THE ORIGIN, HISTORY AND THEOLOGY OF THE BAPTISMAL FORMULA *"BAPTIZE IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, HE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT"* IN THE EARLY CHURCH

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I. Introduction to Mt. 28, 19b

The only scriptural text referring to baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity and enumerating the three persons is Matt. 28, 19: *πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος*[1]. The history of the fragment was much debated in modern scholarship, being contested even its Matthaean origin[2]. The presence of the text in

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[1] The verbs of the text are in Participle – Imperative – Participle which indicates a Semitic reminiscence because „in emphasizing the main verb, no idea of *going* need be present at all". This means that: 1. The verbal form was used primarily for what is to follow, like something necessary and regular for a group of people – identified here with the command to baptize and teach; 2. The participle must be qualitative, here not being used in an absolute manner as in the ten commandments of the OT; 3. When the participle was used with the imperative it was restricted to codes and quotations, indicating thus an impersonal tone. Bruce J. Malina, *The Literary Structure and Form of Matthew XXVIII,16-20*, NTS, vol. 17, 1970, No. 1, pp. 90-91, 96.

[2] The main objections are: 1. Only in Matthew the command to baptize is found; 2. The trinitarian formula is late, Paul and Luke speaking only about the baptism in the name of Christ; 3. The Jerusalemite community's closing in itself would not have been compatible with a command to go and teach; 4. The words of the formula do not appear in Eusebius' pre-Nicaean texts; 5. Apart from the phrase on baptism the text of Mt. 28,16-20 has a precise rhythm. None of the above observations can, nevertheless, prove the later introduction of the formula in the Matthaean text. Rahner and Fortman believe that in Mt. 28, 19b a systematic doctrine of an immanent Trinity cannot be found while Schweizer is a lot more careful underlining that the Names

Eusebius of Caesarea (who quotes sixteen times the fragment as „Go and make disciples among all nations in my name" and only five times the Matthaean form[3]) have influenced the matter. While Conybeare contends that the shortened version predates the first ecumenical council while the longer one follows it. Other critics consider the shorter formula as the original and the longer as dating from around 130-140 C.E. (first appearing in the old African Latin texts). One argument referred to the declaration in Mt. 28, 18b: „And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth", which implies a Christological rather than Trinitarian continuation: „Go and make converts for me, baptizing them in my name, teaching them to respect all that I have ordered to you". Opposing this view was Hubbard who evinced that the short Eusebian version does not have a biblical fundament and that it could be perceived as a free quotation[4]. Nevertheless, most

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imply a concept of an active, actual God that is love. Karl Rahner, *Trinity Divine*, in ***, *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vol. 6, New York, Herder and Herder, 1970, p. 295; Edmund J. Fortman, *The Triune God: A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1972, p. 115. Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mathew*, Trans. By David E. Green, Atlanta, John Knox, 1975, p. 533). Schaberg claims that Christian baptism was from the beginning considered and action and presence of Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit, while denying the trinitarian nature of Mt. 28, 19.

G.F. Moore believes anachronistic the reading of the Matthaean formula as Trinitarian, contending that it is a profession of monotheism and messianism created by Jewish Christians while Kosmala believes that both Jews and Greco-Romans knew about God the Father and the Holy Spirit that inspired the prophets. They did not, nevertheless, knew the Messiah and needed more than the Jews to know Him: 2 Cor. 13, 14; 1 Cor. 12, 2; Ef. 2, 11.12; 3, 2; 4, 17; Hans Kosmala, „The Conclusion of Matthew", ASTI 1965, nr. 4, pp. 132-147, 134. For parallel between vs. 1 and 28 and likeness to the decree of Cyrus from 2. Chr. 26, 23 see Bruce J. Malina, *The Literary,* No.1, pp. 87-104, 93-99.

[3] The 16 short quotations are: *Dem. Ev.* 3.6, 3.7 bis, 9.11 (*GCS* 17.18-20, 20, 11-12, 34.20-1); *In psalmos* 46.4, 95.3, 144,9 (PG 23.416?, 1221C; 24.60C); *In Isaiam* 41.10 (GCS 261.25-6); *Theoph.* 3.4 (*GCS* 129.10); *De Ecclesiastica theologia* 3.3 (*GCS* 149.23-3). The 5 complete ones: *Epistula ad Caesarienses* 3 (see Athanasius Werke, ed. Opitz, 3.1, 43.18-19); *Contra Marcellum* I.I.9, 36 (*GCS* 3.7, 8,21); *De eccl theol.* 3.5 (GCS 163.22); *Theoph.* 4.8 (GCS 177.2), cf. *H. Benedict Green*, N. 19-20, p. 138.

[4] Supporting this thesis and against Conybeare can also be mentioned the absolute absence of the short form from all the NT and Patristic manuscripts. F.C. Conybeare, „The Eusebian Form of the Text Mt 28:19", ZNW, 1901, nr. 2,

of the NT critics accept Mt. 28, 19b as the traditional baptismal formula incorporated into the Gospel to conclude Christ's command to proselytize[5].

Arguing in favor of a Matthaean origin are Kilpatrick, who sees the Jewish content of the Gospel subordinated to its particular Christology[6], and Barth who states that Mt. 28, 19, *The Didache* 7.1.3 (where the triple baptismal formula also appears) and Mk. 16, 9-20 prove the formula's absorption into common use beginning with the second-century[7]. Barth also considers that in 28, 16-20 Matthew followed earlier traditions, supporting his claim by indentifying structural concordances with Lk. 24, 39-49 and Jn 20, 19-23. Both latter fragments present the Incarnation as related to the command to proselytize. Since it is believed that the baptismal practice reflected in Mt. 28, 19 belongs either to the 60's-80's or to the 80's-90's Syriac milieu where Christ had preached[8] a parallel between the ending of Matthew and the baptism scene placed in the beginning

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pp. 275-88, apud Jane Schaberg, *The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit*, Scholar Press, Chico, 1982, p. 28.

