

THE OFFERTORY OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT'S *MISSALE ROMANUM*

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ABBREVIATIONS

Denz. = Henricus Denzinger, ed., *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Herder, (Friburgi Brisg. – Barcinone, 1955)

e.g. = *exempli gratia*

et seq. = *et sequentes*

i.e. = *id est*

Msi = Johannes Dominicus Mansi, ed., *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, Expensis Antonii Zatta Veneti, (Venetiis – Florentiae, 1758-1798)

PG = Jean-Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologia cursus completus: Series graeca*, Migne, (Parisiis, 1857-1866)

PL = Jean-Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina*, Migne, (Parisiis, 1844-1891)

INDEX

ABBREVIATIONS	0
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. DEFINITION.....	2
1.1 OFFERTORY AND SACRIFICE	2
1.2 THE THEOLOGY OF THE OFFERTORY	3
1.3 THE OFFERTORY IN THE LITURGY	3
2. PHASES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OFFERTORY	4
2.1 FROM THE APOSTOLIC AGE UNTIL THE SECOND CENTURY	4
2.1.1 THE NEW TESTAMENT	4
2.1.2 JUSTIN MARTYR (D. 165)	6
2.1.3 IRENAEUS OF LUGDUNUM (D. 202)	7
2.2 FROM THE 3 RD TO THE 11 TH CENTURY.	8
2.2.1 IN ORIENT	8
2.2.2 IN OCCIDENT	9
2.3 FROM THE 11 TH TO THE 16 TH CENTURY.	11
3. THE OFFERTORY IN THE <i>MISSALE ROMANUM</i> OF 1570.....	12
3.1 THE RUBRICS AND PRAYERS	12
3.2 THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE OFFERTORY	14
3.3 CRITICAL EVALUATION OF ITS UNDERSTANDING	17
CONCLUSION.....	19

INTRODUCTION

In this essay, we will study the theology that underlies the offertory of the Roman Missal published in 1570 by the authority of the Council of Trent during the pontificate of Pius V.

The object of our study is of greater interest: after the introduction of Pope Paul VI's *Novus Ordo Missae* (Apostolic Constitution *Missale Romanum* of 3 April 1969), the criticisms of the more traditionalist sectors of the Church immediately rose up against the changes introduced by the «*Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de sacra liturgia*».

Some authors¹ deny even the existence of an offertory rite in the *Novus Ordo Missae*, and by subscribing to the Thomistic thesis that the offertory is an integral part of the Mass, they question the validity of Paul VI's Missal. Others see it as a defective rite that does not enhance the traditional content of faith.²

On the side of the reformers³, the desire to get rid of that relic of the Middle Ages, which was the traditional Offertory, was one of the driving forces behind the creation of the new “Presentation of Gifts”, a rite in which the procession of gifts offered by the people is accentuated, without denying however that it is a preparation for the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

Contrariwise, in the Missal of 1570, the Offertory prayers echo those of the Canon of the Mass, and they do not hesitate to refer to the species of bread and wine as the “immaculate host” and “chalice of salvation”, and this *before* the consecration.

In order to understand the theology of this Offertory, we will begin by placing the offertory within the broader framework of sacrifices in general, from the perspective of the Religious Sciences (1.1) and Catholic theology (1.2), before defining it as a liturgical unit (1.3).

Then we will trace the main phases of the evolution of the Offertory (2). The laconism of the ancient documents, their ambiguity in language and the distance that separates us from them make the interpretation of these texts not only an ungrateful and highly speculative task but rather almost impossible: On one side, reading ancient texts in the post-modern era can only produce multiple anachronical hypothesis; on the other side, the polysemic fecundity of the words of the text makes impossible the strict determination of one specific sense.⁴ Nevertheless, we will see in this section how the offertory went from being a simple “presentation of gifts in a full meal” to a symbolic rite.

We will also see how two opposing tendencies collide in the early stages of the evolution of the offertory: the idea that the Eucharist is a purely spiritual *sacrificium laudis* and the influence of paganism that soon led to the appearance of a symbolic offertory rite (2.1). Then we will study

¹ Gregory Hesse, Michel-Louis Guérard des Lauriers, Anthony J. Cekada among others.

² Arnaldo Xavier de Silveira

³ We read in the *Notitiae* 6 (1970): “the former prayers... were not accurate expressions of the genuine meaning of the “Offertory” rites but merely anticipated the meaning of the true and literal sacrificial offering that is present in the Eucharistic Prayer” [quoted by Cekada (2010)].

⁴ Cf. Olivier-Thomas Venard and École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem, eds., *Le sens littéral des Écritures*, *Lectio divina* Hors série (Paris: Éd. du CERF, 2009).

the genesis of the Offertory in the liturgy of the city of Rome (2.2.2) and its influence on the development of other rites.

In the third section, we will present the offertory prayers and gestures most relevant to our objective: to discern the nature and theological value of the oblation rite in the Offertory. We accompany the presentation of these prayers and rubrics with some considerations (3.1) which will then allow us to make a theological synthesis of them (3.2).

In the last section, we make a critical evaluation of the way in which the Church understood or understands today the offertory theology. This evaluation is intended to show how the Offertory of the 1570 Missal, despite of being *lex orandi et credendi* for many centuries, produced diverse and serious objections on the part of the prelates of the Church, and how the opposing tendencies mentioned in 2.1 results today in two totally different visions of Eucharistic theology.

1. DEFINITION

“Offertory”⁵ is a borrowing from Latin “*offertorium*”, from Vulgar Latin *offertus*, from classical Latin *oblatus*, past participle of *offerre*: to present, bestow, bring an oblation, sacrifice.

1.1 Offertory and sacrifice

In Religious Sciences, according to R. Will, the offertory is an essential part of the sacrifice. He defines sacrifice as a sacred act by which man presents an offering that costs him something and that is pleasing to God.⁶

Summarizing the analysis of Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss⁷, D. R. Jones presents a scheme with the most simple and elementary parts of a sacrifice:

“(a) The entry. The person to be benefited, whoever performs the rite, the place and the instruments all have to be prepared with varying degrees of detail... The worshipper ‘enters cautiously step by step, into de sacred world’.

(b) The victim. Precisely chosen, the victim was destroyed and thus separated from profane world. ‘It was consecrated, it was sacrificed [sic] in the etymological sense of the word... The is a curve of religiosity, reaching a climax and then diminishing.

*(c) The exit. The worshipper himself passes though the same curve of rising and diminishing holiness.”*⁸

⁵ “Offertory,” in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2019), <https://www-oed-com.scd-rproxy.u-strasbg.fr/view/Entry/130628?redirectedFrom=offertory> [accessed October 15, 2019].

⁶ Robert Will, *Le Culte: Étude d’Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*, vol. 1, *Études d’Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* publiées par la Faculté de Théologie Protestante de l’Université de Strasbourg 10 (Strasbourg, Paris: Istra, 1925).

⁷ Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice, its Nature and Function* (London: Cohen and West, 1964) [a translation of *Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice*, 1898].

