CHAPTER V

NAMES AND TITLES ATTRIBUTED TO MARY
(With Patristic and West Syriac Liturgical Thoughts)

INTRODUCTION
Types and symbols serve as pointers for the divine providence. From the subjective human perspective a type or symbol can be seen as a revelation of some aspect of the divine hiddeness. From the objective divine perspective the reverse is the case: some aspect of divine reality lies hidden in the type or symbol.¹ One of the main characteristic features of the early Syriac writing is the ample use of images, and thereby they present the mystery of Christ in symbolic language. In the Syriac world the Church Fathers used the typological exegesis for Biblical interpretation. Paradoxes are also used for showing the incomprehensibility or the mystery of the salvific action of our Lord, for example; ‘the Great one who became small’, ‘the rich one who became poor’ (based on 2 Cor 8:9) and ‘the hidden one who revealed himself’.²

Biblical and liturgical typology explains the scriptures or comments on the rites in function of the objective correspondence that exists between the several phases of salvation history. The typology may be prophetic and announces the eschatological future, or it may be commemorative and shows how the past is fulfilled. Allegory, on the contrary, interprets the scriptures and the liturgy without paying any attention to the real relations that exist between the successive stages of the divine economy. Typology has an objective historical basis. Allegory, on the other hand, abstract from the analogy between the different phases of the one divine plan and sets up arbitrary innovations…. In spiritual exegesis and in

¹ Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, p. 27.
² *HNat* 11:6-8.
mystagogy that which depends on typology remains permanently valid; that which belongs to allegory is transitory”.

Most of the types of Christ and mysteries related to him are from the Old Testament passages which the Church Fathers have ventured to interpret. The pre-planning and narration of types were aimed at teaching the people so that they would have no doubts when the reality came. From the homilies of Jacob of Serug we can understand why the Church Fathers used these types or images in their writings:

Before he comes he delineated that he is coming, so that when he comes, the people should not ask ‘who is he? whose son? Or what is his tiding?’

God wanted to show what was going to happen (ܥܬܝܕ ܗܘܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ) literally before it happens, so that the impious one might not blaspheme when Christ became incarnate. Even the creation of Adam was to educate the world about the form in which Christ was going to be incarnate. For Aphrahat, when God planned to create the world with all its adornments, first he conceived and formed Adam (whole mankind) in his mind. From the beginning, human nature was created as mortal. But before the constitution of the world, he wanted to make us desire immortal life and he showed it in the man Jesus Christ. The creation of Eve from Adam was to explain the virgin birth of Jesus Christ in advance. He who already knows that a woman has proceeded from a man will not be perplexed when he hears that a virgin gave birth.

Types are part of a progressive teaching process of God. If God had spoken of his Son, it would have become the cause for a new idol. So, the almighty wanted not to reveal the Son, but at the same time he wanted to teach the world partially of his existence. Even when God announced that the Lord is one, the people

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4 HS III, p.281.
5 HS IV, pp. 575-576.
6 Dem 17 On the Messiah who is the Son of God, ET by Kuriakose Valavanolickal, Aphrahat’s Demonstrations , ME 24 (Kottayam 2005), p. 144.
multiplied idols. So if He had announced the Trinity from the beginning it would have been disastrous. Thus in the earlier times the Son was hidden in symbols.\footnote{HS V, p.396.}

Why was Christ not taken from earth like the first Adam but from the virgin without marriage? For this question Thomas of Edessa gave the following answer:

If God would have taken the new Adam from earth, we would have been desperate because of our trespasses, for he had despised our nature. But he took our nature and showed us by the virginal birth that the immortal life is without concupiscence and is incorruptible. Therefore we can hope to become partakers of the future goods. Christ has a share in the human nature despite the birth without sperm. The Holy Spirit indicates the beginning of a new \textit{Oikonomia}. The novelty of this formation without coition shows the novelty of the \textit{Oikonomia}.\footnote{Theresia Hainthaler, “Thomas of Edessa, Causa De Nativitate …”, p.77.}

Jacob of \textit{Serug} tells that the Father considered the form in which his Son was going to come to the world. It was according to this form that Adam was created. So, in the strict sense it would be wrong to say that Christ took the form of man, but one should say that man was created in the form which Christ was to take in the future.\footnote{“God considered what is going to happen to His Son, in what form he will come to the world when he will save it. And it is in this form that He made Adam when He created him… So that by seeing him, they may not look at him as a stranger”; \textit{HS} IV, p.591.}

In this chapter we shall study the names and titles attributed to Mary from the liturgical hours of the commemoration of the Virgin Mary. Here I also use the homilies of Aphrahat, St. Ephrem, Narsai and Jacob of \textit{Serug} and the West Syriac Liturgical tradition to explain the names and titles of Mary. For this study I divided this chapter into different sections, in order to understand it easily, with the following main themes:

I. Divine Motherhood  
II. Virginity  
III. Fulfillment of prophecy  
IV. Church and Mary
Names and Titles of Mary

V. Mary and Eucharist

VI. Mary and Eve

I. DIVINE MOTHERHOOD

The power of the Holy Spirit enters the chaste womb of the Virgin, forming the humanity of Christ. The holy Fathers of the Church say that the consent of Mary was essential to the redemption. The Mother of the Redeemer has a precise place in the plan of salvation, for “when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying ‘Abba Father!’”.

Mary’s Divine motherhood is based on the teaching of the Gospels, on the writings of the Fathers, and on the liturgical services of the Church. As Mary was truly the mother of Jesus, and as Jesus was truly God from the first moment of His conception, Mary is truly the mother of the Son of God. He is one Christ the Son of God, whose divinity is born from the Father eternally before the times. And at the end of time his humanity is born from Mary with the united body. His divinity is not from the nature of mother and his humanity is not from the nature of Father.

The prayers of the commemoration emphatically state the divine motherhood of Mary. She is presented as the Mother of Christ and at the same time as a virgin. The hymns of St. Ephrem cited in the commemoration beautifully describe the divine motherhood of Mary. Ephrem presents it as a great mystery:

…Truly, the Son of the Virgin, the Light is full of wonder; since she gave birth to him without man and his name was called (as) ‘wonder’…

May I call her the married woman but her virginity troubles me; and I will call her the Virgin, then her child astonishes me. She gave birth to the wonder and her history (generation) is without limit….

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11 Gal 4:4-6.
12 ܕܡܬܐܡܪܐ ܥܕܲܡܳܐ ܠܕܲܢܚܲܐ ܬܫܒܘ (Hudra Vol. 1, p. 118).
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Mary became the Mother of Christ because of the love of God the Father. It is through his divine plan of salvation that she became the Mother of Christ. Her purity and willingness to co-operate in God’s work of salvation made her worthy of becoming the mother of the Son of God, the Lord of all.\textsuperscript{15} She is depicted as the Mother of Christ, the Medicine of Life.

\[\ldots\text{ for through the love God has come towards us and has taken a pledge from our race for his honour. And behold today he is on the right side of the Father and beseeches for the sake of all of us…}\textsuperscript{16}\]

Mary who gave birth to the medicine of life for the children of Adam, through your supplication may we find mercy on the day of resurrection.\textsuperscript{17}

The prayer points to the mystery that is Mary who contained in her the divinity, the fire, but she was not burnt with it:

The divinity dwelt in the virgin and she was not burnt. That artist who took the dust without hands; the fruit in her he formed which resembles that first one.\textsuperscript{18}

The Saviour of all the creation was carried in her womb (\textit{Qanona}) so the Church gave the peace to the mother of the Saviour of all creatures. Mary conceived and bore Him, the Son of God, the Saviour of all, the Lord of angels and race of men purely without marriage (but) from the power of the Holy Spirit (\textit{‘Onita d’Lelya}). She is the mother and maid servant of the Lord and all creatures. In the incarnation Mary bore Christ and became the dwelling place of God. Like Abraham who inaugurated the Old Covenant, Mary paved the way for the New Covenant. Israel had been formed and chosen because of Abraham’s act of faith. Mary’s act of faith became the source of blessing for the “New Israel”, because therewith she prepared herself for the incarnation that led to the redemption.\textsuperscript{19} In the New Testament, Mary is the “blessing” for the children of the “New Israel”,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[Tcr 27, p. 87; this is the 3\textsuperscript{rd} stanza of 4\textsuperscript{th} madraše- but this stanza is not found in the \textit{HM}ary 2.]
\item[James Puthuparampil, \textit{Mariological Thought of Mar Jacob of Serug}” ME 25 (Kottayam 2005), p.121.]
\item[Suba’a, Tcr 27, p. 77.]
\item[Hpakta, Tcr 27, p. 80.]
\item[Hpakta after proclamation, Tcr 27, p. 82. And see in Mar Narsai, \textit{Hom. on Mary}, Vat. Syr. 588, p.15.]
\item[James Puthuparampil, \textit{Mariological Thought} …, p.324.]
\end{footnotes}
and Elizabeth affirmed it by saying that “blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord” (Lk 1:45). God told Abraham, “the father of many nations” (Rom 4:18) that he “will be a blessing” (Gen 12:2). In the new alliance, Mary “is a blessing”. She can be called “the mother of the believers” for she, by her example sets the Church in the way of faith, obedience and trust in God.

The day when Gabriel entered / my poor presence, he made me immediately a free woman and a servant; for I am servant /of Your divinity, but I am also mother /of Your humanity, [my] Lord and [my] son.²⁰ Here Ephrem’s specification that Mary is servant of the divinity and mother of the humanity of Christ which is the same as the thoughts of the Church of the East on Mary and Christ.

Humility and faith are essential in our Christian life. In the Demonstration on Humility, Aphrahat states that, Mary conceived him because of her humility. Humility brought the humble to exaltation and the proud to humiliation. This is seen in the praise of Mary (Lk 1:48-56). Aphrahat instructs us:

Mary received him because of her humility. For when Gabriel announced to the blessed Mary, he said to her as follows, “Peace to you, blessed among women” (Lk 1:28). Gabriel carried the peace and brought the Blessed Fruit; the beloved child was sown in Mary. She praised and magnified the Lord who was pleased with the humility of his maid-servant; however he was not pleased with the proud and the exalted ones. The Exalted One lifted up all the humble (Lk 1:48, 51-52).²¹

Why did God dwell in Mary? Jacob of Serug gave the answer:

He looked on and dwelt in her because she was humble among those who are born.²²

He searched her and found humility and holiness in her / and limpid impulses and a soul desirous of divinity / And a pure heart and every reckoning of perfection, / because of this He chose her, the pure and

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²⁰ HNat 5:20.
²² Jacob of Serug, Hymn on Mary; cf. Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serug on the Mother of God (New York 1998), p.22
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most fair one. / She alone is humble, pure, limpid and without blemish, /
so that she was deemed worthy to be his mother and not another.²³

By her humility, by her purity, by her uprightness,
and by her good will, she was pleasing and was chosen for Him.²⁴

In the HVirg, Ephrem turns to the Johannine account of crucifixion, where Jesus invites Mary and John to regard one another as Mother and Son. The love and care that flowed from Mary to her Son are echoed by the love of Jesus for John and repaid by entrusting her to his care (Jn 25:2-3). John shows a special resemblance to Jesus, Ephrem assumes, because he takes Jesus’ place as Mary’s son.²⁵ But a deeper ethical mystery is contained here: The love of John for his Lord led him to imitate him, thus bringing into higher relief the imago dei engraved on each human being (Jn 25:4). Ephrem says that the Church glorified Mary not because of her but for the divine presence within her.²⁶

Christ is the King of Kings and Mary is the Mother of the King. Ephrem calls Mary as Ephrata, the Mother of Kings because the Lord of Kings rose from her. Christ is the Lord of all kings and he ruled over them with peace and harmony. In the suba’a prayer the Church calls her the Mother of the King as:

Oh! Mary, mother of the King, the king of kings, persuade Christ to have pity on our low estate because our debts have become strong and our iniquity has increased and our sin became stronger and many are our injuries.²⁷

Mary is the star and Christ is the Sun but this star is brighter than the sun (‘Onita d’Lelya). Mary is called a morning star. According to Jacob of Serug Mary carries the Sun –Sun of righteousness - from where the universe is lightened. Through this light all the darkness was removed from us.