[5] Others even proposed Paul of Mark as source of the formula: Goulder, Schweizer, Zumstein, Hubbard, J.A.T. Robinson, Gaechter, F. Hahn, Perrin, Jeremias, Beasley-Murray, Bultmann, Trilling, Jane Schaberg, *The Father*, p. 72, No. 133; Michel, „The Concept of History in Matthew", JAAR, (1967), 35, p. 229; ***, „Eusebius and the lex Orandi", în Rowan Williams, *The making of orthodoxy,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 124-129.

[6] G.D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel According to Es. Matthew,* Oxford, Clarendon, 1946, p. 107.

[7] Gerhard Barth, *Il battesimo in epoca protocristiana*, traduzione italiana di Marisa Angilletta Panini, Paideia Editrice, Brescia, 1987, p. 56.

[8] Gerhard Barth, *Il battesimo*, 20. *Nuovo Commentario Biblico, I Vangeli*, sotto la direzione di Armando J. Levorati, Traduzione ed edizione italiana a cura di Marco Zappella, Borla, Citta Nuova, Borla, 2005, 554. Anton Fridrichsen, *Exegetical Writings*, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen, 1994, pp. 46-48. Barth claims that for two decades, until the apostolic synod from 49/50 C.E., two roots for the Church's faith existed: the trinitarian formulas and the Christological confession. Some, nevertheless, claim that the Matthaean was not a ritual one but rather a presentation destined for non-believers cf. W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, *Matthew*, (AB 26); Garden City: Doubleday, New York, 1971, p. 363; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Cambridge, 2005, p. 1268.

can be drawn, the baptismal formula appearing as a synthesis of the Matthaean gospel[9].

The uniqueness of the phrase in Mt. 28, 19 draws on three elements: It is the only instance where the three Persons of the Trinity are enumerated in a way that $τὸ\ ὄνομα$ is attributed to each, their names being in Genitive followed by a *nomen regens* (although similarities with Lk. 9, 28, II Cor. 13, 14, Jude 20-21 can be found, the instance is nevertheless unique[10]); The Persons of the Trinity appear as in the orthodox canon, the Father as initiator of the salvation mission, the Son as its achiever and the Holy Spirit as fulfiller, although no particular attributes of the Persons are mentioned[11].

The presence in Mt. of other instances where the author enumerates or implies the Persons of the Trinity (such as the baptism scene 3, 16-7, the casting out of demons made $πνεύματι\ θεοῦ$ with $ἡ\ βασιλεία\ τοῦ\ θεοῦ$; Mt. 12, 28, the quoting of Is. 42, 1-4 where YHWH, the Servant and the Holy Spirit appear, making the baptismal formula a synthesis. Although the Gospels contain the story of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Mk. 1, 8; Jn. 1, 33), in fire (Mt. 3, 11; Lk. 3, 16) and in Jesus" death (Mk. 10, 38-39, Lk. 12, 50) while Acts 2, 38; 8, 16; 10, 48, Rom. 6, 3 and I Cor. 1, 13-15; 6, 11 speak of the baptism $ἐπὶ\ τῷ\ ὀνόματι\ Ἰησοῦ\ Χριστοῦ$, here is the first and only place where the complete baptismal formula is given and attributed to Jesus. Most biblical scholars presuppose the practice of baptism with the $ἐπὶ\ τῷ\ ὀνόματι\ Ἰησοῦ\ Χριστοῦ$, before the composition of the Gospel of Matthew, following that subsequently the Trinitary one was used. We will address the issue again in section three.

Referring to the origin of the Matthaean formula more than one variants were proposed: a) a composition of the author or the

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[9] Pius-Ramon Tragan, *Alle origini del battesimo cristiano, Radici del battesimo e suo significato nelle comunittà apostoliche*, Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, Roma, 1991, p. 279.

[10] Jane Schaberg, *The Father…*, pp. 11-14.

[11] Pr. prof. dr. Ion Bria, *Tratat de Teologie Dogmatică şi Ecumenică*, România creştină, Bucureşti, 1999, p. 89; Pr. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. III, ediţia a III-a, EIBMBOR, Bucureşti, 2003, pp. 296-299, 333; Nikos A. Matsoukas, *Teologia Dogmatica e simbolica ortodossa*, vol. II, traduzione dal greco di Eleni Pavlidou, Edizioni Dehoniane, Roma, 1996, p. 266.

community he was part of; b) a derivation from the monadic and diadic formulas found in the NT tradition; c) a development of the triadic scheme of Jewish origin; d) an addition made by the author who took it from a number of formulas circulating orally in the post-Paschal period[12].

P. Billerbeck, taking into consideration points a, b and c enumerated the three examples related with the use of the formula: 1) when pagans or Jews were sold and bought as slaves by Jews they were baptized „in the name of slavery" following that, upon release, they were baptized „in the name of freedom" in order to be free (Deut. 6, 8)[13]; 2) a sacrifice made on account of four instances (a. holocaust, sin or peace; b. in the name of God (for His love or praise); c. in the name of the altar's fire; d. in the name of the good aroma pleasant to God[14]); 3) when Samaritans circumcised they made it, in the name of mount Garizim', thus with the duty to worship God the way they considered. Drawing on this vast biblical research Billerbeck concludes that baptism establishes a relation between the Trinitarian God and the baptizand, expressed by the latter through its faith in the God whose name is mentioned[15].

One relation which we would like to underline is that with Is. 1, 11 where *nomen reges* דָּם is missing and II Sam. 19, 6 where *nomen regens* נֶפֶשׁ is repeated[16] indicating that the formula can be understood also as „into the name of the Father and (into the name) of the Son and (into the name) of the Holy Spirit.

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[12] Pius-Ramon Tragan, *Alle origini…*, p. 260; *La Bibbia di Gerusalemme*, Centro editoriale dehoniano, Bologna, 2005, p. 2156.

[13] Francis Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Hendrickson Publisher, Massachusetts, 2007, p. 512.

[14] Francis Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew…*, p. 511.

[15] W. Heitmüller, *I am Namen Jesu*, 1903, apud G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, D.G. Reid, *Dizionario di Paolo e delle sue lettere*, Edizione italiana a cura di Romano Penna, Edizioni San Paolo, Milano, 1999, p. 154; Lars Hartman, '*Into the Name of the Lord Jesus' Baptism in the Early Church*, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1997, p. 41.