⁸ Douglass R. Jones, “Sacrifice and Holiness,” in *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology*, ed. Stephen W. Sykes (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 9–21.

As we can see, the dynamics of the sacrifice are inscribed in a parable that begins with sacralization (offertory) and ends with desacralization (consecration). The entry into the sacred world starts with the victim's offering: the victim is sacralized before being destroyed.

J.-H. Nicolas adds that what most characterizes a sacrifice among all acts of worship is that it is offered only to God. An offering (*simplex oblatio*) “*can be made to someone as representing God (to the poor, to ministers of worship)*”⁹

1.2 The theology of the Offertory

Offertory theology is intimately linked to sacramental theology. The value that theologians attach to the Offertory is relative to their conception of the Eucharist. In our opinion, nowadays there are two main theological tendencies among catholic scholars:

a.) Those who emphasize the sacrificial value of the Mass generally consider the offertory as a true act of religion.

This position has its roots in the scholastic presentation of the Eucharist. For instance, as a theological unit, Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–1274) defines the Offertory as the “*materiae consecrandae oblatio*”.¹⁰

Furthermore, in his *Summa Theologiae* he presents it as an integrant part of the sacrifice of the Mass: “*Sic igitur populo praeparato et instructo, acceditur ad celebrationem mysterii. Quod quidem et offertur ut sacrificium, et consecratur et sumitur ut sacramentum, primo enim peragitur oblatio; secundo, consecratio materiae oblatae; tertio, perceptio eiusdem. Circa oblationem vero duo aguntur, scilicet laus populi, in cantu offertorii, per quod significatur laetitia offerentium; et oratio sacerdotis, qui petit ut oblatio populi sit Deo accepta.*”¹¹

Michel-Louis Guérard des Lauriers is one of the most recent exponents of this position¹², and one that brings the Thomistic theory to its paroxysm. He is abundantly quoted by the most traditionalist authors (F. Quoëx, M. Fiedrowicz, etc.)

b.) Those who emphasize the thanksgiving character of the Mass tend to minimize its sacrificial character and view the Offertory as a simple procession of offerings.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin is one of the most recent exponents of this position. It seems that his views greatly influenced the architects of the *Novus Ordo Missae*.¹³

1.3 The Offertory in the Liturgy

⁹ Jean-Hervé Nicolas, *Synthèse dogmatique: de la Trinité à la Trinité* (Paris: Éd. Beauchesne, 2012), p. 923.

¹⁰ 1S d8 q2 a4 qc3.

¹¹ ST3 q83 a4.

¹² Michel-Louis Guérard des Lauriers, “L’offertoire de La Messe et Le Nouvel Ordo Missæ,” *Itinéraires* 158 (1971).

¹³ Cf. Anthony Cekada, *Work of Human Hands: A Theological Critique of the Mass of Paul VI* (West Chester, Ohio: SGG Resources, 2015), pp. 287-288.

In the context of the Roman rite, the word offertory can refer to many different things¹⁴:

- a. The procession of the faithful or the clergy bringing the gifts to the altar. In the Roman liturgy, this procession turned during the Middle Ages into a collection of alms.
- b. A synonym of “*oblatio*” (sacrifice), one of the names with which the liturgy of the Mass was called between the 3rd and the 6th centuries.
- c. It can refer to the preparation and offering of the gifts (*dona, munera*) during the liturgy of the Mass. It is called “*offertorium*” in the *usus antiquior* of the Roman Rite, and “*Praeparatio donorum* [ad offertorium]” in the Novus Ordo of Pope Paul VI.

In the structure of the Mass, the Offertory takes place after the readings and the proclamation of the Gospel (and eventually after the Creed, if it is to be said¹⁵) and concludes with the prayers before the Preface.¹⁶

- d. It can also refer to the antiphon accompanying the Offertory of the Mass, *i.e.* the Gregorian “*antiphona ad offertorium*” or simply “*offertorium*”.

As we can observe, it is a polysemic word that throughout history has lent itself to name synecdochically the most diverse extrinsic elements of a complex act of worship: prayers, rites, gestures, chants...

Next, we will outline the stages of the development of the prayers and rites of the Offertory. Obviously, due to the brevity of this assignment, we will only present the authors and documents that most concern our topic.

2. PHASES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OFFERTORY

2.1 From the Apostolic Age until the second century

2.1.1 The New Testament

2.1.1.1 The Eucharist

In the First Epistle to the Corinthians (probably written about 56/57 A.D.)¹⁷, Paul describes the schema of a Christian “sacred meal” (1 Cor 11, 23-26) making an association between the Lord’s Supper, his death, and his coming. He distinguishes this “sacred meal” from other gastronomic manifestations of Christian brotherly charity (1 Cor 11, 17-22).

¹⁴ Josef Höfer, Michael Buchberger, and Karl Rahner, eds., “Opferung,” in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1986).

¹⁵ Adrian Fortescue, J. B. O’Connell, and Alcuin Reid, *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, 15th ed (London ; New York: Burns & Oates, 2009). p. 71.

¹⁶ Michael Fiedrowicz, *Die überlieferte Messe: Geschichte, Gestalt und Theologie des klassischen römischen Ritus*, 3., aktualisierte Aufl (Fohren-Linden: Carthusianus-Verlag, 2014).

¹⁷ Raymond Edward Brown, *Que sait-on du Nouveau Testament?*, trans. Jacques Mignon (Montrouge: Bayard, 2011), p. 559.

He also puts in relation the Eucharist with the sacrifices of the Old Testament (1 Cor 10, 14-22). This leads many catholic authors¹⁸ to assert that already in the primitive Church the Eucharist was regarded as a sacrificial meal that replaced the sacrifices of the Old Testament.

2.1.1.2 Agape feast

In the Acts of the Apostles (probably written between 85-95 A.D.)¹⁹, the disciples regularly gather to celebrate the *κλάση του ἄρτου* – breaking of bread: “Ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς.” (Act 2, 42).²⁰

Although there is no unanimous agreement²¹ among the exegetes to identify the fraction of the bread in the Lucanian narration with the Paulinian commemoration of the Lord’s Supper, we can deduce from the context of our verse that it was indeed a kind of sacred action (Act 2, 46-47):

*καθ’ ἡμέραν τε προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ,
κλῶντές τε κατ’ οἶκον ἄρτον,
μετελάμβανον τροφῆς ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει καὶ ἀφελότητι καρδίας
αἰνοῦντες τὸν θεὸν*

According to J.-A. Jungmann, at this point there was no ritual preparation of bread and wine, for “as long as the Eucharist was celebrated in connection with the fraternal agape, no preparation was needed, because the gifts were already placed on the table”.²²

It wouldn’t be unrealistic if we imagined that in the religious conscience of the first Christians bread and wine already had at least a certain sacred value in both meals: as we can observe, both the commemoration of the Lord’s Supper and the fraternal agape feast included the breaking and eating of the bread in a sacred context.