You carry the Sun whose rays give light to the universe (Mal 4:2)

All the darkness which oppresses the world is dissipated by Him.²⁸

²³ Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serug on the Mother..., p.23.
²⁴ Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serug on the Mother..., p.26.
²⁵ Kathleen E. McVey, Ephrem the Syrian Hymns, p.369.
²⁶ Cf. HNat 16:16
²⁷ ܛܪ 27, p.78.
²⁸ Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serug on the Mother..., p.80.
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Mary is the mother of the second Adam and not of the Essence. And like the earth, she has also given birth without marriage. He formed the former Adam (First-Adam), the head of the human being, from the earth; he chose the second Adam from the land of the living mother, the Holy Virgin, and he made the child of Virgin Mary (as) the head of heavenly being.

By the desire for fruit, the First (Adam) was condemned and he (thus) condemned his children; and by constancy (in the face of temptation), the Second Adam gained victory. / He, God, wanted to be like a son of man; by the Spirit, He purified one virgin and made her his Mother, / so that He might become a second Adam from God for the world (1Cor 15:45) / to give assistance to that first one whom the serpent had brought low;…

The virgin earth gave birth to that Adam, head of the earth; the Virgin today gave birth to (second) Adam, head of heaven. I Cor 15:45-49: Thus it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (47): The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. (48): As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven. (49): just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

The second Adam has been manifested in the form of first Adam. The first Adam was created without any marital union so the second Adam also embodied from Virgin without any sexual intercourse. By creating first Adam from the dust, he manifested his power and wisdom and in the same way the Word of God took flesh from Mary the Virgin. For he himself became body, just as he willed it, He became man, and entered the world.

In the Syriac Literature the messianic name, ‘Lion’s whelp’, has a wider usage in the background. Gen 49:9 and Rev 5:5 are seen in the context of the Davidic roots of Christ. Moreover, in the context of the incarnate Son with reference to his self-

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29 Narsai, Nativity, 455-456.
30 Karozuta for the commemoration of Mary on May 15, see Tcr. 29, p.44b.
31 Narsai, Nativity, 461-462.
32 Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serug on the Mother…, p.35
33 HNat 1:16.
emptying, Phi 2:6 and Is 53:7; Jn 1:26; Rev 6:1, the two estates of Christ, divine and human are portrayed through Lion-lamb imagery. Mary became the ewe and Christ became the lion’s whelp. It is a supernatural thing. It denotes the divine motherhood of Mary and her position at the salvation history is great.

Who saw an ewe carrying a lion’s whelp and bringing him up without fear. Mary became the ewe and Christ became the lion’s whelp and she brought him up and did not fear. Praise to you our Lord. Praise to you the Son of God who lifted up Mary who gave birth to you.34

Ephrem also states that the lion’s whelp became a lamb from the virgin ewe in order to offer the sacrifice to deliver us:

Blessed are you, the maiden who bore / the Lion’s whelp of which Jacob wrote. / He abased Himself and sucked from you / the pure milk on which he grew. / He became a lamb from the virgin ewe, / so as to offer up that sacrifice which would deliver us.35

Mary is the daughter of poor (parents) who carried the rich one. From the divine intervention the poor one became the mother of the rich one. Through the prayer of this poor one, our poverty passed away and we get the freedom in the heavenly kingdom:

Through the daughter of the poor parents he has sent the rich (one) of his greatness and from him the treasure of his helps poured out to our poverty.36 The daughter of poor parents who became the mother to Him who frees all; He enriched our needfulness through the power of your prayers.37

Jacob of Serug called Mary the daughter of poor ones who became the mother of the Lord of kings and through her intercession we get riches from the rich one and we may live with him in the kingdom of heaven.

Daughter of poor ones, who became mother of the Lord of Kings and gave riches to a needy world that it might live from Him.38

34 Sabah –’ Onita d’Lelya.
35 HMary 9:3, Lamy p. 549
36 Karozuta for the commemoration on May 15; cf. Tcr. 29, p.43b.
37 Tcr. 27, p.81.
38 Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serug on the Mother…, p.19
Mary’s divine motherhood is symbolically presented by the expressions like New Heaven, Castle of King and Temple of God.

1. New Heaven (ܡܕܢܚܐ ܚܕ ܬܐ)
The symbolic expression of Mary as the new heaven stands for Mary’s divine motherhood. In all religions heaven is associated with the abode of God from where God reigns over the earth. Since the Son of God has come down and dwelt in Mary, she is considered the new heaven. In the night prayer the Church praises her as:

   The Lord chose the new heaven for him from the house of David, so that he may confirm the mystery of the promise to the house of Abraham.
   Mary says (to herself) that “blessing to me because I gave birth to the Lord, and behold I was made the foster mother of the Lord of worlds.”

In the Old Testament the word ‘heaven’ is used with cosmological significance as part of the physical universe and with religious significance as the dwelling place of God, particularly as the source of His salutary blessings. In the Gospel according to John we read that Christ came down from the heaven and ascended to heaven and that he goes to heaven to prepare a place for his followers. At the eschatological period the world will be transformed into a new heaven and a new earth. Heaven is the dwelling place of God. Christian life is a voyage to the heavenly kingdom, where our Lord dwells. Ephrem calls her as a new heaven where the King of kings dwelt. And in the *HFaith* we called her as heaven and from her the glorious ray showed out:

   There was Mary, whose pure conception / I beheld there; there was the Church / with the Son within her. Like a cloud / is she who carried Him, and like the heaven / is she from whom flashed the glorious Ray.

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39 *Hpakta* Tcr. 27, p. 85.
44 *HFaith* 81:4.
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In the Bible, heaven occupies an important place, for it is the throne of God (Mt 5:34). The worthiness of heaven is due to the fact that God dwells in it; if it wishes or not. But the worthiness of Mary flows from the obedience to the words of Gabriel. St. Ephrem also calls her as the second heaven. His dwelling in Mary makes her “the second heaven” and the descent of the angels to praise him at his nativity confirms this mystery:

That chief of the angels’ greeted you (Mary) as the pledge of holiness. / The earth became for him a new heaven / in which the Watchers came down and praised. / The sons of the height gathered around to serve you / because of the King’s Son who dwelt in you. / Your earthly habitation became like heaven above by their vigil.45

In the commemoration of the Virgin Mary the Church of the East calls her as New/ Second heaven but in the Church gives one admonition to us that we cannot call her heaven because she is more than the heaven. Mary’s relation with Christ is dynamic, and has the characteristic of a mother’s relationship to her Child:

Fire was carried in her womb; the Tabernacle was venerated in her body. The Spirit brooded in her soul and in everything she became heaven. O Reader “do not blame me” because I called her “like heaven” and as I think (she is) more, high and exalted than heaven.46

Fire, the Christ, which was carried in Mary’s womb, the tabernacle, meeting place between God and men, was venerated in her body and the Holy Spirit brooded in her soul. So the Trinity comes here, and because of this she is a heaven. “If I call her ‘heaven’ don’t blame me because I thought that she is more than that of heaven”.47 The incarnation is incompressible to the human intellect so the Church Fathers used the symbols and images to describe the whole salvific action. In Mary, God who is infinite becomes finite, the unlimited becomes the limited.

45 HNat 27:17 is identical with HNat 28:2.
46 &shha; of Qala of Qala of Night Prayer (Hudra Vol. I, p. 593)
According to Jacob of Serug Mary and Heaven are equal in the dwelling habits but it is not equal with its position. Heaven is his throne only but Mary is his mother so we cannot resemble the throne with the Mother of the Son of God:

Heaven and Mary were for Him equal when He dwelt in her, yet not equal, for to the one who beholds her Mary is greater. Heaven is his throne and Mary his mother and behold they are not equal for the throne does not resemble the Mother because the Mother is greater. 48

Mary is greater than heaven; because she is His mother who carried him, suckled him and sang lullabies to her silent babe. 49 In an anonymous Hymns on Mary we read how Mary became greater than heaven. It is because the child born of Mary is the One who gives life to the Watchers with his very breath and because the child has grown on Mary’s milk:

Peace to you, filled with grace! / The heaven is not greater than you, / and the region of the Watchers trembles at your Child, / for behold you are carrying Him in tranquillity / Him who gives life to the Watchers with his very breath. / Because He so willed it, He has grown up on your milk. 50

Jacob of Serug calls Him the Lord of heaven. And then he asks the question that how the heaven carried the Lord of heaven. Christ is the creator of all and the Lord of heaven dwelt in the second heaven and came forth from her in order to expel the darkness of sins from the earth:

Second heaven, in whose womb the Lord of heaven dwelt
and shone forth from her to expel darkness from the lands. 51

The mystery of the incarnation is seen in the mode of wonder because it surpasses human concepts. Jacob of Serug makes a contrast between heaven, which is insufficient to contain God (1 Kings 8:7), and the womb of Mary in which He willed to dwell:

Heaven is too small to be sufficient to carry His hidden nature,

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48 Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serug on Mother..., pp.68-69.
49 James Puthuparampil, Mariological Thought..., p.110.
50 HMary 14:1; ET by Sebastian Brock, Bride of Light, p.60.
51 Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serug on Mother..., p.18
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but a solitary woman escorts and carries His magnificence.52

The One who dwells in heaven and is incessantly praised by the heavenly beings, has taken bodily form from a woman.53

In the West Syrian Tradition the terms, such as Second heaven and New Heaven, are used to denote Mary:

Second heaven, in whose bosom rested the Lord of the heights and came forth to drive away the darkness from the face of the earth.54

Palace of holiness in which the King descended and came to dwell, new heaven which carried God the Word; in your arms you embraced the flames and you gave milk to the devouring fire; blessed is he, the infinite, who was born of you.55

2. Castle of King

Christ, the King of kings, dwelt in Mary and by this made her a castle (of flesh). She is invoked as ‘the Palace of flesh’. God the Father made Mary a beautiful palace for his Son. The names such as castle of the king, shining castle, pure castle etc., are used to denote the divine motherhood of Mary and the fact that the one who dwelt in her is the Son of God. It is not only Mary’s beauty and sanctity, but the Son of God who dwelt in her that makes her a ‘shining castle’. The pure castle refers to the pure body of Mary in whom God dwelt. Her purity and willingness to co-operate in God’s work of salvation made her worthy to become the mother of the Lord.56 In the night prayer of the commemoration the Church sings:

…”All the doves smote their wings and cried to each other “Come, let us go and see the palace that the King built for us.”57 The Castle of the king gave greeting (peace) to the mother of the servant (Elizabeth) and the embryo (baby) began to leap within her womb before his Lord.58 Peace to

53 James Puthuparambil, Mariological Thoughts..., p.108.
55 Qolo Lilyo on Tuesday, Awsar Slawoto, pp.375-77.
56 James Puthuparambil, Mariological Thoughts ..., pp.116-117.
57 Hpakta after proclamation Tcr 27, p.83.
58 Hpakta after proclamation Tcr 27, p.83; also in Narsai, Nativity, 215-216.
you, Mary, the palace of flesh made of flesh for the King has willed to establish his beauty within your limbs.  