[16] Pr. prof. dr. Ion Bria, *Tratat…*, p. 89; W.D. Davies, F.B.A. and Dalec C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to saint Matthew*, vol. III, T & T Clark, Edinburg, 1997, p. 685; John Nolland, *The Gospel…*, p. 1269.

II. Baptism „in the Name”

The phrase εἰς τὸ ὄνομα appeared in Hebrew and Aramaic but not in classical Greek literature[17]. Present in first and second-century writings with the meaning that „on one's name” has today in banking operations, the commercial meaning referred to an amount of money paid by someone on behalf or on account of someone else for a property transfer. It was also present in the soldier's vow and in the case of documents written on behalf of other persons[18]. Lars Hartman believes that originally the phrase had a neutral character, without a military or commercial nuance, and was endowed with different meanings through its use[19]. A. Deissmann claims that „in the name” of someone denotes a relation of belonging[20].

In Hebrew through the preposition לְ the change of status was expressed: Israel is transformed into a great nation (Ex. 26, 7) and someone is chosen for kingship (I Sam. 9, 16). Here לְ „s equivalent is εἰς. The same preposition attached to a word indicates the appartenance to a family (II Kgs. 10, 17), a tribe (Lev. 24, 11) or political support for a person (II Sam. 20, 11). Also, through לְ reference is made to something in particular, like the name of the angel that wrestled with Jacob (Gen. 33, 20), the breaking of an alliance (Josh. 9, 11) or the quality of the tree in Eden that was pleasant to sight and good for eating (Gen. 2, 9). Through the fulfilment of Aaron's prophecy is indicated (Num. 17, 23), the cause of Israel's running to the screaming of Datan, Core and Aviron (Num. 16, 34) and the division of the people into tribes (Num. 24, 2). The phrase is used also with the meaning of „against” as seen in II Macc. 8, 4: μνησθῆναι δὲ ... καὶ περὶ τῶν γενομένων εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ βλασφημιῶν[21].

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[17] Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996, pp. 1232-1233; Lars Hartman, '*Into the Name of the Lord Jesus'*..., p. 43.

[18] Jane Schaberg, *The Father*..., p. 19.

[19] Lars Hartman, „Into the Name of Gesus”, NTS 1973/4, nr. 20, p. 433.

[20] G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, D.G. Reid, *Dizionario*..., pp. 154-155.

[21] For a detailed presentation of all it functions see Francis Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew*, pp. 513-518; David J.A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, vol. IV, Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, pp. 479-484.

With this wide range of contexts of לְ, the attempts of biblical scholars such as W. Brandt and Heitmüller continued in their research by P. Billerbeck and H. Bietenhard to explain the formula εἰς τὸ ὄνομα starting from the Hebrew לְשֵׁם (*lešēm*) (Josh. 9, 9; I Kgs. 3, 2; 5, 17-19; Is. 60, 9; Jer. 3, 17) or the Aramaic לְשֻׁם (*lešûm*) appear as a singularly difficult task[22]. Both biblical forms also have the meanings „regarding to", „referring to", „for the sake of someone", „because of", „with the purpose to", „with the duty to adore and worship", „for", „belonging to", „obeying one", „acting in the name of one"[23]. The word לְשֵׁם is found in the OT without sufixes thirty-two times, being associated with YHWH's name fifteen times. In the latter instances YHWH is followed sometimes only by the common noun for divinity אֱלֹהִים (Is. 60, 9). The polysemic character of the preposition is often cleared by the context that indicates its meaning. When, nevertheless, the context is not addressed, the general meaning would mirror εἰς τὸ ὄνομα[24]. Today a majority of biblical scholars claims that the form „in his name" is the translation of לְשֵׁם[25].

   L. Hartman analyzes the Hebrew form both from a causal and a final point of view, without being able, nevertheless, to decide on either of the two[26]. He quotes examples where לְשֵׁם refers to a

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[22] The relation with the Gospel of Matthew is given by the assumption that the first Christian community spoke Aramaic.

[23] Jane Schaberg, *The Father...*, p. 19; John Nolland, *The Gospel...*, p. 1268; Zerwick, Max S.J., Grosvenor, Mary, *A grammatical analysis of the Greek New Testament*, Unabridged, 5th, Revised Edition, translated, revised, and adapted by Mary Grosvenor in collaboration with the author, Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Roma, 1996, p. 99.

[24] G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, D.G. Reid, *Dizionario...*, p. 154. E. Beyrenther, H. Bietenhard, *Dizionario dei concetti biblici del Nuovo Testamento*, a cura di L. Coenen, Bologna, Edizione dehoniane, Bologna, 1974, p. 275.

[25] There are scriptural fragments on account of which the Christian meaning and Jewish equivalent of the expression εἰς τὸ ὄνομα; can be ascertained. Thus, in Mt. 10, 41 it is said that who receives a prophet εἰς ὄνομα προφήτου meaning that μισθὸν προφήτου λήμψεται. In Mt. 18, 20 Christ speaks of δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα (see also Heb. 6, 10). The expression is also present in the second-century: Ign. *Rom.* 9, 3: ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς τὸ ἐμὸν πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τῶν δεξαμένων με εἰς ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

[26] L. Hartman, „Into the Name of Jesus. A Suggestion concerning the earliest Mea-ning of the Phrase", NTS, 1973/1974, 20, pp. 432-440.

religious act, concluding that in ritual situation the expression לְשֵׁם (לְשׁוּם) is used to indicate the type, reason and purpose, as well as the intention of the ritual act. Regarding religious functions לְשֵׁם seems to underline their fundamentally indicative nature which distinguishes them from other cultic acts. Similarly, the expression „into the name" was supposedly introduced in order to distinguish between Christian baptism and other ablution rites, like the baptism of John[27], for Christianity the enumeration of the Persons of the Trinity becoming fundamental (I Cor. 1, 12, *Did.* 7.3; Just. Mart. *Apol.* 1.61.10). Both Hartman and Delling note that לְשֵׁם has no value on its own, at most לְשֵׁם „indicates to", „sends to" the person mentioned in the context (Acts 19, 1-6, I Cor. 10, 2). As the NT theophany was novel so were its effects, relation with the OT being used as symbolic, prophetic or typological[28].