F. Quoëx goes much further and suggests that: “As the Eucharistic rite instituted by Christ is essentially a sacrifice, as our faith proclaims, should it not, like any sacrifice - sacrifices of the Old Testament, but also sacrifices of paganism - presuppose an offering on which the sacrum facere would be accomplished?”²³

This position does not correspond to the most recent contributions of research on Christian worship in the first century:

¹⁸ Alfred Vacant, Mangenot Eugène, and Amann Émile, eds., “Messe,” in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique : contenant l’exposé des doctrines de la théologie catholique, leurs preuves et leur histoire* (Paris-VI: Letouzey et Ané, 1928), cols. 825-848.

¹⁹ Brown, *Que sait-on du Nouveau Testament?* p. 269.

²⁰ All quotes from the New Testament are taken from Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Novum testamentum Graece*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28th revised edition, 5th corrected printing (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2016).

²¹ Brown, *Que sait-on du Nouveau Testament?* p. 330.

²² Joseph-André Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia. Explication génétique de la Messe romaine*, vol. 2, 3 vols., *Théologie* 20 (Paris: Aubier, 1952), p. 271.

²³ Franck Quoëx, “Remarques historiques et doctrinales sur l’offertoire romain,” in *Aspects historiques et théologiques du missel romain: actes du 5e colloque d’études historiques, théologiques et canoniques sur le rite catholique romain (Versailles, novembre 1999)* (Paris: Centre International d’Études Liturgiques (CIEL)), 2000), 101–27, p. 103.

“There are no grounds for distinguishing a sacramental Eucharist from other sorts of Christian meals in the earliest period: agape and Eucharist are synonyms at this time, and it was only much later that meal and Eucharist became separated from one another.

The association of the bread that was eaten with the body of Christ (and in some cases the cup with his blood) seems at first not to have been made in every early Christian community.

The association of Christian meals with the Last Supper and the sacrificial interpretation arising from that (perhaps stemming from Paul in 1 Corinthians 10–11) was not one that was taken up very widely until the New Testament books began to be recognized as Scripture in the third century.”²⁴

2.1.2 Justin Martyr (d. 165)

Apart from the New Testament, one of the oldest documents about the primitive Christian liturgy is Justin Martyr’s First Apology. Probably written between 151-155²⁵, it describes how Christian celebrated the Eucharist, mentioning a sort of proto-offertory rite:

“ἔπειτα προσφέρεται τῷ προεστῶτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἄρτος καὶ ποτήριον ὕδατος καὶ κράματος, καὶ οὗτος λαβὼν αἶνον καὶ δόξαν τῷ πατρὶ τῶν ὄλων διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου ἀναπέμπει καὶ εὐχαριστίαν ὑπὲρ τοῦ κατηξιῶσθαι τούτων παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ πολὺ ποιεῖται· οὗ συντελέσαντος τὰς εὐχὰς καὶ τὴν εὐχαριστίαν πᾶς ὁ παρὼν λαὸς ἐπευφημεῖ λέγων· Ἀμήν.”²⁶

Jungmann suggests that Justin’s preparation of the gifts had no ritual value.²⁷ The opposite opinion is held by F. Wieland: *“During the second half of 2nd century, under the influence of paganism, which strictly speaking had altars and oblations, even more because the Old Testament prescribed that Israel make to God ritual offerings, we observe notions foreign to Christianity slipping into the beliefs of the faithful. Bread and wine were considered gifts that could be offered to God”²⁸*

It is interesting to note that Justin admits that there is a similarity between his description of the proto-offertory of the primitive *Εὐχαριστία* and the mysteries of Mithras.

Quoting Luke 22,19 Justin makes a parallel between Christ’s Last Supper and the *Εὐχαριστία* and doing this he underlines its sacrificial value. While water is not mentioned in his account of the Last Supper, it appears as one of the elements for the preparation of the gifts in the Christian *Εὐχαριστία* (1.65) and also as a part of the mystic rites of Mithras (1.66):

*ἄρτος καὶ ποτήριον ὕδατος καὶ κράματος
ἄρτος καὶ ποτήριον ὕδατος*

²⁴ Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation.*, Alcuin Club Collections 87 (London: SPCK, 2012), p. 24.

²⁵ Justin and Leslie W. Barnard, *The First and Second Apologies*, Ancient Christian Writers, no. 56 (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), p. 11.

²⁶ Apology, 1. 65. [Text from PG, vol. 6, col. 42].

²⁷ Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia. Explication génétique de la Messe romaine.*, p. 272.

²⁸ Vacant, Eugène, and Émile, “DTC.”, col. 864.

F. Quoëx supposes that water is only used to temper the wine²⁹. J. Uzzell points out that maybe the similarities between Justin's proto-offertory with the religious practices of some Greek Mystery rites weren't just a coincidence: "*it is clear that substantial ideological and ritual similarities did exist. In fact, they were sufficiently obvious to the early Christian apologists that they felt obliged to offer some explanation for them, particularly since, to their embarrassment, it was clear that the Mystery rituals predated their own. The most common explanation, offered by many Christian apologists including Firmicus, Maternus, Tertullian and Justin Martyr, was that demons had deliberately prefigured Christian sacraments in order to lead people astray.*"³⁰

Furthermore, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* he understands the offering of fine flour prescribed in the Old Testament as a «type» of the Eucharistic bread: "*he interpreted the offering of the bread of the Eucharist as being the fulfillment of the thank-offering prescribed in the Old Testament for those cured of leprosy (Lev 14:10) and thus still as a part of the offering of thanksgiving.*"³¹

2.1.3 Irenaeus of Lugdunum (d. 202)

In his *Adversus haereses* (probably written around 180-190³²), the bishop of Lugdunum develops a theory of the sacrifice: not only the body of Christ is offered during the Eucharist, but also bread and wine are offered to God: "*oportet enim nos oblationem deo facere, et in omnibus gratos inveniri frabricatori deo... in dilectione ferventi, primitias earum quae sunt ejus creaturarum offerentes... Est ergo altare in coelis, illuc enim preces nostrae et oblationes nostrae diriguntur.*"³³

In his important research about the origins of offertory in the Christian liturgies, G. Wetter comments on this passage making an significant remark: "*The Body and the Blood of the Lord don't play here a real role at all, the central point is the Sacrifice of the New Covenant, which is the offering of gifts on the altar.*"³⁴ J. Coppens qualifies Wetter's conclusion by pointing out that: "*the sacrifice of which St. Irenaeus speaks is a new sacrifice, distinct from the oblations of the Old Testament; a sacrifice that presupposes the effects of the transubstantiation, the conversion of bread and wine in the body and blood of the Lord*"³⁵

The same author affirms that apart from Irenaeus and Justin, the other documents of early Patrology ignore the offering of the first fruits (*primitiae creationis*), or do not consider it as a distinct element of the Eucharistic action and concludes that these two testimonies are not sufficient to justify the Wetter's theory.³⁶

²⁹ Quoëx, "Remarques historiques et doctrinales sur l'offertoire romain.", p. 102.