And in the `실탐` prayer the Church also call her the palace of flesh:
Mary who became the palace of flesh which gives peace to everything, beseech together with us to the Son, Christ, that he may have pity upon us.

She is the palace (Prov. 9:1) where dwells the Son of God, who is the King of kings. God chose Mary because she had been pleasing before Him.

St. Ephrem used the title “royal palace” for Mary’s virginity and for her divine motherhood as well. She is a Royal Palace because the Royal Son dwelt in her. The metaphor of the dwelling of the King in the castle is the royal imagery; a symbol of Mary’s maternity and virginity also:

Blessed is she, in whose heart and mind / You are: she is a royal palace / because of You, O Royal Son. She is the sanctuary / for You, the High priest. She knows no worries / or cares of home or husband.

Royal palace for Mary’s divine motherhood:
Blessed are you, O Castle, Castle of the King, / whose gate is greater than mortal beings. / The glorious King dwelt within you. / Let His love be a bulwark for your beauty.

Royal palace for Mary’s virginity:
Babe in the womb, since the seal of virginity / abides, the womb was for You / the royal palace and the curtain. / Evidence of virginity upon it, evidence of virginity outside, / a fetus inside- a great paradox.

The indwelling of the word: at the fullness of time, His love dwelt in us and reconciled the universe. He did not send towards us any spiritual being who are active on his behalf, but He sent his own Son, who is the same order with the Father, the Word to us and redeemer.
According to Narsai, with the will of God He himself went forth from on high and came down to the depth and for his dwelling he fashioned a palace of flesh on the earth. This palace is Mary and he formed her with the pleasure of his love:

He went forth from on high and came to the depth (below) in His (good) pleasure / and fashioned a dwelling place in a palace of flesh in the (good) pleasure of His love.\(^{64}\)

Peace be upon you, castle of holy things and full of virtues,
harbour of mysteries and new ship full of riches.\(^{65}\)

Jacob of *Serug* presents Mary as the most perfect one in the whole of creation and the word “fair palace” is one of the finest expressions to describe that God found her worthy and ready and so He dwelt in her.

Fair palace, the King built and entered and dwelt in it;
The doors were not opened before Him when He was going out (Ezek 44:2).\(^{66}\)

Here, Mary’s maternity and virginity are symbolically brought out in a single picture. God made Mary a beautiful palace and was born from her. When He came out of Mary, the seal of her virginity remained intact. Mary, who gave her consent to becoming the mother of the Son of God, was respected by God in that He let her remain in the state of virginity.

Jacob of *Serug* tries to communicate two things; first, the state in which the angel met the virgin and secondly what she became in giving her consent to becoming the mother of the Son of God.\(^{67}\) The castle of holy things and full of virtues stands for Mary who is humble, pure, limpid and without blemish; Mary was deemed worthy to be the mother of the Son of God.\(^{68}\)

In the West Syrian Tradition these terms are used many times. Here we may present some of them:

While Mary was standing in prayer and making supplication before God,
an angel of fire descended beside her, clothed in flame, and said to her:

\(^{64}\) Narsai, *Nativity* 1: 73-74.
\(^{65}\) Mary Hansbury, *Jacob of Serugh on Mother…*, p.45.
\(^{66}\) Mary Hansbury, *Jacob of Serugh on Mother…*, p. 19.
\(^{67}\) James Puthuparambil, *Mariological Thoughts …*, p.117.
\(^{68}\) Jacob of Serugh, *On the Virgin*, ET by Mary Hansbury, *Jacob of Serug on Mother…*, p.23.
peac be with you, palace in which the Son of the King dwells, he took from you poverty, when he who is rich dwelt in your womb, that he might satisfy the hunger of the nations.\(^\text{69}\)

### 3. Temple (ܢܘܣܐ) and Temple of God (ܗܝܟܠܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ)

The symbol of the ‘temple’ was of utmost importance to the Israelites in the Old Testament. Mary is the temple which the Holy Spirit purified and sanctified, in whom the Son of God dwelt. Christ is no mere human being otherwise he could not rise from the dead. So according to the Church Fathers He is the rational temple in which God is.

According to Aphrahat, the Persian sage, after God brought forth Adam, and he had known his maker. “…God was formed and conceived inside the thought of man. He became the temple for God his maker, as it is written, ‘You are the temple of God’ (1Cor 6:16). He had said, ‘I shall dwell in them and I shall walk among them’ (Lev 26:12, 2Cor 6:16). But if the sons of Adam do not know their maker, God is not formed inside them and he does not dwell with them and he is not conceived in their thought. However they are considered before him like animals and like the rest of the creatures (Ps. 73:22)”.\(^\text{70}\)

The phrase “God put one body” (\textit{HNat} 9:2) indicates that there is nothing unclean or unworthy about the body. Ephrem elsewhere speaks of the human body as having become God’s new temple, replacing the Temple on Mount Zion (\textit{HEccl} 42:4).

When the Holy Spirit descends upon Mary and sanctifies her, she becomes a temple or tabernacle for the Son of God. This theme is recited on the day of the commemoration of our Virgin mother:

> She who became a tabernacle to the Lord, palace to the heavenly son and a castle to the son of the creator who resembles her in the world.\(^\text{71}\)

The Old Testament concept of the temple is that it is the dwelling place of God on earth.\(^\text{72}\) The temple was conceived of as a dwelling place for the deity on earth.

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\(^{69}\) \textit{Qolo, Sapro} on Wednesday, \textit{Awsar Slawoto}, p.547. \\
\(^{70}\) \textit{Dem} 17: \textit{On the Messiah who is the Son of God}, Et by Kuriakose Valavanickal, \textit{Aphrahat’s Demonstrations}, p.145. \\
\(^{71}\) \textit{Qala} of \textit{Qala} of Night Prayer (\textit{Hudra}, Vol. I, p. 595)
and it is not the building which was used for public gathering and prayer in our current concept. Since the Son of God dwelt in Mary, she became a “pure Temple”. In the Morning Prayer the Church praises her as:

… for the Father took pleasure in you; and the Son dwelt in you and the Holy Spirit fashioned the temple in you; and on this account behold watchers and men glorify you. 

And at the night prayer we called her as the ‘temple full of grace’:

“Peace unto you, O Temple Full of grace” the watcher said to the blessed woman; Peace be with you because Christ, the sun of righteousness, rose from you.

As the temple of God the Word, Mary is the purest shrine, and she is the perfect model for the Christians as they try to achieve this goal of perfection in their lives. According to Jacob of Serug the Holy Spirit came at first and purified Mary and then the Power of the Most High (the Word) dwelt in her:

Blessed is she who received the Holy Spirit; He purified and polished her, And He made her a temple, and the Lord Most High dwelt in her abode.

The Holy Spirit has purified and polished her and made her blessed among the women. God made her a temple in which the Lord of Most High dwelt as his abode. The temple is the house of his hidden Father and through it he revealed himself to the world. In the Old Testament the temple is the meeting place between God and the people. Likewise she bore the Son of God, she became the temple of God and thus became a ‘real mediator’ between people and God.

In the West Syrian Tradition we have this symbol in various prayers:

Christ our God who willed that today your mother, whom you made the temple of the Holy Spirit, would enter the temple at Jerusalem to dedicate herself to your Father in a life of pure worship.

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72 James Puthuparmpil, Mariological Thought..., p.121.
74 D-ṣaqera-Praise another lesson, Tcr.27, p.91.
75 Ḥpakte Tcr 27, p. 85.
76 Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serugh on the Mother..., p.41.
77 Concluding prayer of Entrance of Mary in the Temple, evening prayer; cf. Francis Acharya, Prayer..., p.255.
Blessed and glorious Mother of God, pure virgin who received the Most High, you are the glorious tabernacle of the Godhead, the pure temple of the Word of God, the dwelling place of the Maker of all....

St. Ephrem used this symbol not only for the divine motherhood of the Mary but also for the human beings who fully dedicated their lives to God and the Church. Just as John and Joseph recognized that Mary was the temple and tabernacle in which God dwelt, we should recognize Christian virgins, betrothed to Christ, as his temples, symbols of the mystery of the incarnation. In the biblical analysis we have seen that a Christian is the temple of God for the “Spirit of God dwells” (1Cor. 3:16-17) in him. As the temple of God Mary is the fair tabernacle, and she is the perfect model for Christians as they try to achieve this goal of perfection in their life. One can become the temple of God by building oneself in Christ and by seeking to do the will of God, just as Mary who first became the temple of God.

In Mary the temple, the transcendent God limited Himself in space, and clothed Himself in human fashion.

These prayers proclaim the divine origin of Jesus Christ from Mary. The prayers of the commemoration emphatically state Mary’s divine motherhood. She is presented as the Mother of Christ and at the same time as a virgin. Mary became the Mother of Christ because of the love of God the Father. It is through his divine plan of salvation that she became the Mother of Christ. Her purity and willingness to co-operate in God’s work of salvation made her worthy of becoming the mother of the Son of God, the Lord of all. She is depicted as the Mother of Christ, the Medicine of Life.

It was reasonable that it should be announced to the Blessed Virgin that she was to conceive Christ. First, in order to maintain a becoming order in the union of the Son of God with the Virgin-namely, that she should be informed in mind concerning Him, before conceiving Him in the flesh. Secondly, that she might be a more certain witness of this mystery, being instructed therein by God. Thirdly,

79 HVirg 25:10-11.
80 James Puthuparmpl, Mariological Thought of ..., p.126.
81 James Puthuparmpl, Mariological Thought ..., p.121.
that she might offer to God the free gift of her obedience: which she proved herself right ready to do, saying: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord”. Fourthly, in order to show that there is a certain spiritual wedlock between the Son of God and human nature. Wherefore in the Annunciation the Virgin’s consent was besought in lieu of that of the entire human nature. The New Testament presents us a God who wishes to dwell in human persons and who invites the person to dwell in Him; the condition for this communion is to keep the Word of God (Jn 14:23) and to abide in Him (Jn 15:30). We must say ‘yes’ to the will of God with the faith of God and then we become the temple of our Lord.

