithful. (V. 34) Usually they performed the betrothal in a Sunday-service, so that there would be a great congregation in the church; and after the morning-psalms they recited the Lord’s Prayer and immediately after this they performed the Ritual of Betrothal while the Lord’s Prayer had already been recited.

113 **Question:** But if they do not marry in the church, but go into the house of the bride to marry, how can they share in the Lord’s Prayer? **Solution:** First they begin with the Lord’s Prayer to which they join the Ritual of Betrothal.

114 **Question:** But if their wedding takes place after days or months, will they be without participation in the Lord’s Prayer? **Solution:** The Betrothal and Wedding is one act. (M. 30) As the clergy recite one (V. 35) Maṭebha at night, in the time of the Evening-service, and sleep the rest of the night, and arise at the end of the night and finish their service without the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer having been said, but praying and intoning the Hulala, so also at the Wedding-service. Because the Lord’s Prayer, once said, does not need to be repeated.

115 **Question:** What is the reason that they do not recite the Lord’s Prayer in the Funeral-service? **Answer:** A dead man who passes away returns to the earth whence he was formed. He does not recite prayers nor does he hallow the name of his God nor can he praise his Lord and magnify His kingdom. God’s will has been fulfilled for him, because he returned to his dust, and he does not need any sustenance or food. He is delivered from the harms of evil (V. 35) and those who pray for him ask that he may be accepted by his Lord and acquire confidence before Him and his sins may be forgiven. As from the mouth of the dead man (M. 31) they make supplications, such as this: “O Lord, Thou God of my salvation”, and: “Behold the dead”, and “You shall not forget my soul”, and: “O Lord, (rebuke me) not in Thine anger” (etc., together with Antiphons and hymns etc.)

116 **Question:** But what is the second method? **Solution:** If a man

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ing’, and: ‘O Lord, my hope’, and the Antiphons of the same kind; and the hymns: ‘Have mercy on me, o Lord’, and: ‘Who is upright’, and: ‘Have mercy on me in His mercy’, and the rest of the ‘Antiphons of the Way’.”
dies at the end of the day, after the Evening-service, the priests must go to the house of the dead man and recite the Mautehba over him, and in this way the Lord’s Prayer is recited, (V. 36a) and during the Morning-service after the morning-psalms they begin the Mautehba's of the Funeral-ritual and all their service over him, and in this way the Lord’s Prayer has been recited: a clear argument that we must recite the Lord’s Prayer over the departed. I have buried many dead in the village Nineveh, 'the house' of the ignorant, and I saw their priests who after the dead man had been buried and they had sealed the prayer over the grave, returned to the church with the whole congregation of the faithful and recited the Lord’s Prayer; they kissed the Cross (M. 31b) and gave peace to one another and recited two prayers and sealed. Then they went to the house of the dead man and ate. Then the Lord’s Prayer is properly recited in the Funeral-service. I have heard that also in the country of Ḥazza (V. 36b) they recite the Lord’s Prayer at the Funeral-service. We are not able to find the custom of the Ancients about this question. Do what may please you!

117 Question: I saw many priests who when reciting the Mautehba of the Evening-service over the dead recited two prayers only. They did not recite the Seal of the prayer nor did they sign over the assembly or over the dead man. Some of them, however, did recite the Seal and made the sign over the assembly and also over the dead man. What is the reason of this difference and what is the reason of those who sign and the argument of those who do not sign? Answer: The argument of those who do not sign is as follows: the Service and the Burial (M. 32a) of the Departed has no regular beginning and end; they simply join in it one Mautehba with another, followed (V. 37a) by the "Antiphons of the Way". After having buried the dead man and finished their whole service, then they seal. They reckon in this way that Mautehba of the Evening-service as the beginning of the Mautehba’s of the Morning. This is the argument of those who seal after the end of the Burial-service. As to those who seal in the Evening-service, they argue as follows: This day we recite one Mautehba, and it is not necessarily joined with the Mautehba’s of the Morning-service, sealing the Evening-service, because (the service) is ended. The

(1) V. om. (2) V. om: “after”; consequently the translation should be changed a little.

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next day we begin with the Service of the Departed. In this way the Mautb̆hā of this day is not reckoned with that of to-morrow. Therefore we sign and seal the people that is assembled, in order that it may not be sent away without blessings and the sign of the Cross 'of the Lord.' He (the priest) makes also the dead man a partaker of his signing as though he was still with us in his body and needing the signing 'of the Cross.' (V. 37b).

118 Question: When a Bishop or a Metropolitan (M. 32b) begins the Mysteries and they (the procession of priests) go out while (reciting) the Anthem of the Sanctuary,₁ where must the Cross stand, on the righthand side of the Bishop or on his lefthand side? Solution: The Bishop takes the place of Christ, as is written: “The priest like Jesus Himself etc.”, and the Cross is the symbol of the victory, as we sing in the Antiphon: “The head of the Angels Gabriel extolls the symbol of the Cross”. Therefore the Cross must stand and be on the righthand side of the Bishop. The assembly kisses (first) the Cross and then the Bishop. The Ancients did so.

119 Question: We see now in our days that they do the contrary: the Cross stands at the lefthand side of the Bishop and the faithful (lit. men) kiss first his hand (V. 38a) and then the Cross. The same thing is done on Palmsunday: when they recite the Antiphons and celebrate the feast with a procession, the Cross is on the lefthand side of the Bishop and the Gospel on his righthand.₆ Solution: The ecclesiastical chiefs of our time do this for one of the two (M. 33a) following reasons: either from pride or ignorance.

120 Question: How is this (to be understood)? Solution: Because they have the presumption that they are the Church and the Altar, having power over all and being higher than the Cross and the Gospel. O ignorant Bishops, who do not know how to stand! Those who kiss the hand of the Bishop before the Cross do this from ignorance as well.

121 Question: There are also some priests who when they begin the Mysteries place the Cross on the platform in front of (V. 38b) the altar, the Cross facing the altar, and when they carry the Cross while reciting the Anthems of the Sanctuary₇ they turn its front to the West and go in this way to the Temple. Solution: Every Cross when it is set down must face the West and be

₁ V. om. (2) V. adds: “either”. (3) V.: “of the sacristans” (cf. n. 7). (4) V. om. (5) V. adds: “of the Bishop”. (6) V. om. (7) cf. n. 3.
placed in the East, and the priest who carries it and goes out to
the Temple is bound to bow and adore first before the Cross; then
take it and go out. But those (M. 33b) who let the Cross face the
altar, argue that they carry it in the same way as they come; they
need not to turn the front of the Cross from East to West. They
act in this way either from laziness or ignorance.

122 Question: There are some who in bringing out the Cross place
it (V. 39a) on the Bema facing the altar while the Gospel which
is at the side of it faces also the altar. Solution: I have never
seen this nor have I heard it from the Ancients. Wherever the
Cross and the Gospel are placed they must be placed in the East,
in order that they may be adored by the faithful (lit. men). He
who does something else strays from the truth of the Church.

123 Question: To say more of what I asked you concerning the Palm-
sunday, to the effect that we see that the Cross stands at the left-
hand side of the Bishop and the Gospel at his righthand side:
you have not given me an argument for this. Solution: Those who
do this argue (M. 34a) that the Gospel is higher than the Cross
and do not know that without the Cross the Gospel would not have
been known nor that the Cross taking the place of Christ comes
first. Let these things (V. 39b) be known to you! Here end the
various (questions) concerning the ecclesiastical orders and

PRAISE BE TO GOD.  

(1) V.: “the East”. (2) V.: “however”. (3) V. om.