In the Matthaean NT context, the preposition εἰς could mean „with regards to", „referring to"[29]. The Hellenistic origin of the formula εἰς τὸ ὄνομα was refuted by J. Jeremias and by H. Bietenhard who argue in favor of a Semitic source for all three prepositions εἰς; ἐν; ἐπὶ. לְשֵׁם or לְשׁוּם from Aramaic would have been, in their vision, the sources for the Greek forms. The Hebrew meaning is one of intentionality, sending towards the goal of the cultic action while the Greek forms add causal nuances (ἐπὶ) and base (ἐν). According to these interpretations the baptismal formula would present the results of baptism and the personal relation of the bartizaned with Christ, relation that sends to a particular purpose εἰς would refer to a state of dependency and ἐπὶ to a me/you relation with an emphasis on God (ἐν)[30].

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[27] Gerhard Barth, *Il battesimo…*, p. 71.

[28] *Ibidem*. G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, D.G. Reid, *Dizionario…*, p. 155.

[29] G. Delling, *Die Bezugnahme von neutestamentlichen eis auf Vorgegebenes*, in *Verborum Veritas*, Festschrift G. Stählin, Wuppertal, 1970, pp. 211-223. Gerhard Barth, *Il battesimo…*, p. 67; A. Oepke, εἰς, in *Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento*, Fondato da Gerhard Kittel, Continuato da Gerhard Friedrich, Edizione italiana a cura di F. Montagnini, G. Scarpat, O. Soffritti, Vol. III, Paideia, Brescia, 1967, pp. 278, 569-574.

[30] The prepositions also send to the invocation or confession made in that moment. W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, *Matthew*, p. 363. Kosmala writes that they are interchangeable cf. Kosmala, *In my name*, p. 88, apud Jane Schaberg, *The Father…*, p. 69, N. 101. One could think of the way in which God invited Israel

G. Delling believes that through the εἰς τὸ ὄνομα formula the bartizaned is included in Christ, integrated into the event of eschatological salvation. G. Barth, following G. Delling and L. Hartmann, underlines the Semitic fundament of the formula but does not identify the meaning of baptism in the content of the לְשֵׁם expression. From a liturgical point of view, εἰς τὸ ὄνομα represents the reason for and finality of a ritual that is separate from other cultic actions. The words „into his name" set apart Christ's baptism from that of John[31]. M. Quesnel and Heitmüller parallel the formulas βαπτίζοῦτες ἐν i ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι and βαπτίζειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα on the one hand, and ἐν on the other and ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι are read by them in a Semitic key as translations of the Hebrew בְּשֵׁם[32]. Baptism was administrated „with the mention of the Savior's name", which cannot be claimed in the case of the formula εἰς τὸ ὄνομα because the roots of εἰς τὸ ὄνομα must be searched for in the Hellenistic commercial language[33]. Thus, the formula could have both a causal and a final meaning. Bietenhard prefers the latter interpretation[34], indicating a transfer of property although in Mt. 18, 19-20 he recognizes the causal interpretation. Bieder and Delling combine the two, with the mention that Delling inclines towards the causal meaning in this particular context[35].

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to His table: although the terms of the alliance specified the rights and duties of Israel the relation is not one of equality.

[31] Pius-Ramon Tragan, *Alle origini…*, p. 35.

[32] Dictionaries remind also of this meaning of בְּשֵׁם. That appears often with the name of YHWH: Gen. 4, 26; 12, 8; 13, 4; 21, 33; 33, 19; 34, 5; Deut. 18, 7; 21, 5; Jer. 26, 9; 11, 21; Am. 6, 10; etc. In some cases the LXX translates בְּשֵׁם with ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι (Gen. 12, 8; Ex. 33, 9; Deut. 18, 5 etc.); David J.A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, Volume II, Sheffield Academic Press, 1995, pp. 82-86; Solomon Mandelkern, *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae*, Altera pars, Akademische Druk- U. Velagsanstalt, Graz, 1955, p. 1191. The form ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι present in the writings of Hellenistic Judaism is compatible with the construction בְּשֵׁם from the Masoretic text of the Targum and the Qumran texts. The meaning of „ב" makes baptism an act based on Christ and not on a path leading to Him cf. Pius-Ramon Tragan, *Alle origini…*, p. 36; Gerhard Barth, *Il battesimo…*, p. 62.

[33] Gerhard Barth, *Il battesimo…*, p. 62.

[34] Gerhard Kittel, *Grande Lessico…*, p. 278.

[35] Gerhard Barth, *Il battesimo…*, pp.64-65.

Baptism εἰς τὸ ὄνομα would also indicate a material possession[36], as mirrored also in the Pauline I Cor. 6, 20 and 7, 23. One of the mysteries of orthodox faith is present here as in baptism one maintains its unique, unrepeatable character in both this life and the afterlife while it is integrated in Christ's mystical body, becoming a member of the Church.

According to Bietenhard[37], to baptize „in the name of Christ" is identical to baptizing „into Christ", meaning that Paul replaced εἰς τὸ ὄνομα from Rom. 6, 3 with εἰς, which would have been a lot more common in Greek. Bietenhard believes that the „name" is overunderlined and that Paul certainly related, due to his knowledge of both languages, εἰς τὸ ὄνομα to the name of Christ[38]. Heitmuller concludes that, in general, the expression „into the name" expresses the passing or transfer of property and in a baptismal context it indicates the purpose and mystical fulfillment of the baptizand, a point of view that gained general support in the academe.

Recent studies have shown the difficulty in speaking of a formula for transferring property. The preposition εἰς gains the meaning of „belonging" not because of its connection with to τὸ ὄνομα, but because it is related with a general verb that expresses a concept of transfer. It is unknown if the same signified is presupposed when in relation with βαπτίζω[39]. Outside the NT texts the formula εἰς τὸ ὄνομα has no direct parallel, which could as well underline

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[36] In the OT there are instances where by saying the name of someone over an object or city the right of property was enacted (II Sam. 12, 28; Ps. 49, 12). By invoking the name of Christ over the neophyte this belonged legally to Christ.