II. VIRGINITY

Scripture and tradition agree in ascribing to Mary the greatest personal sanctity; she is conceived without any stains of sin; she shows the greatest humility and patience in her daily life (Lk 1:38, 48); she exhibits an heroic patience under the most trying circumstances (Lk 2:7, 35, 48; Jn 19:25-27). The virginal conception is indicative also of the completely gratuitous nature of Christ’s redemptive incarnation. It is carried out without the aid of human agencies; it can only happen because God has freely chosen to intervene.\textsuperscript{82} The \textit{protoevangelium of James}, an infancy gospel and the life of Mary, written in mid-second century, with its hagiographic details, was to have great influence. It said that Mary remained a virgin while delivering her son \textit{(in partu)} as well as after the birth of Jesus \textit{(Virginitas post partum)}.\textsuperscript{83}

John Haffner gives the details of the virginity of Mary as follows:

\begin{quote}
The bodily virginity of Our Lady is further elaborated as virginity before the Birth of Christ, during his Birth and after His Birth (\textit{virginitas ante partum, in partu, and post partum}). The doctrine of \textit{virginitas ante partum} teaches the absence of marital relations between Our Lady and St. Joseph up to the time of Christ’s birth, and therefore affirms the virginal conception. The \textit{Virginitas in partu} includes the non-rupture of the hymen at the moment of birth, which takes place without any opening of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{82} Paul Haffner, \textit{The mystery of Mary}, Gracewing Hillenbrand-Books (Chicago 2004), p.134.

the membranes or damage to Our Lady’s body, and without pain. This description of the *virgintas in partu* involves a miraculous Birth, during which Christ passes from His Mother’s womb, as He later passed from the closed sepulcher. At the same time, it was a true Birth. The teaching concerning *virginitas post partum* excludes marital relations, and thus the generation of other children, after the Birth of Christ. Taken together these truths constitute the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.\textsuperscript{84}

The term ‘virgin’ is used 45 times in the prayer for the commemoration of Mary. Mary’s giving birth to Emmanuel did not affect her virginity, and she remained ever Virgin. To the Jews who doubted the virginity of Mary it is retorted that with God nothing is impossible. The basis of all the greetings to Mary is her virginal motherhood of Emmanuel.

Mary has no stain at any period of her life. She is pure in her whole life form the childhood to the old age. On the commemoration of the Blessed Virgin on August 15 the Church of the East sings in one hymn that “Christ sent his watchers to his mother and they lifted up her body to heaven”, for this purpose the holiness is essential because only pure things are seen in heaven. In the \textit{ܡܘܬܒܐ} of the commemoration on second Friday after nativity we glorify her life as follows:

Who would not give praise to her childhood? / Who would not glorify her youth? / Who would not subdue (to) her Lordship? / His spirit is in the desires of her freedom. / Her childhood that is not injured, / her youth that is not harmful and / her old age is full of help to win all healings and all health.\textsuperscript{85}

The hidden power dwelt in her and she gave birth to the Son of God but the seal of her virginity is unchanged but it was exalted and made sublime for ever:

Chaste Mary, the seals of your virginity are pleasant, and sublime and lofty is the hidden power which dwells in you.\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{84} Paul Haffner, *The Mystery of Mary*, p.135.
\textsuperscript{85} \textit{ܫܒܚ} of the *Qala of \textit{ܡܘܬܒܐ} of Night Vigil of the Commemoration of the Virgin (\textit{Hudra} Vol. I, p. 595)
\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Hpakta}, Tcr.27, p.85.
Names and Titles of Mary

The Virgin Mary became the Mother of Christ because of her reception of the Word of God. Her ears were ever ready to respond to the call of God that it was through the hearing the good news through the ear Mary conceived the son of God. In the prayer of the liturgical hours of the commemoration of the Virgin Mary we can understand the conception through hearing and through the ear of Mary:

New tidings the watcher made fall into the ears of Mary, and she wondered much with the fresh word that he spoke with her.

The Father revealed his power from the height in the Virgin Mary. The watcher descended and sowed ‘the new tidings’ in her ears and she received the conception of wonder through the power of the Holy Spirit.

What really accounted for her divine motherhood and virginity is her readiness to abide by the will of God. The Syriac words repeatedly used here in reference to her conception are $\Gamma\Pi\gamma\iota\varsigma\iota\nu$ and $\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu$ which all mean that she conceived without sexual union. The words $\Gamma\Pi\gamma\iota\varsigma\iota\nu$ and $\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu$ refer to marital union.

Gabriel the great and the head of the angels announced to the virgin about His glorious birth, that you shall conceive from the Holy Spirit without man, intercourse and the seed of a man... without intercourse the Virgin gave birth to Emmanuel, more elevated than the Sun, who became the Lord of all creatures.... The watcher proclaimed the new conception without marriage; and she received it (him) in faith without doubt....

87 Narsai, Nativity, 189.
88 Hpakta, Tcr. 27, p.83.
89 Qanona, Tcr. 27, p.90.
90 Cf. Mt 12:50.
91 $\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu$ means marriage, from $\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu$ means yoke rt.
92 $\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\n
Names and Titles of Mary

In the commemoration, terms like ‘virgin’, ‘ever virgin’ and ‘pure virgin’ are also used to indicate the virginity of Blessed Mary.

The Holy Virgin is a great refuge to the faithful ones.\textsuperscript{96} The Virgin bore the Christ, the Lord of all.\textsuperscript{97} The Virgin became the mother of Wonder.\textsuperscript{98}

The expression ‘Ever Virgin’ (ܒܬܘܠܬ ܥܠܡܝܢ) is used twice in this commemoration.

Ever virgin Mary, the blessed Mother, beseech your Son so that he may make dwell his tranquillity in this sanctuary in which the day of your commemoration is celebrated; and may he cause to overshadow above it the right hand of his mercy like in the house of Abraham, for all the afflicted and distressed will take help from him.\textsuperscript{99}

Who has seen a virgin (who) gave birth without marriage?

And after her giving birth she remained virgin without doubt.\textsuperscript{100}

Even after the birth of Jesus, Mary remains a virgin. The expression ‘Pure Virgin’ is used three times:

The Pure Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ, beseech your son that he make dwell his tranquillity and peace within the churches in the four regions of the world. And may the priests and kings be established in their realms and may he cause his love and harmony to reign from age to age.\textsuperscript{101}

The pure virgin carried the fruit which the (watcher’s) voice had sowed, and the Spirit sounded on the harp of her (i.e. of the spirit) soul a hymn of praise.\textsuperscript{102}

The Virgin gave milk to her Son. How can we call her ‘virgin’ because she gave milk from her breast to her Son? The contradictions are seen in the hymns of St. Ephrem. If one cannot understand how Mary is both virgin and mother, how much less is it possible to comprehend her Son! (\textit{HNat 11:1}). Moreover, Mary is the mother, sister and betrothed of Jesus. In \textit{HNat 11}, Ephrem states the kenotic

\textsuperscript{96} Sabah of Onitha d-Batar, Tcr.27, p.76.
\textsuperscript{97} Basliqe, Tcr.27, p.76.
\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Qܢܘܢܐ} Tcr. 27, p.88.
\textsuperscript{99} Suba’a, Tcr. 27, p.78.
\textsuperscript{100} Hpakta after proclamation, Tcr. 27, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{101} Suba’a, Tcr.27, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{102} Hpakta Tcr. 27, p.85. See Narsai, \textit{Nativity}, 191-2.
theme developed in two respects: First with respect to Mary: She cared for her Son because He willed to become in need of care. Second with respect to all creation: By entering Mary’s womb he is transformed from the Lord, Establisher, Ruler, Nourisher of all and became a needy and helpless infant.

For she is Your mother- she alone- / and Your sister with all. She was to You mother; / she was to You sister. Moreover, she is Your betrothed / with chaste women. In everything, / behold, You adorned her, Beauty of Your mother.103

Through the power of God Mary’s womb is able to bear the One who bears all. How it happened with the human intellect one cannot understand, because it is far from human comprehension.

By power from Him Mary’s womb became able / To bear the One who bears all. / … He gave milk to Mary as God. / In turn, He was given suck by her as human. / Her arms carried Him, for He lightened His weight, and her bosom embraced Him, for He made Himself small.104

Jacob of Serug also gave importance to the virginity of Mary in his homilies:

Virgin who without marital union marvelously became a mother, a mother who remained without change in her virginity.105

A pure Virgin and a fiery Watcher spoke with wonder: a discourse which reconciled dwellers of earth and heaven.106

In the West Syrian Tradition we see the virginity of Mary in sublime expressions. An example is:

We beg and beseech you, Lord God, have pity and mercy upon us by the acceptable prayers of her from whom you were born in a holy manner, the virgin without stain, holy Mary….107

As to Mary's virginity after her childbirth, it is not denied by St. Matthew's expressions “before they came together” (1:18), “her firstborn son” (1:25), nor by the fact that the New Testament books repeatedly refer to the “brothers of

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103 HNat 11:2.
104 HNat 4:182-186.
105 Jacob of Serugh, Hymn on Mary ET Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serug on the Mother…. p.19.
106 Jacob of Serugh, Hymn on Mary ET Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serug on the Mother…. p.29.
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Jesus”\textsuperscript{108} The words “before they came together” mean probably, “before they lived in the same house”, referring to the time when they were merely betrothed; but even if the words be understood of marital intercourse, they only state that the incarnation took place before any such intercourse had intervened, without implying that it did occur after the incarnation of the Son of God.\textsuperscript{109} In the \textit{ܫܒܚ} of \textit{Qala} of \textit{Mawtva} of night prayer, the Church of the East calls Mary as the ‘virgin’. Even though she is betrothed to Joseph, there is no sexual union between them so the Fathers of the Church teach us: “This is the woman, unmarried. For no married woman is called virgin but this woman is called a woman once in truth she is a virgin”.\textsuperscript{110} The following are the symbols and images are used to describe the virginity of the Virgin Mary.

\textbf{1. Earth (ܐܪܥܐ)}

Various images are used for describing the virginity of Mary. First of all she is a Virgin like the earth. This symbol denotes the virginity of Mary and divine intervention on her. Here the Church Fathers use this symbol for the wonders of the motherhood and virginity of the Mother of Christ. In the hymns which are recited, on the Night vigil of the commemoration of Virgin Mary, that if we call Mary as Earth then we are stupid because she is incomparable with the whole earth:

\begin{quote}
If I call her ‘the Earth’ as a stupid one I meditate her (because) I understand that there is nothing like her. She is incomparable to the whole earth. / Adam was born from the earth and Adam returned to it (i.e., Earth). The Lord of Adam was from Mary, because of His love he became the son of Adam.\textsuperscript{111}
\end{quote}

Mary is the Mother of the second Adam; she is the mother of humanity and the servant of divinity. With the divine command the Earth bore the first Adam likewise Mary gave birth to the second Adam without any sexual union. Like Earth which gave birth to gold and it returns to its mother; Mary gave birth to her

\textsuperscript{108} Mt 12:46-47, 13:55-56; Mk 3:31-32; Lk 8:19-20; Jn 2:12, 7:3-10; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor 9:5; Gal 1:19; Jude 1.
\textsuperscript{110} \textit{ Hudra} Vol. I, p. 594.
\textsuperscript{111} \textit{ܫܒܚ} of the \textit{Qala} of \textit{ܡܘܬܒܐ} for the Night Prayer.
Son then he redeemed and saved her also with the creatures. In the *Hpakta* of this commemoration we sing the following:

Mary is the mother of the second Adam and not of (the divine) Essence; and like the earth she has also given birth without marriage….\(^{112}\)

That (Divine) command, which gave a sign to the earth, and it bore Adam, he depicted his image within her limbs in the likeness of ….\(^{113}\)

The Earth gives birth to gold, and it returns to its mother and redeems her;

Mary gave birth to Christ, and he redeemed and saved the creature….\(^{114}\)

O Chosen earth! Who sowed the good seed in you? And who put the living sheaf without you having perceived it? Through the prayer of Blessed Virgin Mary, He, the Son of God, removed the rod of wrath from us.\(^{115}\)

Mary is the chosen earth and Gabriel the Archangel sowed the new-tidings through her ears and she gave birth to Christ. Without any intervention of human seeds she conceived and gave birth. God put the life or fire that is Christ in her womb and she carried it for nine months and then gave birth for our redemption.