³⁰ Jennifer Susan Uzzell, "The Relationship between Hellenistic Mystery Religions and Early Christianity: A Case Study Using Baptism and Eucharist," 2009, <https://www.academia.edu/34255907/>

³¹ Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation.*, Alcuin Club Collections 87 (London: SPCK, 2012), p. 52.

³² Josef Höfer, Michael Buchberger, and Karl Rahner, eds., "Eirenaïos," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1986).

³³ *Adversus haereses*, IV,18,4 [Text from G. Wetter (1922), p. 94, *vide infra*].

³⁴ Gillis P. Wetter, *Altchristliche Liturgien II: Das christliche Opfer. Neue Studien zur Geschichte des Abendmahls*, vol. 2, 2 vols., Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 17 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922), p.94.

³⁵ Joseph Coppens, "L'Offrande des fidèles dans la Liturgie eucharistique ancienne," *Cours et conférences des semaines liturgiques*, 5, 1927, 99–123, p. 112.

³⁶ Coppens. p. 113.

However, it seems pertinent to recall here one of the fundamental principles for the interpretation of ancient liturgical sources: “Usually only particularly significant, new, or controverted practices will tend to be mentioned, and others will probably be passed over in silence; but the first time something is mentioned, it does not necessarily imply that it is the first time it has been practiced.”³⁷

2.2 From the 3rd to the 11th century.

From the 4th century onwards, as Jungmann states³⁸, almost everywhere in the Church there is, at least occasionally, a presentation of offerings by the faithful. Even if the notion of spiritual sacrifice (*sacrificium laudis*), inherited from the Old Testament and abundant in the writings of the early Fathers, persisted into the 4th century, it appears that “the bread and cup came more generally to be thought of as the «oblation»—the substance of the eucharistic sacrifice—from the third century onward and, [...], for some eucharistic prayers to incorporate a statement that these were being offered. This idea would no doubt have been encouraged by the fact that the participants continued to bring these gifts with them from home to present, just as they had previously brought food and drink to contribute to the supper.”³⁹

2.2.1 In Orient

In Orient, the apparition of the *πρόθεσις* (the place for the preparation of the oblations for the Divine Liturgy) and the use of a single bread for consecration, greatly diminished the relationship between the oblation of the faithful and the Eucharist, because it made it impossible to offer the oblations during the Liturgy.⁴⁰

The solemn transfer of the bread and wine needed for the Liturgy, from the prothesis to the altar, appears for the first time in Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite’s *Περί της εκκλησιαστικής ιεραρχίας* (III, 2) and its called “the Great Entrance”.⁴¹ This sort of offertory procession is still one of the most important ceremonies of the Byzantine liturgy today.

We can briefly describe it as follows⁴²: the archdeacon, with a disc containing the parcels of bread not yet consecrated, opens the procession preceded by a candle; then come the deacons, who carry empty patens; then, the first priest carrying the chalice with the unconsecrated wine and then other priests also carrying chalices; they are followed by the second officiant, who carries the *αγία λογχή* (liturgical spear) crossed on the Eucharistic spoon; other ministers carry the sacred books, the crucifix, a small sponge to pick up the crumbs of the prothesis, and the round fans (*ρίπίδιον*) to protect the oblation from the flies.

We may be surprised by the honors given to unconsecrated species, but, as A. Rentel remarks: “The ritual of the Divine Liturgy [...] already in the preparatory rites, points to the bread as the «Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world» and who is «sacrificed for the life of

³⁷ Paul Bradshaw, *La liturgie chrétienne en ses origines: sources et méthodes* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1995), p. 95.

³⁸ Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia. Explication génétique de la Messe romaine*, p. 274-275.

³⁹ Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies*, p. 54.

⁴⁰ Cf. Aimé G. Martimort, *L’Église en prière: Introduction à la liturgie*, 3rd ed. (Tournai: Desclée & Cie, 1965), p. 378.

⁴¹ Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia. Explication génétique de la Messe romaine*, p. 275-276.

⁴² Fernand Cabrol, “Offertoire,” in *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris-VI: Letouzey et Ané, 1935), col. 1952.

the world and its salvation» [...]. *Here there is no movement, no intervening climax; the liturgy began where it ends.*”⁴³

2.2.2 In Occident

In Occident, the link between Offertory and eucharistic sacrifice was much better preserved and persisted until the 11th century⁴⁴.

In the third century, Cyprian, bishop of Carthage from 249 to 258, already recognizes as a general rule that the faithful must present an offering in order to participate in the Eucharistic celebration. Making a harsh rebuke to a rich lady who does not bring bread for the Eucharist, he says: “*dominicum celebrare te credis... quae in dominicum sine sacrificio venis, quae partem de sacrificio quod pauper obtulit sumis*”⁴⁵

The Synod of Elvira (held in Spain probably between ca. 300-306⁴⁶) states⁴⁷ in its cc. 28-29: “*Episcopos placuit ab eo qui non communicat munera accipere non debere*” and “*Energumenus qui ab erratico spiritu exagitur, hujus nomen neque ad altare cum oblatione, recitandum, neque permittendum, ut sua manu in ecclesia minister*”.

Also, the Third Council of Carthage (397⁴⁸) mentions the oblation of bread, wine and other elements: c. 23 “*Ut in sacramentis corporis, et sanguinis Domini nihil amplius offeratur, quam ipse Dominus tradidit, hoc est panis, et vinum aqua mixtum (Primitiae vero seu mel, et lac, quod uno die solemnissimo pro infantium mysterio solet offerri, quamvis in altari offerantur, suam tamen habent propriam benedictionem, ut a sanguinis, et corporis dominici distinguantur.) Nec amplius de primitiis offeratur, quam de uvis et frumentis.*”⁴⁹

In 585, Third Synod of Mâcon insists on the offering of the faithful, recalling that this use is part of the tradition: c. 4 “*Propterea decernimus ut omnibus dominicis diebus altaris oblatio ab omnibus viris et mulieribus offeratur, tam panis quam vini*”⁵⁰

At the end of the 7th century, the *Ordo romanus I* (PL 78, 943 sq.) offers us the first description of the Roman Mass we had and describes the structure of the Offertory of the Pope's stational Mass.

F. Quoëx, summarizing the analysis of A. Chavasse (*La liturgie de la ville de Rome du V^e au VIII^e siècle*, 1993), presents two complementary movements during the Offertory of the ancient Roman liturgy:

OFFERRE	SUSCIPERE
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⁴³ Alexander Rentel, “Byzantine and Slavic Orthodoxy” quoted in Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies*, p. 184.

⁴⁴ Cf. Martimort, *ibid.*

⁴⁵ *De opere et eleemosyna*, C. XV [Text from Jungmann (1952), p. 273].

⁴⁶ Henricus Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, ed. Karl Rahner, 30th ed. (Friburgi Brisg. - Barcinone: Herder, 1955), p. 28.

⁴⁷ Johannes D. Mansi, ed., *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, Expensis Antonii Zatta Veneti, vol. 2, 53 vols. (Florentiae, 1759), col. 10.

⁴⁸ Denz., p. 46.

⁴⁹ Msi., vol. 3, col. 924.