[37] E. Beyrenther, H. Bietenhard, *Dizionario…*, p. 275.

[38] Gerhard Barth, *Il battesimo…*, p. 64. From the moment of baptism the neophyte became a member of Christ, a new ontological stance symbolized by being called ἅγιος (I Cor. 1, 2; Eph. 1, 1, Heb. 6, 10 etc.). The baptizands were receiving the name of the Son of God (Herm. Sim. 9,16,3), over them being called „the beautiful name" (Jas. 2,7; Herm. Sim. 8,6,4).

[39] The formula underlines especially the relation between the event of the penitent's baptism and the salvific event tied to the Savior's name. The transfer of property appears as a secondary element added in time. *Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento*, Fondato da Gerhard Kittel, Continuato da Gerhard Friedrich, Edizione italiana a cura di F. Montagnini, G. Scarpat, O. Soffritti, vol. II, Paideia, Brescia, 1966, p. 71.

its novelty as well as the lack of the context that supports the transfer of property thesis.[40]

G. Delling argues for a need to pay close attention to the baptismal and non-baptismal milieu of the formula, indicating in his analysis that the magical content of a „belief into the name of one" in the NT context is marginal. A debatable conclusion since it was common knowledge in the Mediterranean world of the apostles that the saying of the Divine Names was wrought with power cf. Acts 19, 13-15; Phil. 9, 9-11 etc. The use of Jesus'name appears as powerful regardless of the context, much of the popularity of Christianity in its earliest phase owing to exorcisms which implied the calling of His name[41]. Identified with His person, the Savior's name carries within the salvific mission through which He raised human nature to deification, which renders it „fearful" for the entire creation cf. Phil. 2, 9-11. The one baptized in His name becomes thus a carrier of the sacrifice enacted on the Holy Cross, becoming a Christ through Grace that is to conquer the effects of death and sin[42].

The saying of the Holy Trinity's names meant the enacting of its Presence as underlined by the OT instance of the joining of the verb קָרָא[43] with the noun שֵׁם, in the context of „calling one's name/invoke"; in Gen. 4, 26, „revelate" in Ex. 33, 19, 34, 5 and „to bless in the name of YHWH" in II Sam. 6, 18. From the aforementioned examples it is noticeable that on many occasions the saying of the Divine Name was a cultic act related to teophanies[44].

III. Monadic, Diadic and Triadic Formulas

Apart from the Trinitarian formula found in Matthew 28.19, in the New Testament the expressions εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησου, „in the name of Lord Christ" and εἰς Χριστὸν „in Christ" are also

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[40] Gerhard Barth, *Il battesimo…*, p. 63.

[41] Ramsey MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (A.D. 100 – 400), New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1984, p. 27.

[42] Baptizands called *Christs* from the third-century on cf. Origen *C. Cels.* 6.79 and Methodius *The Banquet* 8.8.190-192.

[43] Francis Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew…*, pp. 894-896.

[44] The visual and spatial access to the Liturgy of the believers, following the baptism into the names, was thus an institutionalized theophany in the early Church.

found with the meaning of „for Christ". The Christians from Samaria (Acts 8, 16), as the followers of St. John in Ephesus (Acts 19, 5) were baptized εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ (Acts 8, 16; 19, 5; Rom. 6, 3; Gal. 3, 27). Gérard Rossé considers this a very old liturgical formula[45], belonging to the language of the incipient Church and used by St. Luke in a spontaneous manner the way he also uses ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς, „Lord Christ" (Acts 1, 21; 4, 33; 7, 51; 8, 16 etc.)[46]. According to L. Hartman, the formula in itself represents the tradition which Luke had received from his milieu. St. Peter, in his sermon from Pentecost, urged the listeners to be baptized ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Acts 2, 38) while in Acts 10, 48 the author mentions, regarding the same apostle, that he baptized the family of Cornelius ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ[47].

Barth shows that when *one person* was baptized just the name of the Savior was mentioned and H. v. Campenhausen believes that in the beginning, Christian baptism was made only in His name. This author cannot accept the opinion of Campenhausen who claims that in the beginning the baptism of John was in no way different than the Christian one and that no fixed formula was used until the end of the first century[48], especially in sight of 1Cor 1, 11-7 where the Apostle deals with the divisions in Corinth where different Christians claimed to belong either to him or Apollo or St. Peter. Referring to this Paul asks himself: μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε (I Cor. 1, 13). The author of the epistle indicates thus clearly that baptism was related with the death and resurrection of Christ, as subsequently developed in Gal. 3, 27 and Rom. 6, 3.

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[45] Cf. I Cor. 1, 13, 15; Acts. 2, 38; 8, 16; 10, 48.

[46] Gérard Rossé, *Atti degli Apostoli, Commento esegetico e teologico*, Città nuova Editrice, Roma, 1998, p. 678, N. 16.

[47] It is assumed that the form is a conscious abbreviation of the „in the name of Christ" expression. (Rom. 6, 3-4; Gal. 3, 27) G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin, D.G. Reid, *Dizionario...*, p. 155. Hans Kosmala in his study „The Conclusion of Matthew", ASTI (1965), n. 4, pp. 134-140, after quoting an impressive number of fragments attesting that the Church was living in Christ and reminding the faulty way of quoting of Eusebius, categorically excludes God the Father and God the Holy Spirit from the cult.

[48] Gerhard Barth, *Il battesimo...*, p. 56.