In the *Karozuta* of the Liturgy of Hours for the commemoration of Mary on May 15\(^{th}\) the Church proclaims as follows: “He formed the former Adam (anti-Adam), the head of the human being, from the earth; he chose the second Adam from the land of living mother, the Holy Virgin and he made the child of Virgin Mary (as) the head of heavenly being”.

Mary is the ‘land’ that receives the source of light (*HEccl* 37:3). Faith ‘is the eye which can see hidden things’ (*HEccl* 24:3), and faith in turn needs to be accompanied by love and prayer (*HFaith* 4:11). The faith is essential for the intervention of divine essence in men:

Then if the Word brought himself (Essence) down and became flesh, why is it necessary that the Spirit come in order to perfect his

\(^{112}\) *Hpakta* Tcr. 27, p. 81; see Narsai, *Nativity*, 455-6.

\(^{113}\) *Hpakta* Tcr. 27, p. 81; see Narsai, *Nativity*, 457-8.

\(^{114}\) *Hpakta* Tcr. 27, p. 84.

\(^{115}\) *Hpakta*. 
conception? In faith Mary greeted the heavenly one just as in the beginning the earth greeted the voice of commandment.\textsuperscript{116}

God sowed His will in a land of flesh that is Mary for uprooting the error and to give hope to the unhopeful men. All people are sinners and they went astray from Him: at that time God willed to give his only begotten Son to our nature to save us from the seas of errors and he gave new life to us also.

In a sign of peace, He sowed His (good) pleasure (ܟܒܝܢܐ) in a land of flesh,
in order to uproot error and sow hope for those without hope.\textsuperscript{117}

In the \textit{HNat}, Ephrem compares the virgin with the virgin earth which gave birth to Adam, the head of the earth. Mary gave birth at the fullness of time to the second Adam who is the head of heaven.

The virgin earth gave birth to that Adam, head of the earth;
the Virgin today gave birth to [second] Adam, head of heaven.\textsuperscript{118}

The thirsty earth is the unproductive land which denotes the divine intervention in Mary and human being and the theme ‘Every thing is possible to God’ also proclaimed through this imagery:

From the thirsty earth gushes forth a Spring
sufficiently to satisfy the thirst of the peoples.\textsuperscript{119}

Mary’s virginity is compared with the Earth. In Eden, without its having been worked the tree of life sprang up in its midst. There is cultivator there to cultivate the trees in it. Only divine grace worked on it as same in the case of Mary, the divine grace brought the child in her womb.

Mary’s virginity was preserved,\textit{as was the Earth’s}, in Eden the blessed (Gen 2:7)
Without its having been worked, \textit{there sprang up from its midst} (Gen 2:9)
the Tree of Life, which brings, in its mercies, \textit{Life to the souls of all who taste of it}.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{116} Tcr. 27, p.82; see Narsai, \textit{Hom. On Mary}, Vat. Syr. 588, p.15.
\textsuperscript{117} Narsai, \textit{Nativity}, 105-106.
\textsuperscript{118} \textit{HNat} 1:16.
\textsuperscript{119} \textit{HNat} 4:84.
\textsuperscript{120} Ephrem the Syrian, \textit{Sogitha} 1:30; cf. E. Beck, \textit{Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Nativitate} (CSCO 186, Syr. 82); cf. Sebastian Brock, \textit{Bride of Light}, p.71.
In the West Syrian tradition we can see the imagery of earth or thirsty earth in its prayers:

Blessed is the fruit of life that descended from on high, 
and sprang and grew up from the thirsty ground of Mary, 
to give hope and encouragement to the dead, 
that they will rise from their graves on the last day.\textsuperscript{121}
Rejoice, O Land, for the Lord has done great things for you. 
Mary, you are the land on which God has stepped, 
The land on which the thorn of sin has never grown, 
You who gave birth to him who has torn up sin by the root.\textsuperscript{122}

\textbf{2. Unploughed Field (ܠܐܚܩܕܠܐܡܡܬܘܡܝܕܥܬܠܐܟܪܐ)}

The ‘unploughed field’ is an agrarian symbol which the Syriac Fathers used to describe the mystery of Mary’s virginity. The land which is not ploughed and in which seeds have not been sown remains unproductive and barren.\textsuperscript{123} In the last strophe of the \textit{ܡܕܪܫܐ} for the commemoration of Virgin the Church recites:

She is the field that has never known a ploughman, yet from her has shot up a Sheaf full of joys: without any seed, she has provided supply for creation….\textsuperscript{124}

This hymn is taken from the collection of the hymns of St. Ephrem. Here he illustrates the virginity of Mary through the imagery of the land which is not ploughed and in which seeds have not been sown. The symbol “Unploughed land” reveals the principle that what is impossible for men, becomes possible because of God’s mercy, intervention and love.

O Field, which without a ploughman yielded a sheaf of life, 
And all creation which had been needy was satiated by it.\textsuperscript{125}

Mary’s giving birth is compared to a harvest from an unploughed land. This same is in the case of Elizebeth who gave birth to John the friend of Bridegroom within

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Qolo}, Fridays in the season of the annunciation, evening prayer; see Francis Acharya, \textit{Prayer...}, p.311.
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Qolo}, The Mother of God, Mother of Seeds, Night vigil; see Francis Acharya, \textit{Prayer...}, p.557.
\textsuperscript{123} James Puthuparmpil, \textit{Mariological Thought ...}, p.207.
\textsuperscript{124} Tcr. 27, p.87; see \textit{HMary} 2: 4.
\textsuperscript{125} Jacob of Serug, \textit{On the Mother of God}, Mary Hansbury, \textit{Jacob of serug on the Mother...}, p.70.
Names and Titles of Mary

her barren and old age. And also to Sara who is the mother of Isaac, the type of Christ.

Mary the blessed Field, has produced /that Sheaf that brings all kinds of joy: /the Harvest Pile of corn / needed no farmer.\(^{126}\) / Good field which, without seed, gave a sheaf\(^{127}\) and grew a great yield while being unploughed.\(^{128}\)

It was totally impossible to conceive a child for the barren women and to the virgin also. But in the case of Mary no sexual union takes place for the conception of Child but divine intervention is essential for this event. In the Eden though there was no cultivation the tree of life was there. The virginal conception was beyond human comprehension, so the Church Fathers used this agricultural imagery for describing it to the people of God.

O guarded field, who has thrown into you stolen seed?
because the heap of grain that is placed in the middle is not ours.\(^{129}\)

Jacob of Serug put these lines in the mouth of Joseph, thus alluding to the fact that the conception has taken place without his habitation with Mary.\(^{130}\)

In this month that scorches the seeds by its severe cold
the Blessed Seed sprang up from ‘the earth that had not been ploughed’.\(^{131}\)

In the West Syrian Tradition we see the imagery of field for describing the virginity of Mary:

The Word of the Father lowered himself and descended to you,
Pure and Holy Virgin, and became flesh without seed.
Like a blade full of life he grew up from you, Blessed Field.
Happy are you who became Mother of the living Lamb of God.
The fruit of life sprang from you as from a blessed field.\(^{132}\)

\(^{126}\) Ephrem the Syrian, *Sogiyata* 3:36, CSCO 186, Syr. 82, p.208.
\(^{128}\) Mary Hansbury, *Jacob of Serugh on the Mother…*, p.19.
\(^{129}\) HS I: 587-8; cf. FH, p.68.
\(^{130}\) James Puthuparampil, *Mariological Thoughts…*, p.212.
\(^{131}\) HS I: 1103-4; cf. FH, p.91.
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In Mary, God revealed His gift of salvation by making possible what was impossible for men. It highlights the perpetual virginity of Mary and with her humility which made her to become the mother of the Son of God.

3. The Light to the eyes (ܢܘܗܪܐ ܠܥ ܝܢܐ)

Mary’s virginity is compared to eyes into which the light enters. When the light enters into the eyes no damage happens to the eyes. We see the things only because of the light of the object entered into our eyes. Thus Christ entered her and went out from her without causing any change in her. Mary did not perceive his entering and coming forth. Through the conception and giving birth to the child her virginity was not corrupted.

Like the light to eyes, he entered into her; he went out from her and he did not affect her at all. Mary did not perceive his entering, he did not corrupt her virginity by his going forth.\(^{133}\)

Christ was born from the Father eternal and in the incarnation He was born again from Mary at the fullness of time. In \textit{HElcce} Ephrem used the imagery of light into eye and that Light makes some positive changes in her:

\begin{quote}
As though on an eye / the Light settled in Mary, / it polished her mind, \\
/ made bright her thought / and pure her understanding, / causing her 
virginity to shine.\(^{134}\)
\end{quote}

To Ephrem, Christ’s birth from Mary as well as from the Father was an indication that man too requires a second birth, that is, at baptism, and once again the chiastic structure of this piece of typology gives the artistic symmetry that the Syriac poets loved so much.\(^{135}\)

\begin{quote}
The Son of the Most High came and dwelt in me, /and I became His mother. / Just as I gave birth to Him /a further birth, so too did He give birth to me / a second birth: He put on His mother’s robe/ her body, while I put on His glory.\(^{136}\)
\end{quote}

\(^{133}\) \textit{Hpaktu- Suba’a after proclamation} , Tcr.27, p.84.
\(^{135}\) Sebastian Brock, An Introduction to Mary Hansbury’s \textit{Jacob of Serug On the Mother} ..., p.12.
\(^{136}\) \textit{HNat} 16:11.
Christ’s first birth from the Father and His second birth from Mary are balanced chiastically here with Mary’s physical birth and her second birth. In other words, her baptism, which, as we shall see, Ephrem regards as already taking place while Christ is in her womb.\footnote{Sebastian Brock, \textit{The Luminous Eye}, p.69.}

A number of factors suggest these links. In the first place one must remember that in Ephrem’s day Christ’s nativity and baptism were still celebrated on the same day, and that, at least in some localities, baptisms were held at this time, rather than at Easter. The links were further suggested by the characteristically Syriac imagery of the baptismal waters as a womb, and the fact that Christ’s presence in the Jordan was widely regarded in the early Syriac Speaking Church as having potentially sanctified all baptismal water. The parallelism thus created between Christ in his mother’s womb and in the “womb” of the Jordan water leads Ephrem to regard Christ’s very presence in Mary’s womb as the equivalent of her baptism:

The light settled on Mary, as on an eye; it purified her mind, it cleansed her understanding, it washed her through, it made her virginity shine. The river in which Christ was baptized conceived him again symbolically, the damp womb of the water conceived him in purity, and bore him in holiness, made him rise up in glory. In the pure womb of the river you should recognize the daughter of man, who conceived without the aid of man, and gave birth as a virgin, and who brought up, through a gift, the Lord of that gift.\footnote{\textit{HEccl} 36: 2-4.}

Mary is the “land” that receives the source of light (\textit{HEccl} 37:3). Christ is the true light which makes to shine the entire world. Light settled on Mary as on an eye. The Light that is Christ purified her mind and senses and maintained her virginity. In the Syriac tradition at the Baptism of Christ the Light is shown on the river of Jordan.