⁵⁰ Msi., vol. 9, col. 951.

-The pope offers wine and bread (represented by the sub-deacon <i>oblationarius</i>) (nn. 77-79; 83-84);	-The Pope receives from the archdeacon his own oblations (<i>oblatam Pontificis</i>) and places them on the altar (n. 83-84);
-the nobles offer bread (n. 69);	-the Pope <i>suscipit oblationes</i> of the nobility (n. 69);
-the attenders, bread and wine (n. 76);	-the Bishop <i>hebdomadarius</i> receives the oblations of the attenders (n. 76);
-the archiparaphonist offers water in representation of the <i>schola</i> (n. 80);	-the archdeacon receives the Pope's personal oblation (n. 77-79); a sub-deacon <i>accipit fontem</i> from the hands of the archiparaphonist (n. 80);
-the <i>hebdomadarius</i> and the deacons present their offerings (n. 82)	-The Pope receives the oblations of the <i>hebdomadarius</i> and the deacons and places them on the altar (n. 82)

Jungmann notes that: “*The main lines of this rite of oblation can still be seen in the Pontifical Office half a millennium later.*”⁵¹

2.2.2.1 The Gallican Rite

Before continuing with the history of the Offertory of the Roman liturgy from the 11th century onwards, it seems opportune to conclude this part with a description of the Gallican liturgy.

The Gallican Rite, in F. Cabrol's opinion⁵², seems to be inspired by both the Mozarabic rite, the Roman and the Byzantine rite. Here, it is interesting to note an offertory procession, called *Sonus*, where the as yet unconsecrated species are already designated as the body and blood of Christ.

A document commonly known as *Expositio brevis antiquae liturgiae gallicanae*, probably written in the around 700⁵³, describes this procession in this way:

“*Sonum autem, quod canetur quando procedit oblatio, hinc traxit oxordium [...] Nunc autem procedentem ad altarium corpus Christi non jam tubis inreprehensibilibus, sed spiritalibus vocibus praeclara Christi magnalia dulci modilia psallet Ecclesia. Corpus vero Domini ideo defertur in turribus, quia monumentum Domini in similitudinem turris fuit scissum in petra [...] Sanguis vero Christi ideo specialiter offertur in calice, quia in tale vasum consecratum fuit mysterium Eucharistiae pridie quam pateretur Dominus [...] Aqua autem ideo miscitur, vel quia decet populo unitum esse cum Domino, vel quia de latere Christi in cruce sanguis manavit et aqua [...] Sursum corda ideo sacerdos habere admonet ut nulla cogitatio terrena maneat [...] in hora sacrae oblationis [...].*”

The vocabulary used (*oblatio, offertur*) and the description of the part of the Mass in which we find ourselves (*i.e.* before the *Sursum corda*), allow us to see clearly that it is an offertory rite, and that the author uses *oblatio* to refer to the gifts both before and after the consecration.

E. Martène, who together with U. Durand first published the *Expositio brevis* in 1717 in their *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*, is perplexed by the cult paid to the non-consecrated species in

⁵¹ Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia. Explication génétique de la Messe romaine.*, p. 278.

⁵² Cabrol, “D.A.C.L.”, col. 1954.

⁵³ Matthieu Smyth, “Le première lettre du pseudo-Germain de Paris et la mystagogie” *Miscel·lània Litúrgica Catalana*, no. 9 (1999): 51–71. In this article, in addition to presenting weighty arguments for later dating the *Epistola Prima*, he considers that, far from presenting a precise description of the rites of the Gallican Liturgy, Pseudo-Germanus' intention is more to make an allegorical reading of the rites.

pseudo-German's *Sonus* and being unable to recognize what is evidently an offertory rite, he reinterprets it as a commixture rite: "*tum corpus Domini in turri conservatum ex praecedenti sacrificio [diaconus] deferebat ad altare*"⁵⁴ H. Leclercq participates in the same perplexity, contenting himself with saying: "*talking about sanguis Christi, corpus Domini, corpus dominicum before the consecration has transformed this oblatio, he [Germanus] anticipates, without further thought*"⁵⁵

However, M. Smyth claims that "*it is this allegorical-narrative, figurative perspective, dependent on Antiochian historicism, which gives full meaning to the «proleptic» presence of the Holy Gifts during the procession. [...] It is because the oblation, already represented by the coming of the Gifts on the altar, has begun, that the faithful adore the Lord.*"⁵⁶

2.3 From the 11th to the 16th century.

Many authors agree⁵⁷ that from the 11th century onwards the offertory procession of the *Ordo Romanus I* underwent a radical transformation due to several factors:

a.) The communion of the faithful became less frequent: The exaltation of the Divine in the Liturgy⁵⁸ and the separation between the clerics and the laity⁵⁹ were the cause of a growing feeling of unworthiness among the faithful and "*led to the practice by many of non-communicating attendance at the Eucharist for considerable periods of time.*"⁶⁰ This contributed to the breaking of the link between the offering of the people and communion.

b.) From the 7th century onwards the "private Masses" appeared in monasteries as a consequence of the idea that priests offer the sacrifice on behalf of the laity. These celebrations, said by the priest alone, were also called "votive Masses" when they were applied for a particular intention. Moreover, "*the «fruits» of the Mass—the benefits which it brought—were commonly understood in a quantitative sense, so that two Masses were believed to bring twice as many benefits as one Mass, and this led to a dramatic increase in the number of celebrations. It was no wonder, therefore, that the offertory part of the rite, originally having just the single oratio super oblata, soon became subject to an explosion of additional prayers and ceremonial acts*"⁶¹

c.) From the 9th century onward unleavened bread, generally prepared in monasteries, began to replace ordinary bread.⁶²

⁵⁴ PL 72, 85-86.

⁵⁵ Henri Leclercq, "Messe," in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris-VI: Letouzey et Ané, 1934 1933), col. 660.

⁵⁶ Smyth, "Le première lettre du pseudo-Germain de Paris et la mystagogie," p. 64.

⁵⁷ Martimort, *L'Église en prière: Introduction à la liturgie*, p. 378. Also Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia. Explication génétique de la Messe romaine.*, p. 282 et seq.

⁵⁸ During Middle Ages Eucharist takes more and more a dramatic shape.

⁵⁹ For instance, we can read in the *Decretum Gratiani* C. 1 q.12 c. 7: "*Duo sunt genera Christianorum. Est autem genus unum, quod mancipatum divino officio, [...], ut sunt clerici. [...] Aliud vero est genus Christianorum, ut sunt laici. His concessum est [...] oblationes super altaria ponere, decimas reddere, et ita salvari poterunt.*"

⁶⁰ Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies*, p. 65.

⁶¹ Bradshaw and Johnson, p. 218.

⁶² Bradshaw and Johnson, p. 211.

d.) From the 11th century money begins to replace the offering of bread and wine. The offertory procession becomes a collection of alms for the sustentation of the clergy.⁶³

At this time we see the appearance of the offertory prayers that will later be found in the *Missale Romanum* of 1570, the missal that will be in use (practically unchanged) in the Latin church for more than 400 years until the publication of the *Novus Ordo Missae* of Pope Paul VI in 1969.