Referring to Campenhausen's arguments it should be under-
lined that in baptismal context the formula „into the name of..."
always appears related to the verb „to baptize" and never with the
noun „baptism". In Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter and the Epistles of John,
Revelations, the Letters of Jude and Jacob, Barnabas, Polycarp of
Smyrna and Clement of Rome the verb $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\zeta\omega$ is missing. In the
epistles of Ignatius of Antioch it is mentioned three times, twice
regarding the baptism of Christ by John and once about the Chris-
tian baptism (*Smirn.* 8.2). In *The Shepherd* of Hermas (3.7.3) the
formula $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ $\tau\grave{o}$ $\check{o}\nu o\mu\alpha$ $\tau o\hat{v}$ $\kappa\nu\rho\iota o\nu$ is present while *The Didache* re-
minds of the Trinitarian formula at 7.1.3 but also the abbreviated
version $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ $\tau\grave{o}$ $\check{o}\nu o\mu\alpha$ $\tau o\hat{v}$ $\kappa\nu\rho\iota o\nu$ at 9.5. This latter instance cannot
be read as an abbreviation neither of the Trinitarian formula nor of
the older, shorter version[49].

Acts 8, 38, another text quoted in support of his thesis by Cam-
penhausen, addresses the story of the conversion of the Ethiopian
not the moment of baptism, Kretschmar, in his history of baptismal
liturgy, shows that the baptismal formula was common especially
in the eastern parts while in the west Hippolytus and Tertullian is
lacking. What is still unclear is whether the formula was used in
the actual ritual or only when attempting to detach Christian bap-
tism from parallel ablution rites[50].

O. Cullmann considers the NT instances where God, Christ and
the Holy Spirit appear mentioned together the result of a process
drawing on passages that initially had only „Jesus Christ" of „Jesus
Christ and God". Their development followed a single course, small,
synthetical expressions being enlarged. One example is the initial,
monadic Christological confession „Christ is Lord" (I Cor. 12, 3;
Rom. 10, 9) which represented the confession particular to the nas-
cent Church. Through it Christians would have replaced Moses with
Jesus (John 1, 17)[51], it was used during cultic action, exorcism, during
persecutions and baptism. Starting from here one can reach the

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[49] *Ibidem*, p. 59.
[50] *Ibidem*, p. 60.
[51] Anton Fridrichsen, „The Tripartite Formula in Matt. 28, 19 and Baptism in the
Three Names", in *Exegetical Writings*, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen, 1994,
p. 50.

baptismal formula found in Acts and the Pauline epistles: ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Cullmann believes that the introduction of the Trinitarian structure weakened the Christocentric character of NT faith but, he adds, belief in Jesus Christ does not exclude belief in God the Father and the Holy Spirit[52].

It has been proposed that, especially in the case of Jewish catechumens the phrase „Jesus if Lord" was used as a synthetical profession of faith[53]. Subsequently, with Greco-Romans conversions a diadic formula was developed reflected perhaps in I Cor. 8, 6: ἀλλ' ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ[54]. Eventually a triadic formula, containing the Holy Spirit was reached: Ἓν σῶμα καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα, καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν· εἷς κύριος, μία πίστις, ἓν βάπτισμα, εἷς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων, ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν (Eph. 4, 4-6) and II Cor. 13, 13: Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν[55], with parallels in Mk. 8, 38; 13, 32; Acts 1, 1, 4, 6; II Thess. 1, 7-8; Rev. 3, 5; 14, 10; I Tim. 5, 21; Mt. 24, 36; Lk. 10, 21-22; 9, 26; Jh. 3, 34-35, I Cor. 12, 4-6[56].

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[52] Cullmann, *Le prime confessioni di fede cristiana*, Roma, 1948, p. 6, apud Natale Bussi, *Nel nome del Padre e del Figlio e dello Spirito Santo"*, Edizioni Domenicane, Alba, 1965, pp. 14-15.

[53] Hans Kosmala, *The Conclusion…*, p. 136.

[54] O. Cullmann, *The Earliest Christian Confessin*, London, 1949, pp. 32-42; Pius-Ramon Tragan, *Alle origini…*, p. 263. Another text is 1 Tim. 2, 5.

[55] Martino Albertz believes that in this text the entire message of the NT is synthesized apud Natale Bussi, *Nel nome…*, p. 20.

[56] Schaberg claims that the Christian baptism was from the very beginning seen as an action and presence of Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit without, nevertheless, accepting Mt. 28, 19 as Trinitarian. Until Athenagoras, Justin's pupil, the Trinitarian doctrine was still „under construction", the first ones to deepen it being Origen and Methodius of Olympus; Jane Schaberg, *The Father,* 23, 49, 69, N. 103; N. 274, p. 84. Anton Fridrichsen, *The Tripartite…*, pp. 51, 53. H. Benedict Green concludes at the end of his study that: 1. The innovation related to the Father and the Spirit was introduced around 140-150 C.E. along with the triple immersion and adjoined triple confession; 2. The innovation had an immediate impact on the system of Marcion which can be detected in the tone of the *Apologies* of Justin Martyr; 3. The enlarged, Trinitarian structure confession was molded after Mt. 28, 19 which was associated with baptism and which circulated as part of the Gospel; H. Benedict Green, *Matthew*, 28:19, p. 137.

Another possible explanation of the triple form of the expression (monadic, diadic and triadic) could come from a care not to fall into politheism which rendered necessary the explicit mention of the Triune God's uniqueness, leading to the Matthaean formula. As noted by O. Cullmann, both the diadic and the triadic formulas are centered around the Person of Jesus Christ as the One who died and resurrected, on His Resurrection being based the entire cult. The Father was understood as the One who Resurrected the Savior and Glorified Him, and the Holy Spirit as the One sent by Christ and announcer of His Lordship. It is thus that in the first-century belief in Christ implied faith in the Father and the Holy Spirit as well.

The latter thesis generated a number of divergent reactions, J.N.D. Kelly claiming that no obvious proof exists for believing that the diadic formula is older nor that the diadic and triadic versions derive from the monadic ones. The oldest expression of the Christian Paschal celebration is „God (the Father) resurrected Christ". The other way around, Kelly believes, it is unlikely (mentioning God the Father as a derivation from faith in the Resurrected Christ). O. Cullmann writes that mentioning God the Father before the name of Christ would mean that faith in the latter derives from faith in the former. Nevertheless, the NT underlines that humankind reaches faith in God the Father through the mediation of the Son who was Incarnated and Revealed the Father. On the other hand, greeting formulas in which God the Father and the Son appear, like the one in Rom. 1, 7, indicate that the simultaneous mentioning of the Father and the Son belongs to the oldest expressions of Christian belief.