In the printed \textit{Hudra} text for the commemoration of Virgin Mary we can see the following images on the virginity of Mary in the \textit{ܡܘܬܒܐ} of the Night prayer which are not found in the manuscript.\footnote{Rubric (that is found in Gazza) is given in the present manuscript.}
4. Fleece of Gideon (ܓܸܙܬܵܐ ܕܓܸܕܥܘܲܢ)

This is an important symbol which stands for the virginity of Mary. The incident of preparing war against Midianties, God chose Gideon to lead the war. He was hesitating to take this leadership and he asked for one witness for the winning of war. When he was preparing to set out for the fight, he requested a sign from God. Gideon’s request was granted and in the morning, the fleece was miraculously soaked with dew while the ground around remained dry. Gideon asked God to give him another sign (Jud 6:39) and it happened on the next morning (Jud 6:40). From this sign he understands that he gets victory over the enemies.

The mystery of Christ’s dwelling on Mary is well depicted in this sign. Compared with Mary and the Son of God, Mary is the fleece and Son of God is the dew. The symbolism of the “dew upon the fleece” is a sign that God can allow His all-pervading presence in a small place and in a small object.141

This is fleece not of wool (or without a dweller?) because Holy Spirit dwelt inside her. And she is like the fleece of wool in the house of Gideon; she received the rain.142 For, Gideon placed the fleece of wool on the threshing floor and he tested God because the world said and he said thus, If rain falls in this night, upon this land and I find dry this fleece which I put. I believe that the salvation is through the hand of this Israel”; and as he said thus and he spoke again in another way: If it be dry upon this whole borders and the fleece which I put; I wring water from it. It is dry on all ground and it wrung the whole fleece. This is Mary (Jud 6:36ff) and she is more excellent than it. Just as the fleece became dry so then Mary became pure. And the desire did not weave for her and she was not sunken by sin. Like it (the fleece) received the rain when the land was dry so then the Spirit rested upon Mary and she sanctified all.143

140 See Jud 6:36-37.
141 James Puthuparambil, Mariological Thought..., p.224.
142 Jud 6:37.
143 ܫܒܚ of the Qala of ܡܘܬܒܐ of Night Prayer; see Hudra Vol. I, pp. 593-594.
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In the *HVirg* Ephrem says that the teaching of our Lord was portrayed in the dew of Gideon and it came down and moistened our dryness:

> In the sign (ܒܐܬܗ) and the dew of Gideon Your teaching was portrayed,/ for it fell in drops and came down and moistened the dryness of the peoples./ Their fruits were pleasing to You.¹⁴⁴

In this imagery the Syriac Fathers saw a foreshadowing of the incarnation which took place in Mary’s virginal conception. Jacob of *Serug* enumerated that the dew that Gideon found in the bowl depicted the symbol of Christ:

> The dew that Gideon found in the bowl when he prayed depicted the symbol of him who came down upon the fleece like rain.¹⁴⁵

This symbol also illustrates that God is present in the life of us to strengthen and support us in our weaknesses. But we must be in humble and real faith with him.

5. **Door of our Lord of which the Prophet Ezekiel spoke (ܬ ܲܪܥܹܗܕܡܵܪܝܵܐܕܐ ܲܡܝ ܪܠܚ ܲܙܩܝ ܐܹܝܠܢܒܝܐ)**

The door is a symbol of Mary’s perpetual virginity. Even though Mary gave birth to the Son of God, her virginity was not damaged through it. At the night prayer we recite that Mary is the door through which the Lord entered as in the vision of Ezekiel:

> This is that door of the Lord, of which prophet Ezekiel spoke,¹⁴⁶ which corporeal ones shall not tread, and through it the Lord entered and went out.¹⁴⁷

Ephrem speaks about the virginity of Mary with the door which Ezekiel saw. The womb of Mary is the marriage chamber where the heavenly bridegroom was lying while the virgin doors were carefully guarded:

> In the womb of flesh a marriage chamber was set out/ in whose midst the heavenly Bridegroom lay reclining, / while the virgin doors were carefully guarded./ When the glorious Groom desired to go forth/ He left

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¹⁴⁶ Ezek 43:1-3; 44:1-3.
¹⁴⁷ *Qala* of the *Qala of Night Prayer*; see *Hudra* Vol. I. p.594.
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the virgin doors sleeping, unaware of his departure/ as the angels and watchers sang out in praise.\textsuperscript{148}

The virginal conception is presented as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy. In Mary the door which is closed was prophesized as ‘let it remain sealed, for through it the Lord will enter’:

Today let Ezekiel, wondrous in his visions, / rejoice, for his prophecy has found fulfillment in very fact:/ there, in Babylon, he beheld a closed door,/ and he said, “Let it remain sealed, for through it the Lord will enter’./ Mary is that door which is closed,/ and by it Christ has entered the world/ without ever opening it- so let the disputatious keep silent.\textsuperscript{149}

The closed door is a symbol of Mary’s virginity in giving birth, because she gave birth to Christ miraculously. In the homily \textit{On the Nativity of our Lord}, Jacob of Serug utilized this symbol as a symbol of her virginity in giving birth to the Son of God:

The closed door of which Ezekiel has spoken
is the Virgin whose virginal seal is preserved.\textsuperscript{150}

Mary’s womb remained closed even after the Son of God passed through it. This symbol of closed door denotes the perpetual virginity of the Virgin Mary and her offspring is the Son of God. So God could preserve her virginity uncorrupted ever after the giving birth of her Son.

6. Rod of Aaron (\textit{ܢܗܪܘܢܛܐܘܒ})

Two revolts against the authority of Moses were the revolt of Korah and the revolt of Dathan and Abiram.\textsuperscript{151} Korah and his followers were protesting the selection of certain leaders to approach Yahweh. And the followers of the second revolt complained that Moses had misled the people by bringing them out of Egypt.

The family of Aaron is symbolized by the staff or rod. The incident was meant to teach the pre-eminence of the house of Aaron and tribe of Levi over the rest of the Israelites, and it is another indication of the persisting, tension between the

\textsuperscript{148} \textit{H}Mary 2:4; cf. Sebastian Brock, \textit{Bride of Light}, p.59.
\textsuperscript{149} \textit{H}Mary 4:5; cf. Sebastian Brock, \textit{Bride of Light}, p.63.
\textsuperscript{150} Jacob of Serugh, \textit{On the Nativity of our Lord}; cf. \textit{FH}, p.115.
\textsuperscript{151} Cf. Num 16.
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Levites and the secular tribes. Through this tension they get the plague over
them and Moses prayed to the Lord. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: bring
their staffs and place them in the tent of meeting before the covenant, where I
meet with you. And the staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout. On the next
day only Aaron’s staff had sprouted. It put forth buds, produced blossoms, and
bore ripe almonds. Through this way, the Lord showed which tribe is for the
priesthood. In the prayer of night vigil the Church compares the rod of Aaron with
the virginal conception of Mary:

Rod of Aaron (Num 17:5ff) witnesses to her that she has a son and does not
have a man (husband). That staff carried the fruits (Almond tree and fruit)
when it was laid in the Ark and even if it was not planted on the earth. A
long time it stayed and then it perished.

Ephrem uses this imagery for the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy of
the virginity of Mary mother of Christ. As Aaron’s staff sprouted so the virgin
sprouted forth to provide us the wonderful fruit. The symbol of Mary’s virginity
and divine presence are hidden in the Levite’s staff:

The staff of Aaron, which alone of all the Israelites’ staffs sprouted when
placed in the Ark: “They depict you too in the staff, placed in the Ark; / it
sprouted forth without being planted-to proclaim your tale,/ this staff
which, though unwatered, was crowned with leaves/ to be a parable of
the Virgin/ who sprouted forth, to provide us with the wondrous Fruit./ It
is her symbol that is hidden in the Levite’s staff”.

It is fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy for the virginity of our Lady and
the divine presence. Just as Aaron’s rod sprouted without being planted, so Mary
gave birth to her Son without any intervention of man or without any seed.

7. Unbreakable Rock/Burning Bush and Staff of Moses (ܚܘ ܛܪܵܐ ܕܡܘ ܫܹܐ ܘܣ ܲܢܝܵܐ
dתܕܡܘ ܪܬܵܐ ܘܟܹܐܦܵܐ ܕܠܐܵܬܪܵܐ ܥܵܐ)

Moses struck on a rock with his staff and water came out of it. Likewise Mary is
the unbreakable rock and the fountain (Christ) came out of her. No wound was

Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, & Roland E. Murphy (eds), The Jerome Biblical

 marzo of the Qala of Night Prayer (Hudra p. 593)

HMary 5:6; cf. Sebastian Brock, Bride of Light, p.42.
Names and Titles of Mary

made when Moses struck on the rock with his staff. So also when Mary gave birth to the Son of God there was no change in her nature. There is no corruption seen in Mary after giving birth to Christ. And her virginity is also explained with the help of the burning bush which Moses saw on Mount Sinai. The bush was blazing, yet it was not burnt and it was a great wonder for showing the presence of God in the midst of it. Similarly Christ was the burning fire that dwelt in her for nine months but she was not burnt by it.

And Moses confesses her with his staff. And the rock with its water (Ex 17:6) gives witness to her. This is an unbreakable rock (Ex 17:6) and from it the fountain (was) went out and it enriched all with understanding, the Gentiles who were blind in understanding. This is the wonderful bush (Ex 3:2-3) which stays in the midst of the fire. And the burning fire dwelt (stayed) three and six months in her.\(^{155}\)

In the *Hymns on Mary*, instead of the word ‘struck’ Ephrem uses the expression “spoke”, which for “brought forth” water at the desert. He compared Moses’ speech with rock which produced water, with the speech of the spiritual being with Mary and then she conceived and gave birth in her virginity. This is the fulfillment of old prophecy:

“Moses spoke with the rock/ and it produced water in streams, but no flood;/ the well which the people’s leaders indicated/ was opened by a staff, bearer of symbols;/ for the thirsty its draft was sweet./ By David’s daughter did Gabriel take his stand: with her there spoke this spiritual being/ as with the rock of Moses had done of old./ She then conceived and gave birth in her virginity/ to Him in whose symbol/ Moses performed all these novel things./ Blessed is the Child in whom all hidden symbols have received their explanation”.\(^{156}\)

“Blessed are you, Mary, who became/the type of the bush which Moses beheld; blessed are you, Mary, who became like a veil, covering His radiance …”.\(^{157}\)

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\(^{156}\) *HMary* 16:3; cf. Sebastian Brock, *Bride of Light*, p.64.
Names and Titles of Mary

Rock with water and burning bush symbolized the virginity and wondrous conception of the Virgin Mary. Divinity dwelt in her and took the garment of humanity from her. In the writing of the Church Fathers we see that the divinity considered as a fire which dwelt in her but did not consume her.

8. Ark of Flesh/ Tree of Wonder (ܐܝ ܠܵܢܵܐ ܕܬ ܲܗܪܵܐ ܩܹܒ ܘ ܬ ̣ ܐ ܕܒܸܣܪܵܐ)

In the ܡܘܬܒܐ of the commemoration of the Virgin Mary the Church of East compared Mary with the Ark of flesh where Christ rested and from him the human nature got freedom from Satan. And Mary is compared with the Wonderful Tree that carried the fruit of wonder that is Christ. The whole creation wondered at him because they do not believe in him and his incarnation through the Virgin Mary.