In the following chapter, we will make a genetic and analytical presentation of the offertory prayers and gestures contained in the *Missale Romanum* of the Council of Trent.

3. THE OFFERTORY IN THE *MISSALE ROMANUM* OF 1570

Just a few years after the end of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), Pope Pius V promulgates with the Bull *Quo primum* (14th of July 1570) the *Missale Romanum ex decreto sacrosancti concilii Tridentini restitutum*.

This missal, which was compulsorily imposed practically on the entire Latin Church, underwent several reforms throughout the centuries in which it was in force. The most important were those made under the pontificates of Clement VIII (1604), Urban VIII (1634), Leo XIII (1884), Pius X and Benedict XV (1920), Pius XII (1951-1956), John XIII (1961). Nevertheless, it remained almost unchanged until its abolition in 1969⁶⁴.

As we do not have the Roman "*editio princeps*" of 1570, for this section we will use a Roman Missal published in 1574 in Venice.⁶⁵

3.1 The rubrics and prayers

a.) The Offertory begins with the *Dominus vobiscum* and *Oremus* of the celebrant. No prayer answers this *Oremus*.⁶⁶ Then, the celebrant reads for his instruction the *Offertorium* (the text of the Gregorian melody sang by the *schola cantorum*).

b.) The priest takes the veil from the chalice and the paten (or the deacon gives him the paten with the host that he received himself from the sub-deacon), and he "*accipit patenam cum Hostia, et ambabus manibus usque ad pectus eam elevatam tenens, oculis ad Deum elevatis, et statim demissis, dicit: Suscipe sancte Pater, etc.*"⁶⁷

⁶³ Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia. Explication génétique de la Messe romaine*, p. 285.

⁶⁴ Cf. Fiedrowicz, *Die überlieferte Messe*, p. 44 et seq.

⁶⁵ *Missale romanum ex decreto sacrosancti concilii Tridentini restitutum et Pii V Pont. Max. iussu editum*, (Venetiis: Ex Bibliotheca Aldina, 1574).

⁶⁶ Maybe this silence is a vestige of the Ordo Romanus I, where no prayer was said except the *oratio super oblata*.

⁶⁷ "Ritus celebrandi Missam" in *Missale romanum*...

Only after the *recognitio* of Urban VIII, the *De defectibus Missae*⁶⁸ of the Roman Missal mentions that the “mental” offering of the *oblata* seems to be the minimum required for the Offertory: “*facta oblatione, saltem mente concepta*”⁶⁹.

The *De defectibus* mentions the necessity of the *oblatio* so insistently that it seems clear to us that for the editors of the augmented rubrics of the Mass, the Offertory was an integral part of it. Also, the necessity to make the pair *oblatio-consecratio* is comparable in the text to the duty of double consecration.

c.) These first prayers said by the priest, *Suscipe sancte Pater* and *Offerimus tibi*, probably appeared for the first time in the 11th century in the collection of apologies called “*Missa Illyrica*”.⁷⁰

It is interesting to note that the prayer *Suscipe sancte Pater* is composed in first-person and in singular: “*leaving no doubt as to who is regarded as the subject of the eucharistic action*”.⁷¹ Like the *Te igitur clementissime Pater* of the Canon, this prayer establishes a clear parallel with it, referring to the Father and not to the whole Trinity.

d.) As the priest blesses the water to be poured into the chalice, he says the prayer *Deus qui humanae substantiae*, “*an ancient Roman Christmas oration amplified by a reference per huius aquae et vini mysterium and by the solemn invocation of Christ's name before the concluding formula*.”⁷²

e.) As the priest returns to the middle of the altar, he makes a bow (*aliquantulum inclinatus*), lays the hands joined on the altar and says the prayer: *In spiritu humilitatis*. These prayers appear already in northern France in the middle of the 11th century.⁷³

Here we find another ritual parallel with a Canon prayer *Supplices te rogamus*, which indicates the same rubric: “*profunde inclinatus junctis minibus, et super Altare positus*”.

The *suscipiamur a Te* of the *In spiritu*, echoes the *partem aliquam et societatem donare digneris* of the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* of the Canon.

f.) Then, he stands erect and looks up to heaven (*elevatis ad coelum oculis*), subsequently he lowers the eyes to pray *Veni sanctificator*. We can find the same prayer already in the 9th century in the Stowe Missal.⁷⁴ It has two purposes: The invocation (or epiclesis), and the benediction of the sacrifice⁷⁵.

In many oriental liturgies, the epiclesis is generally pneumatological and occurs after the consecration. In the Roman Missal it is a late addition of the late Middle Ages, it is not *expressis verbis* pneumatological, it is not *strictu sensu* an epiclesis (according to

⁶⁸ An introductory section describing the actions to be observed in face of some common problems that may occur during the Mass affecting its validity.

⁶⁹ This clause does not appear either in the *editio princeps* of 1570 or in the *recognitio* of Clement VIII (1604).

⁷⁰ Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia. Explication génétique de la Messe romaine*, p. 329.

⁷¹ Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies*, p. 219.

⁷² Jungmann, p. 339.

⁷³ Jungmann, p. 327.

⁷⁴ Martimort, *L'Église en prière: Introduction à la liturgie*, p. 383.

⁷⁵ Nicholas Ghir, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; Dogmatically, Liturgically and Ascetically Explained*, 6th ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau - St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder, 1902), p. 530 *et seq.*

Jungmann the accent is placed on the blessing⁷⁶) and more generally we can inscribe it in the medieval dynamic that tended to make of the Offertory a "little Canon", a sort of proleptic duplication of the same.

Another parallel between the Offertory and the Canon in the following: an epicletic gesture carried out during the *Hanc igitur* before the consecration (*tenens manus extensas super oblata*) is also followed by a consecratory blessing *Quam oblationem*.

g.) After having incensed the altar of washing his hands, the priest returns to the middle of the altar and recites the prayer *Suscipe Sancta Trinitas*. This is perhaps the oldest of all the offertory prayers: "*In this place, just before the Oration fratres, and said by itself in this bowed attitude, the prayer is to be found even in an earlier period [10th or 11th century], and in Italy itself, as a component part of the Roman offertory plan there developing.*"⁷⁷

According to Jungmann, this Trinitarian invocation is of Gallican origin. It appears already in the 9th century in the Sacramentary of Sens: "*Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas, hanc oblationem quam tibi offerimus pro Imperatore nostro... pro omni populo christiano... et pro his qui nostri memoriam in suis continuis orationibus habent, ut hic veniam recipient peccatorum et in futuro praemia consequi mereantur aeterna*"⁷⁸ It is possible that this prayer was a substitute for the diptychs suppressed by Charlemagne in 789.⁷⁹

We can easily find parallels between this prayer and the Canon:

- The *anamnesis* of the first part of *Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas* (*ob memoriam passionis, resurrectionis...*) echoes the *Unde et memores* of the Canon.
- The *memento* of the saints (*in honorem Beatae Mariae*) echoes the *Communicantes*.

h.) Before saying the *secreta* of *oratio super oblata*, the priest turns to the faithful and invites them again to pray: *Oratione fratres*.