J. Schaberg believes that the triadic, diadic and monadic formulas appeared concomitantly, circulating in parallel in the incipient Church. According to this thesis the triadic formula in Mt. 28, 19 cannot be an elaboration on the diadic or monadic versions. The constructions most similar to the one in Mt. 28, 19 are to be found in the mentioning of God's „angels", His, Anointed and Chosen One; in the Old Testament[57].

A canonical text that presents a construction parallel is that in Dan. 7, 14. Representing the fundament for apocryphal constructions in I Enoch and IV Ezra as well as for those in Rev. 1, 4-8; 2, 26-27;

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[57] Pius-Ramon Tragan, *Alle origini…*, p. 265.

7, 9; 5, 6-14. Among the apocryphal texts containing such for-
mulas we remind I En. 39.5-7[58] and 62.69[59]. The latter refers to The
Chosen One or The Righteous One, who is called The Son of Man
and the word ‚angels" refers to the army of God. According to
Fuller the triple version would have followed this evolution: 1)
God is called father and the work of the Son was related to Jesus
(Mk. 8, 38). In this stage there was no explicit identification of Jesus
with The Son of man; 2) The eastern Church overlapped The Son of
Man with Christ the Resurrected developing, on account of Jesus"
use of the word „Abba" the Father-Son relationship; 3) The „angels" were
replaced by the Holy Spirit, translation eased by the intertestamental,
apocalyptic literature[60]. The apocalyptic fund of the triadic formula follo-
wed, in his opinion, the following scheme: 1) The triadic texts would
have been made for Greco-Roman Christians, the Jewish milieu
influencing little the matter; 2) The Trinitarian dogma would de-
rive from late apocalyptic traditions from first-century Palestine
where patterns of the heavenly Judgment court are found; 3) The
existence of pre-NT fragments mentioning diverse triads[61].

IV. Testimonies Regarding Baptism in the Name of the Holy Trinity in the First Three Centuries

Texts testifying to the use of the trinitarian baptismal formula in
various Christian communities have survived from the first-centuries[62].
The first two instances come from *The Didaché*[63]: „And concerning

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[58] Other instances are 51, 3-4; 61, 8-10.

[59] R.H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testa-ment*, Volume II, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968, pp. 211, 219, 227-229.

[60] Jane Schaberg, *The Father…*, p. 53; Reginald H. Fuller, *The foun-dations of the New Testament Christology*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1965, pp. 243-250.

[61] Georg Kretschmar, *Studien zur frühchristlichen Trinitätstheologie*, J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1956, pp. 219-223; Jane Schaberg, *The Father…*, pp. 54-55, n. 273, 276, 84.

[62] The name of God in the baptismal rite appears in: *Acta Philippi* LB 2, I (86, 34-5); A. Hanthipp. 21 (73,6,13); Basilius Caesariensis Cappadociae, *Adversus Eunomium*, 3-5 (I 276E; M 29, 665C), Theodorus Studita, *Epistularum libri duo*, 2.24 (M.99.II92A); Athanasius Alexandrinus, *De decretis Nicaenae synodi*, Opitz 2 p. I, M.25.416, (31 p.27.24; M 24, 473C); *Const. App.* 7.44.1; apud *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Edited by G.W.H. Lampe, D.D., Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1961, p. 964.

[63] According to J.P. Audet the text would have been written between 50s and

baptism, baptize this way: Having first said all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. But if you have no living water, baptize into other water; and if you cannot do so in cold water, do so in warm. But if you have neither, pour out water three times upon the head into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit" and in *The Didache* 9.5 baptism into the name of Jesus is mentioned: „But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, unless they have been baptized into the name of the Lord"[64]. Köster believes that the text is the oldest witness coming from a Christian community of baptism „into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit", the Matthaean text being a subsequent development. While Vööbus believes that the trinitarian formula is not earlier than 150 C.E., Rondorf credits *The Didache* 9.5 as being the oldest reference. According to Rondorf the existence of two formulas in *The Didache* can be explained by the use of the Christological form at the baptism of Jews and the Trinitarian one at that of Greco-Romans. The latter thesis seems sustained by the mentioning of the text in *Did.* 9.5 in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* 39.2, reflecting the situation of the Judeo-Christian community which in *Did.* 7.1 was adapted to the requirements of a Roman-Christian context. V. Ferrua explained that the expression „baptize into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" is present twice in *Did.* 7 because the chapter is formed by diverse textual layers and the formula, without the article, indicates a reglementation (a phase of accord) and passing from the form without article to the one with. Concluding, we adopt the viewpoint of G. Visonà who sees *Did.* 7.1 and 7.3 in agreement, the difference between the two being given by the immediate context. In the community's liturgical life only the first formula existed, *Did.* 9.5 being a definition of the Christian baptism. Described as made „into the name of Jesus", this formula had the advantage of setting the Christian ablution from parallel rites[65].

70s C.E. but other critics propose 150-180 C.E.; *Scrierile Părinţilor Apostolici*, traducere, note şi indici de Pr. D. Fecioru, EIBMBOR, Bucureşti, 1979, p. 20.

[64] *Didachè.* (7,1,3; 9,5), *Insegnamento degli Apostoli*, Introduzione, testo, traduzione e note di Giuseppe Visonà, Paoline Editoriale Libri, Milano, 2000, pp. 314-317, 324, 325.

[65] V. Ferrua, „Dal battesimo cristologico a quello trinitario: una conferma nella Didachè?", Salesianum (1992), 54, pp. 223-230; Giuseppe Visonà, *Didachè…*,

The subsequent two testimonies come from Justin Martyr's *First Apology* (150-160 C.E.): „Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit" (61.3). In the same writing, towards the end, the idea is again dealt with the mention that above the water the name of „everyone's Father and Lord-God" was invoked. The enlightened one was washed „and into the name of Jesus Christ (…) and into the name of the Holy Spirit" (61.12)[66]. In *The Dialogue with Trypho*, baptism „in the name of the Lord" is also reminded[67].