This is the Ark of flesh (Gen 7) in which Noah of truth has rested and he gave freedom to our nature from the word of the enemy. This is the Tree of wonder, which carried the fruit of wonder, and the whole creation wondered in him, and he makes its dwellers wonder.158

Ephrem always uses the term ‘Wonder’ for Christ himself. He called him ‘wonder’. The incarnation of Christ is not understood by the human intellect. All the salvific works are incomprehensible to men. Through faith we can understand all things. Christ is an eternal one but at the incarnation he came down and took second birth from Mary the Virgin without any corruption for her virginity.

Christ was born of a virgin because of the dignity of Christ or for the declaration of the Father sent him to the world. He is the Word of God: and the Word is conceived without any interior corruption so He should be conceived without corruption of the mother. The result of Incarnation of Christ is, men might be born again as sons of God, “not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (Jn 1:13), i.e. of the power of God.

III. FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

The Christ-event is the fundamental principle of the Bible and seems to offer relatively little detail about Mary. Mary serves as a link between the two

158 *** of the Qala of ܒܫܚ of Night Prayer; see Ḫudra Vol. I, p.593.
Covenants not just through parallel or prophetic verses but by embodying common themes. She is a bridge between the Old and the New Testaments because the Scripture shows her representing both the people of Israel and the Church that is New Israel begun by her Son. **Various schemes** from biblical theology, which attempt to organize the data contained in Scripture, can be applied to Mary as the fulfillment of the Old Testament. The theology of the Old Testament as fulfilled in the New is based on the actions and words of God and man’s response. The various Old Testament categories are thus brought to fulfillment in the New, in Mary. According to the scheme promise-fulfillment, the Old Testament is intrinsically open to the future and Christ is the final cause of the whole of the Old Covenant. The birth of Mary’s Son is the fulfilment of God’s will for Israel, and Mary’s part in that fulfilment is that of free and unqualified consent in utter self-giving and trust: “Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38; cf. Ps 123:2).

Christ’s coming to the world was in accordance with the accomplishment of Old Testament prophecies. He is the one promised by God and proclaimed by the prophets. The Old Testament refers to *Mart Mariam* both in its prophecies and its types or figures. Some of these prophecies are: the prophecy referring to Mary found in the very opening chapters of the Book of Genesis (3:15): “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and your seed and her seed; she shall crush your head, and you shall lie in wait for her heel”; and the prophecy referring to Mary found in Is 7:1-17. The other prophecy referring to her is contained in Mic 5:2-3: “And you, Bethlehem, Ephrata, are a little one among the thousands of Judah: out of you there shall come forth unto me one that is to be the ruler in Israel, and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity”. And another is the prophecy referring to Mary which is found in Jer 31:22; “The Lord has created a new thing upon the earth: A woman shall compass a man”.

In the season of Annunciation we recall all the fulfillment of the prophecies such as Isaiah’s prophecy of His virginal birth (Is 7:14); Micah proclaimed him as a ruler of Israel (Mic 5:2), Malachi named him as the Sun of righteousness (*Mal*

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159 Paul Haffner, *The Mystery of Mary*, p.48.
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4:2). At the very beginning of the liturgical year in the Annunciation period, we are reminded of all the salvific actions of our Saviour from His first coming to His second coming that we have to live up to in the course of the whole liturgical year. The hymns of all the period of the liturgical prayers of the Church of the East present Mary as one guiding us along the path of salvation. God chose her as the fulfillment of the promise of salvation. In Mary God realizes the fulfillment of the promise given to the patriarchs concerning the Saviour. In the course of time the Redeemer of humanity came to this world in the body taken from Mary, the daughter of David. Thus, the promises to the prophets were fulfilled in her, and it became a guarantee of salvation for the human race.

The virginal conception was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah concerning Emmanuel: “Behold, a young lady (Virgin) shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel which means God with us”. In the Liturgy of Hours of the commemoration of Virgin Mary, the Church of the East recites:

Mary, You are blessed because all the promises which the prophets indicated were completed in you; and there shone out from you the Light and the Life and the Good hope for men. Listen to Isaiah who calls and says through the prophecy that “behold the Virgin will conceive and give birth to Emmanuel”.

In Mary all the prophecies related to the Christ, the Son of God, are fulfilled. At the end of the time God the Father willed to send his only begotten Son for the sake of our nature. Through the prophets the Father said these things related to the Son of God previously. If He did not say about him directly through the prophets then the people would not believe in Him. Through the symbols and images He declared all things related to His Son to us in order that we should believe him. According to Jacob of Serug, God created Adam from the dust in the image of his

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162 Cf. Is. 7:14.
163 Hpakta Tcr. 27, pp.84-85.
only begotten Son because he had planned to give his Son to us in future. From the book of Genesis onwards we can see the prophecy of Mary the Mother of His Son. In this commemoration prayer we can see the prophecies which are fulfilled in Mary:

Let us rejoice and exult on the day of the commemoration of the blessed one since the mystery of the revelations of prophecy was completed in her….  

…In you the promises of good things were fulfilled as well as declarations of prophecy which were promised to the just ones and forefathers from all ages….  

In the West Syrian tradition we can see the same theme in their liturgical prayers. The virginity and divine motherhood of Mary also prophesied earlier:

O you in whom were fulfilled all the mysteries of the prophets; the Son of Amram represented you by the bush which was burned but was not consumed; Gideon, the renowned judge, saw you in the fleece. Solomon in the veil and Ezekiel in the closed door; Isaiah called you the virgin who gave birth to God.  

The just of old gave fair and lovely names to Mary, the daughter of David, the holy virgin: Ezekiel, in exile, called her the closed door; Solomon, the garden enclosed and the sealed fountain; David named her a city and Christ is the blade which shot up within it without seed; he has become the food of the nations and he has exalted her memory in heaven and on earth.  

1. Harbour (ܠܡܐܢܐ)

Mary is the harbour into which the Old Testament types come to rest as ships. The promises given to David and the prophets are fulfilled in Jesus born of Mary. Like all ships carrying cargoes take rest on the harbour, Mary is the harbour where all

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164 Hpakta Tcr. 27, p.85.  
165 Lbakta Tcr. 27, p.91.  
167 Qolo, Lilyo on Wednesday; cf. Awsar Slawoto, p.503.
the prophecies and Old Testament types come to an end. In Mary God fulfilled his promise which was given to Abraham, the father of believers. Mary is the Mother of the Church of believers, from whom our Lord came forth for us. In this Liturgy of Hours we can repeatedly see Mary as the harbour of all prophecies:

Peace to you who became the haven of all prophesies. Peace to you because you gave birth without marriage, as Isaiah said (Is 7:14).\textsuperscript{168}

Blessed are you, Mary, mother of Jesus, the Saviour of all worlds, for you became the harbour for prophets, conclusion of mysteries and also of parables. Behold! all generations sing to you fine praises saying, Blessed are you because you are worthy to become the mother and maid-servant of the Lord of all creatures.\textsuperscript{169}

From Abraham, the promise has proceeded and dwelt in David; and from David it came and arrived till Mary. In Mary the promise of life confined the course of its way; and in her limbs he enters, rests and dwells as in a harbour.\textsuperscript{170}

In the *HNat* Ephrem uses this image for Mary. He said that David is the father of Christ because he came from that heredity or family of David. In this poem Ephrem recites it from the mouth of Mary herself:

I became a haven for Your sake, / great Sea. Behold, the psalms
of Your father David and also the words / of the prophets, like ships
discharged in me Your great wealth.\textsuperscript{171}

Similarly in the hymns of Jacob of Serug we can see the same term:

“Peace be upon you, castle of holy things, full of virtues,
harbour of mysteries and new ship full of riches.\textsuperscript{172}

In the West Syrian tradition also we can see this imagery for the fulfilment of the prophecy on Mary:

Peac be with you, holy palace of a wonderful beauty,
harbour of mysteries, ship loaded with him who is life eternal.\textsuperscript{173}

\textsuperscript{168} *Onita d-Lelya* songs for the Morning Prayer, Tcr.27, p.89.
\textsuperscript{169} *Suba’a* Tcr. 27, p.79
\textsuperscript{171} *HNat* 9:4.
\textsuperscript{172} Mary Hansbury, *Jacob of Serug on the Mother…*, p.45.
2. Daughter of David (ܡܕܢܐ ܕܒܪܬ)

Joseph was called the father of Jesus the Messiah. Jesus was born from Mary, the virgin, from the seed of the house of David (Mt 1:13-16), from the Holy Spirit, as it is written, “Joseph and Mary, his betrothed, both of them were of the house of David” (Lk 2:4-5). The Apostle testified, “Jesus the Messiah was from Mary, from the seed of the house of David, by the Holy Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:5). This is seen in Aphrahat’s Demonstration on the Cluster of grapes:

Joseph was called the father of Jesus, although he was not born from his seed. But the name of fatherhood was handed over from Adam until Joseph, for sixty-three generations. The name of fatherhood was taken from Joseph and it was placed upon the Messiah. From Joseph he received the name of fatherhood, and from John, the name of priesthood, and from Mary he put on the body and received the name of birth.  

Mary is truly the daughter of David, for the Son of David is the fruit of her flesh. In the Liturgy of Hours of the Church of the East Mary is called as the daughter of David for the fulfillment of the promise of God the Father to Abraham, the father of believers. We recite in the qanona of psalm 148 that Holy Mary the daughter of David is blessed because she is worthy to become the mother and maidservant of the Son. Mary is the mother of His humanity which was taken from her and she is the servant of the divinity that is from God, His Father and because of this all the generations gave ‘blessings’ to her:

You are blessed O Holy Virgin Mary the daughter of David, since you are worthy to become the mother and maidservant of the Son, the Lord of all. And because of this all our generations gave ‘blessing’ to you.  

Let all the generations, who have been blessed in you, give you the fine praises, O daughter of David, the Virgin Mary; for the Father took pleasure in you; and the Son dwelt in you and the Holy Spirit fashioned

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175 Cf. Lk 1:32.
176 Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serugh on the Mother..., p.48.
177 Qanona for Ps 148 on Night Prayer, Tcr. 27, p.90.
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the temple in you; and on this account behold watchers and men glorify you.  

In the _Lbkta_ of the Morning Prayer we can see the Trinitarian aspect in the incarnation of Christ. The Father wished for her and the Son dwelt in her and the Holy Spirit fashioned a temple in her and because of this all men and watchers glorify her.

Jacob of Serug also gives many examples for this:

For the sake of the family of Joseph which was of the house of David,

It was necessary that he be the spouse of the daughter of David.  

Likewise Ephrem:

The succession of kings is written in the name of men instead of women.  

/ Joseph, a son of David, betrothed to a daughter of David, / for the child could not be registered in the name of His mother. / He became, therefore, Joseph’s offspring without seed, / and His mother’s offspring without man, / and by the two of them He bound Himself to their people, / so that among the kings He is written, Son of David.  

In the West Syrian tradition also we can find the following:

Ezekiel, the prophet of the exile, saw with the eye of prophecy the daughter of David and fashioned an image of her beauty by divine revelation, which the Lord showed to him in a wondrous way.  

Not only the conception and incarnation of Christ but also the passion, death and resurrection were prophesied by the patriarchs. In the Passion of Christ which occurred during the paschal week, we naturally expect to find Mary at Jerusalem. Simeon's prophecy found its fulfillment principally during the time of our Lord's suffering.