Jungmann remarks that: "*One of the few fixed points which recur unchanged in all the medieval oblation rites is a petition found near the end of the rite, a petition by the priest for the prayer of the bystanders. According to the 8th-century Roman pontifical rite as adapted to Frankish circumstances, such a ceremony occurred right after the celebrant had added his own gift to the oblation of the faithful and the clergy; he then turned around and, stretching out his arms, asked the other priests to pray for him.*"⁸⁰

3.2 Theological interpretation of the Offertory

From the previous section we can draw several conclusions:

1). The underlying theology of the prayers and gestures of the Offertory suggest us that in the Mass:

⁷⁶ Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia. Explication génétique de la Messe romaine*, p. 342 et seq.

⁷⁷ Jungmann, pp. 324.325.

⁷⁸ Jungmann, p. 323.

⁷⁹ Martimort, *L'Église en prière: Introduction à la liturgie*, pp. 386-387.

⁸⁰ Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia. Explication génétique de la Messe romaine*, p. 361.

-the priest truly offers

quam ego indignus famulus tuus offero tibi. The Offerimus tibi is in plural because the chalice is offered together with the deacon of the Mass.

-on behalf of the faithful

offerō tibi... pro omnibus circumstantibus.

-the "immaculate host" and the "chalice of salvation", even before the consecration

Suscipe, ...hanc immaculatam hostiam; Offerimus tibi calicem salutaris

-and this is a sacrifice pleasing to God.

Sic fiat sacrificium in conspectus tuo hodie, ut placeat tibi Domine Deus.

Oremus ut meum ut vestrum sacrificium acceptabile fiat.

-The priest and the faithful also offer themselves

suscipiamur a Te, Domine.

-for the forgiveness of sins, the salvation of the whole World, and in honor (and asking the intercession) of the Blessed Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, Saint Peter and Paul, the saints whose relics are on the Altar, and all the Saints.

Pro innumerabilibus peccatis, ...ut mihi, et illis proficiat ad vitam aeternam; proficiat... nobis ad salutem.

2.) As bread and wine are not mentioned in the texts (except in the prayer *Deus qui humanae substantiae*), but as the liturgy speaks almost always of *hostia immaculata, calix salutaris*, we cannot say that the priest simply offers bread and wine.

J. de Aldama remarks in this sense: "*Panem et vinum aliquo modo offerri, videtur certum ex variis locutionibus liturgicis. Id tamen non ita intelligendum est ut offeratur substantia panis et vini tamquam materia ex qua transiens, quatenus destruitur in ipsa effectione sacrificii...*"⁸¹

It is also interesting to note that all the prayers of the Offertory except one, *Suscipe sancta Trinitas*, does not explicitly refer to the one Sacrifice of Christ.

3.) The parallels with the Canon, as well as the terminological unity before and after the consecration, can be an indication of an ancient theological conception in which there was not yet a precise moment for the "consecration".

That ancient theological conception, *i.e.* that the body of Christ is in some way present in the eucharistic species but not from a precise moment, was common until the 4th century. Furthermore, among Western theologians "*it did not become a topic of philosophical debate ... until the ninth century*".⁸²

As W. Crockett observes, that liturgical and theological shift has been taking place since the fourth century: "*In the first place, the unity between symbol and reality, which was characteristic of the ancient world, is beginning to dissolve. The symbol is no longer seen as the means of participating in the reality, but is on the way to becoming a mere*

⁸¹ Joseph A. de Aldama et al., *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, Editio quarta, vol. 4, 4 vols., Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos 73 (Matriti: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1962), pp. 311-312.

⁸² Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies*, p. 221.

*sign or pointer that is separated from the reality that it signifies. It is against the background of this fundamental cultural shift that symbolical and realist language run into conflict with each other. As long as the symbol is the means by which the community participates in the reality that it signifies, there is no problem in using symbolical and realist language simultaneously. Once the unity between the symbol and the reality begins to dissolve, however, the presence of the reality seems to be threatened when symbolical language is used.”*⁸³

4.) After the reform of Urban VIII, the necessity to make the *oblatio* before the consecration, marks the next stage in the evolution of the same. If we translate this change into scholastic language, we could say that:

-The proximate matter (*materia proxima*)

Thomas Aquinas distinguishes remote matter (or *materia circa quam*) from proximate matter (or *materia ex qua*), the former being situated in the *genus* of substance and the latter in the *genus* of action⁸⁴. In ST3 q74 a1 he writes: “*panis et vinum sunt materia conveniens huius sacramenti*” That the *materia remota* of the Eucharistic sacrifice is bread (*panis triticeus*) and wine (*vinum de vite*) has been dogmatically defined by the Church (e.g. Denz. 430; 698; 877).

C. Pesch remarks: “*materia remota sacrificii est res materialis, ut taurus in vetere testamento; materia proxima est immutatio, qua illa res communi usui subtrahitur, ut occisio tauri*”⁸⁵

The Offertory is precisely that point where begins the sacralization of the elements to be offered. Theologians consider that the *materia proxima* of the Eucharist as a sacrament are the consecrated species⁸⁶, because of their *immutatio* as sign signifying sanctification.

According to Thomas Aquinas, sacrifice is defined as follows:⁸⁷

- *oblatio rei sensibilis* (a1)
- *solī Deo facta ad testandum ejus supremum dominium nostramque subjectionem* (a2)
- *per quamdam immutationem circa rem oblatam* (a3 ad3)
- *et facta a legitimo ministro qui est proprie sacerdos* (a4)

If we consider the Eucharist as a sacrifice, the *materia proxima* is the oblation of the Offertory, in which bread and wine are removed from common use, sacralized, immuted in the *hostia immaculata*.

-of the sacrifice of the Mass

When we make a distinction between the Mass as a sacrament and the Mass as sacrifice, we don't forget that the Mass is a sacrifice only sacramentally, but we don't consider it as a sanctifying rite (*signum sacramentale*) but as *signum ut sacrificium*.⁸⁸

⁸³ William R. Crockett, *Eucharist: Symbol of Transformation* (New York: Pueblo, 1989), p. 106-107.

⁸⁴ 2S d36 q1 a5 ad4: “*est duplex materia: ex qua, vel in qua, et materia circa quam: et primo modo materia dicta non incidit in idem cum fine: sed secundo modo est idem cum fine: quia objectum finis actus est.*”

⁸⁵ Christianus Pesch, *Praelectiones Dogmaticae: De Verbo Incarnato, de Beata Virgine Maria, de Cultu Sanctorum*, Editio IV et V, vol. 4 (Friburgi Brisgoviae: Herder, 1922), p. 309.

⁸⁶ Bernard Lucien, *De Eucharistia: Commentarius in Summam Theologicam Sancti Thomae* (pro manuscripto, 2003), p. 12.