In Jam. 2, 7[68] and *The Shepherd* of Hermas (the first half of the second-century) Christians were reminded „that they are named with" the name of the Lord or that above them was „invoked/ called" the same „name of the Lord" (8.1.1, 8.6.4 and 9.14.3)[69]. Tertullian's testimony is equally important: *sicut enim Ioannes antepraecursor domini fuit praeparans vias eius, ita et angelus baptismi arbiter superventuro spiritui sancto vias dirigit abolitione delictorum, quam fides impetrat obsignata in patre et filio et spiritu sancto. tribus testibus stabit omne verbum, dei quarto magis donum? habemus benedictione eosdem arbitros fidei quos et sponsores salutis. sufficit ad fiduciam spei nostrae etiam numerus nominum divinorum. cum autem sub tribus et testatio fidei et sponsio salutis pigneretur, necessario adicitur ecclesiae mentio, quoniam ubi tres, id est pater et filius et spiritus sanctus; ibi ecclesia quae trium corpus est*[70].

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pp. 141-142, 315; Jean'Hervé Nicolas Op, *Sintesi Dogmatica*, Traduzione di A. Bussoni OSB, vol. II, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, città del Vaticano, 1992, p. 214.

[66] S.P.N. Iustini, *Apologia Prima pro Christianis,* (327-441), PG 6, 419-422.

[67] Idem, *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* (471-803), PG 6, 559-660.

[68] οὐκ αὐτοὶ βλασφημοῦσιν τὸ καλὸν ὄνομα τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς.

[69] Sanctus Hermas, *Pastor* (892-1025), PG 2, 971; 2, 975-978; 2, 993-994.

[70] Tertulliani, *Liber de baptismo* (1198-1224), 6.1-2, PL 1,1206; A. Fridrichsen writes that the incipient Church never knew a formula of the kind „I baptize you…" which would have been introduced in the second-century by Tertullian; Anton Fridrichsen, Exegetical Writings, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen, 1994, p. 47; Tertuliani, *Liber Adversus Praxeam* (154-196), 26, PL 2,188-190.

V. The Theology of the Baptismal Formula

Hartman believes that the mentioning of the name was some-thing that was optional[71], which seems very unlikely given the subsequent Patristic testimonies just mentioned. The Names of the Holy Trinity's Persons were said by the baptizer, usually the bishop or the priest, each of the Three Names indicating a certain aspect of Christian life which the neophyte was now beginning. The moment of the rite's conclusion appears as especially symbo-lically charged and solemn[72].

By mentioning God the Father in the beginning He appears as the fundament of the remaining Persons as He gave birth to the Son and is His Glory[73]. The Holy Spirit also comes from the Father and resting in the Son and the Father testified on behalf of the Son upon the latter's baptism (Mt. 3, 13-7) and Transfiguration (Mt. 17, 5). The proclamation of Jesus as Son takes place in the moment when the whole Trinity is revealed[74].

Baptism represented a threshold in the life of the ancient man, implying not only a change of religious allegiance but a complete subordination of one's life to the Christic model. As underlined by Schneemelcher, in the first two centuries the only canon was the very person of Jesus[75], the importance of the personal model, sometimes filtered through the apostolic experience, being paramount in the first Christian communities. Baptism „in the name" seems to have underlined just this complete dedication of the person of the bap-tizand which, with the receiving if the new name (Christian) ad-mitted its subjection to the mode provided in the Incarnation. A subsequent addition to the baptismal ritual, the chrismation, under-lines the Christic character of early Christian baptism, reinforcing the

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[71] Lars Hartman, „*Into the Name of the Lord Jesus"…*, p. 439.

[72] *Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento*, Fondato da Gerhard Kittel, Conti-nuato da Gerhard Friedrich, Edizione italiana a cura di Felice Montagnini e Giu-seppe Scarpat, vol. I, Paideia, Brescia, 1965, p. 188.

[73] Towards the Father the Son directed His prayer (Jh. 17).

[74] Pius-Ramon Tragan, *Alle origini…*, p. 270.

[75] W. Schneemelcher (ed.), *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. I: „Gospels and Related Writings"; vol. II: „Writings relating to the Apostles; Apocalypses and re-lated subjects", Second Revised Edition, ET by R. McL. Wilson of Neutestament-liche Apokryphen, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1989-1990. Cambridge: J.Clarke & Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991-1992, p. 18.

identitary assimilation enacted in baptism through the invocation of the names. Sources from the first three centuries underline the difference existing between the community and those outside it (even the catechumens). Corroborated with a long catechumenate period needed to master the way of life rather than the doctrine, the image of baptism as a radical change in one's not only lifestyle but ontological status was drawn. From damned to elect, from sinner to saint, one was changed and the mentioning of the names indicated in the ancient world just this transfer. After the likeness of Chefa and Saul, the neophytes were baptized in the names of the Holy Trinity's Persons and received the name of Christ.

Being baptized into the name of Jesus implied in the early Church a close, personal connection to the Prophet from Nazareth, the duty to follow His example and the following of the Law (which incorporated the OT as well)[76]. Through baptism he neophyte became the „property" of Christ[77] following that, his entire life, he would live assuming that state[78].

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[76] Pius-Ramon Tragan, *Alle origini...*, pp. 269-270.

[77] Gerhard Barth, *Il battesimo...*, p. 73.

[78] An interesting, literal case is that of Thomas in *The Acts of Thomas.*

The Origin, History and Theology of the Baptismal Formula „Baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" in the Early Church

Rev. Ph.D. Cand. Cristian PRILIPCEAN

In this article we analyze the expression „baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28, 19b). Firstly, we mention the critics that challenge its matthaean origin (among which we enumerate the two quotation methods of Eusebius of Caesarea), and then we continue with the theologians who believe the text as being inspired; in the second chapter, starting from the meaning of the prepositions לְ and בְּ, and as well of the word εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, we trace the main features of the phrase „to baptize in the name of..."; then there is a brief description of the presumed historical development„monadic, dyadic, triadic formula"; in the penultimate chapter we quote the liturgical sources of the first three centuries that contain the text Mt. 28, 19b; we end with the theology of the analyzed expression.