⁸⁷ ST2-2 q85 a1-4

⁸⁸ Nicolas, *Synthèse dogmatique*, p. 944.

*“Est igitur sacrificium in generi signi ut sacramenta; sed cum haec significant hominis sanctificationem, illud significat supremam Dei maiestatem”.*⁸⁹

-is the oblation of the Offertory.

The action of offering. But we cannot simply say that it is the action of offering bread and wine, for we have already said that the priest offers the *hostia immaculata*.

3.3 Critical evaluation of its understanding

Already during the Council of Trent, some Council fathers submitted to discussion some abuses in the celebration of the Mass. One of them was: *“Idem consideranda in offertorio quaedam, ut illud, quod panis non consecratus vocetur hostia sancta et immaculata, oblata pro vivis et defunctis. - item illud, quod vinum, antequam consecretur, vocetur calix salutaris.”*⁹⁰

Despite this discomfort among the Council Fathers, as far as the offertory is concerned, the Council of Trent limited itself to defining:

a.) The sacrificial nature of the Mass;

Denz. 948: *“Can. 1. Si quis dixerit, in Missa non offerri Deo verum et proprium sacrificium, aut quod offerri non sit aliud quam nobis Christum ad manducandum dari: A. S.”*

b.) the remote matter of sacrifice of the Mass;

Denz. 877: *“per consecrationem panis et vini conversionem fieri totius substantiae panis in substantiam corporis Christi Domini nostri, et totius substantiae vini in substantiam sanguinis eius.”*

c.) The moment when the transubstantiation occurs;

Denz. 886: *“Can. 4. Si quis dixerit, peracta consecratione, in admirabili Eucharistiae sacramento non esse corpus et sanguinem Domini nostri Iesu Christi, sed tantum in usu, dum sumitur, non autem ante vel post, et in hostiis seu particulis consecratis, quae post communionem reservantur vel supersunt, non remanere verum corpus Domini: anathema sit.”*

d.) The Church in persona Christi offerente, offers and is offered in the Mass;

Denz. 938: *“Nam celebrato veteri Pascha, quod in memoriam exitus de Aegypto multitudo filiorum Israel immolabat [Ex 12.1ss], novum instituit Pascha, se ipsum ab Ecclesia per sacerdotes sub signis visibilibus immolandum in memoriam transitus sui ex hoc mundo ad Patrem, quando per sui sanguinis effusionem nos redemit "eripuitque de potestate tenebrarum et in regnum suum transtulit" [Col 1.13].“*

⁸⁹ Pesch, *Praelectiones Dogmaticae: De Verbo Incarnato, de Beata Virgine Maria, de Cultu Sanctorum*, ibid.

⁹⁰ A libellus mentioned the Acta of the Council: Abusus, qui circa venerandum Sacrificium evenire solent, partim a patribus deputatis abimadversi, partim ex multorum praelatoruin dictis et scriptis excerpti [8. Augusti 1562]. Quoted in Guérard des Lauriers (1971).

e.) Only a validly ordained priest can validly consecrate and offer the Eucharist.

Denz. 949: “*Can. 2. Si quis dixerit, illis verbis: 'Hoc facite in meam commemorationem' [Jo 22, 19; 1 Cor 11, 24], Christum non instituisse Apostolos sacerdotes, aut non ordinasse, ut ipsi aliique sacerdotes offerrent corpus et sanguinem suum: A. S.*”

As we can see, the Council definitions do not deal with “the problem” of the Offertory: What does the Church offer before the consecration?

For M.-L. Guérard des Lauriers., the Offertory is nothing more than the sacrifice of natural law. Thomas Aquinas says that offering sacrifice to God is “of the natural law” and neither sin nor the Redemptive Incarnation changes anything in this respect: the sacrifice, an *opus naturae*, remains what it must be, concomitantly with the Sacrifice of Christ. The sacrifice of natural religion remains an obligation, but it is only realized in the very act of Sacrifice offered by the Incarnate Logos.⁹¹

His conclusion seems logical to us, but only if we take as a premise the literality of the prayers, ignoring the *Sitz im Leben*⁹² of those who composed them. Indeed, many factors indicate to us that the symbolic realism of the Offertory is not a superfluous anticipation but reflects an earlier state of theological thought in which a precise moment in which the body and blood of Christ appears had not yet been defined (cf. 3.2.3).

In that theology, the Mass was holistically considered as an epiphany of Christ, and for this reason, the authors did not hesitate to speak of an “immaculate host” before and after the consecration.

The Offertory of Pius V’s Missal is neither an anticipation of the Canon, nor a sacrifice of natural religion, nor a theological unit that can be defined as archaic and problematic: it is a theology that the Westerners lost many centuries ago and that the Orientals still preserve: the whole Mass is a theophany of Christ.

“With respect to a “moment” of the Eucharistic consecration, the Byzantines by no means limited themselves to the epiclesis. But the most distinct feature of their approach seems to be not their preference for one set of words over another but their reverence toward the manual acts of the Eucharistic celebration—be it the priestly blessing, the elevation, or the immersion of the Lamb into the chalice. However strange this attitude may seem, there is some logic behind it. It stresses the unity of the liturgical text and ritual action behind it and, in the case of the elevation, the importance of experiencing the whole Divine Liturgy in its entirety—the gifts are not “complete” until they are needed for communion. Such a perception of the liturgy reveals its holistic and integral character and does not allow its reduction to the recitation of a «sacramental formula». ”⁹³

⁹¹ Guérard des Lauriers, “L’offertoire de La Messe et Le Nouvel Ordo Missæ.”

⁹² In the term the term *Sitz im Leben* we see that “the meaning and significance of the text is bound up with its inferred function within the community that produced it” Cf. Wolfgang Kraus, R. Glenn Wooden, *Septuagint research: issues and challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scripture*, (Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies, 2006), p. 23.

⁹³ Michael Zheltov, “The Moment of Eucharistic Consecration in Byzantine Thought,” in *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West: Essays in Liturgical and Theological Analysis* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 2010), 263–306.

As we can see, the offertory of the Tridentine Mass is also an interesting tool in the ecumenical dialogue with the Orthodox, and one more point that unites the two churches.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that for modern mentality, unfamiliar to the symbolic realism of the Middle Ages, the offertory prayers of the Tridentine Missal can be more than confusing.

This “small canon” has all the appearances of *sacrifice before the Sacrifice*. This might lead one to think that this Offertory founds a human religion in which man can offer a sacrifice to God without having to go through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

The answers to this problem have been the most varied: from accepting the existence of a sacrifice of the natural religion united to the Sacrifice of Christ at the moment of the offertory; to denying the religious value of the offertory and succumbing to an “*exaggerated zeal for antiquity in matters liturgical*”⁹⁴ that ignores the contributions that both paganism and the Middle Ages made to the development of the liturgy.

The thesis that we propose invites us at the same time to appreciate the influences of the past and to rediscover a less sacrificial and more Eucharistic vision of Mass: the presence of Christ in his Church.

⁹⁴ Pius XII, Encyclical *Mediator Dei*, 20th of November 1947

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