**IV. CHURCH AND MARY**

Mary is the Mother of Christ; the Church is Christ’s mystical body and because of this relationship Mary is the mother of the Church. Celebration of Mary had now

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178 _Lbkta_ of Morning Prayer Ter. 27, p. 91.
179 Mary Hansbury, _Jacob of Serugh on the Mother…_ , p.63.
180 _HNat_ 2:13.
181 _Qolo, Sapro_ on Tuesday; cf. _Awsar Slawoto_, p.423.
moved from the realm of Christology to that of ecclesiology. Mary was *Mater Ecclesiae* (Mother of the Church), for she had brought forth Christ, the head of the Church.\(^{182}\) Mary is not simply a member of the Church like others but the very figure of the Church, or the Church in her nascent state.\(^{183}\) The relationship between Mary and the Church is highlighted by the fact that she is the privileged member of the Church, the most loving Mother of the Church, the fulfilled image of the Church, the prophetic type and figure of the Church, and also the eschatological icon of the same.\(^{184}\)

In the New Testament, Mary is not often referred to. Nevertheless, we can notice that she was present at all three of the events that from the Christian mystery: the incarnation, the paschal mystery, and Pentecost. In the incarnation, the Redeemer (God) was formed as a man, Mary was present there. The Word of God dwelt in her womb and united himself to the humanity. In the Paschal mystery, when he worked our redemption by destroying sin and renewing life, she is standing at the foot of the cross (Jn 19:25) and Christ entrusted his mother to John, the representative of all believers, as his mother. At Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given to make salvation in the Church operative and relevant, she was present at that time also, because it is written that the apostles “with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, with Mary the Mother of Jesus” (Acts 1:14). Following Mary in each of these fundamental steps will help us to really and resolutely follow Christ so that we can live his entire mystery.\(^{185}\)

Ephrem calls the Church as “Mary” in his hymns:

…Again, Mary is like the Church, /the Virgin, who has born the first-fruits by the Gospel. / In the place of the Church, Mary saw him. /Blessed be he who gladdened the Church and Mary! / Let us call the Church itself ‘Mary’ / for it befits her to have two names…\(^{186}\)

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184 Paul Haffner, *The Mystery of Mary*, p. 18.
186 *HMary*; cf. Lamy I, pp. 531-532.
Church as Christ’s body; but the ‘earth’ which bears the Church is Mary. “…For the earth is the body of Mary, the temple which received the seed. Contemplate the angel who came to sow this seed in the ears of Mary”. 187 Again, in the Nativity Hymns, Ephrem considers both Mary and the Church as fulfillments of the prophecy:

Blessed are you, O Church, in whom rejoices / even Isaiah in his prophecy: / “Behold a virgin will conceive and bring forth / a child”

whose name is a great mystery…. 188

In the western tradition Ambrose of Milan (+397) is the first author to call Mary the type and image of the Church. 189 The Mary-Church parallel is based on the virginal motherhood of both, a motherhood that has the same supernatural fructifying principle: the Holy Spirit. However, there is not only a relationship of resemblance between the Virgin and the Church; there is also an operative relationship, made possible by the unity between Christ and Church, his mystical body. 190 The holy Virgin, in giving birth to Christ for the salvation of the world, contracted a maternal relationship with all men on a spiritual level. She contributes to the building up of the Church into the body of Christ. 191

1. **Bride (ܟܠܬܐ)**

The prophets present Israel as bride of Yahweh. The Church is the mother of the faithful. Instead of the Israel (ܥܡܐ) Christ betrothed himself with the Church of the gentiles (ܐܪܡܝܐ). Ephrem gives privileges to the Gentiles rather than to Israel. God has selected a new bride for his Son, the Church of the New Testament, instead of the Synagogue. 192 Syriac tradition understands the Church in sacramental terms. 193 Aphrahat calls Christ the ‘bridegroom’, Apostles the

187 CDiät 4,15.
188 HNat 25:5.
Names and Titles of Mary

‘betrothers’, the Church or the community of the Faithful as ‘bride’: “He [Christ] is the bridegroom and the apostles are the betrothers and we are the bride; let us prepare our dowry”. This is also common place in the East Syriac Liturgical tradition.

From the Tešbohta of the liturgical prayer for the commemoration of Mary we can understand that the Church is his bride which was brought by his own blood:

O full of grace, beseech the Child who rose from your womb, so that he may make to dwell his peace and tranquility within his Church, which was bought by his own blood. Mary rejoiced since she gave birth to him and John (rejoiced) when he baptized him. Heaven and earth rejoice in him, the Star who shone out from Jacob (Num 24:17).

In most of the prayers of the period of Qudaš ‘edta of the liturgical year of the Church of the East we recall that the Church is the bride of Christ; for this purpose he gave to her his body and precious blood as dowry. And in the ‘Onita d-Raze for the first Sunday of Qudaš ‘edta we sing:

“O Church, the daughter of King, rejoice and exult in your bridegroom, because He betrothed you and made you enter into his bridal chamber. He has given her his body and precious blood as (dowry) marriage gift. Through his sacrifice he gave sanctification and purification to her and made her as his bride…”.

Mary is not only the mother of Christ but she is his sister and bride also. This can be seen in the madraše taken from St. Ephrem’s HNat, which are recited on the commemoration of the Virgin Mary:

For she is your mother- she alone- and your sister with all. She was to You mother; and she was to you sister. Again, she is your betrothed

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196 Tcr. 27, pp.91-92.
197 Ḥudra Vol. 3, p.566; ܝܘܚܢܢ of 1st Sunday of Qudaš ‘edta.
198 Ḥudra Vol. 3, p.566; ܝܘܚܢܢ of 1st Sunday of Qudaš ‘edta.
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(bride) with the chaste women. In everything, behold, you adorned her, Beauty of your mother.  

In another hymn from the *HNat*, Ephrem explains why he uses such terms as ‘sister’, ‘mother’, ‘bride’, and ‘daughter’ to Mary from her mouth:

“For I am [Your] sister from the House of David, / who is a second father. Again, I am mother / because of your conception, and bride am I / because of your chastity. Handmaiden and daughter / of blood and water [am I] whom You redeemed and baptized.

Just as every believer, Mary is the member of the Church but she is the first disciple of his discipleship. Ephrem explores some of the paradoxes that surround Mary as a result of her giving birth to the divine word. Ephrem speaks about the two births of Mary, as about the two births of Christ. For Christ the first is the eternal birth from his Father and the second is from Mary at the end of time; and for Mary, first from her parents and the second is at the moment of conception of Christ:

Son of the Most High who came and dwelt in me/ [in] another birth, He bore me also/ [in] a second birth, I put on the glory of Him/ Who put on the body, the garment of His mother.

As any individual believer Mary also wants the redemption from her Son. Likewise, following the example of Mary, the Church remains the virgin faithful to her spouse. For the church is the spouse of Christ as is clear from the Pauline Letters (cf. Eph 5:21-33; 2 Cor 11:2), and from the title found in John: “Bride of the Lamb” (Rev 21:9).

2. Ship (ܐܠܦܐ)

In the writings of the Syriac Fathers the Church is represented by a ship which journeys through a troubled and stormy world, considered as a sea, towards the peace of harbour. Aphrahat, in his Demonstration, compares the Church to a ship navigating through troubled waters which is directed by the righteous who are the

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200 *HNat* 11: 2.
skillful pilots.\textsuperscript{203} In the *HVirg* Ephrem uses the image of the ship and Christ is presented as the skilled Sailor who has conquered the raging sea with the wood of the cross.\textsuperscript{204} Ephrem also compares the Church with the ark of Noah which is guided by Christ ‘the steersman’. So also Mary, the type and true model of the Church, is compared to a ship in the East Syrian Liturgical tradition.\textsuperscript{205} In the commemoration of *Mart Mariam*, the East Syrians sing:

Like a ship, Mary carried our whole race; and she lifted up and placed the human race on the sea-coast of the exalted kingdom.\textsuperscript{206}

Here Narsai, the poet theologian of Church of the East, demonstrates Mary as a ship which carried the entire humanity to the Kingdom of the Most High. Ephrem compares the life of the church to a voyage. This is a common allegorical figure used by the Church Fathers. In this figure the Church is the ship, heaven or the Kingdom is the port, Christ is the Captain, Cross is the mast, and Spirit is the wind. “We are enclosed as though in a ship, and we mourn for such as have escaped, from the storm into the haven of peace”.\textsuperscript{207}

In the *HFaith* (49:3) Ephrem describes the Church as a ship which moved from East to West and South to North, in the manner of a cross, with this cross the Church sanctifies the entire world which is immersed in the streams of water:

The ship of the Lord of all swooped about in the Flood / It came out of the east and reached the West. / It floated to the South and stretched out to the North… / It proclaimed that its offspring would be fruitful on all sides and multiply in all quarters… / ..who came, constructing a church for us in the midst of the waters, / delivering its inhabitants by the Name of the Three….\textsuperscript{208}

In the *Hymns on Mary*, Ephrem describes Mary as a ship bearing a cargo of treasures.\textsuperscript{209} This is hope of humanity but it also means that Mary carrying Christ,
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the Saviour of all, who is the treasure of treasures. The Church is also a ship carrying the cargo of treasures. The sacraments and Eucharistic elements are the treasures of the Church and the Church carries it and gives it to its inhabitants as Mary is pouring out the blessings from its cargo to the poor ones. In the West Syriac liturgical tradition also Mary is called the ship, which carried the new life:

Come in peace, ship which carried the new life, peace be with you palace in which the king descended and dwelt; come in peace, garden in which was the branch of righteousness, peace be with you the dwelling in which the mysteries were preserved.210

3. Divine presence/ Holy Spirit

In the Old Testament the tabernacle is the dwelling place of God and now the Church is the heavenly dwelling place211 of Christ. In the incarnation Mary bore Christ and became the dwelling place of God. Ephrem explains why we honour Mary: “Mary is honoured not for herself but for the divine presence within her”.212

Woman serves in the presence of man, / who is her head.213 Joseph rose to serve in the presence of his Lord / Who was within Mary. The priest serves in the presence of Your Ark214 because of your holiness.215

Mary is the dwelling place of his hiddenness. Virgin, who has given birth to Christ, the glorious abode of the Holy Spirit (virgin) in whom the Lord of all was pleased to renew our image that was corrupted.216

The divinity dwelt in her and formed Christ. Narsai illustrates Mary in the perspective of temple and sacrifice. He combines the aspect of sacrifice and the dwelling of Christ in Mary, who in turn is also a temple of God. In the metrical homily On Nativity, Narsai writes:

210 B’outho of Mar Jacob, Lilyo on Thursday, Awsar Slawoto, p.637.
211 Hudra Vol. 3, p.566.
212 HNat 16:16.
213 Cf. I Cor. 11:3
214 Jesus is not only the presence of God and thus prefigured as the presence within the Ark, but he is also the Word of God, hence prefigured by the scripture contained within the Ark.
216 Onita d’Baslige.
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By the power of the Spirit, he has willed to construct a temple in your womb. So that it might become (His) dwelling place and he might dwell therein through (His) good pleasure. Without the pigments (of human seed), He depicts an image on the tablet of your body, so that He might thereby signify the authority of His hidden Offspring (Nativity 1:115). Christ is the head of the Church, the mystical body and Mary is the mother of its head on the level of the flesh, but in the order of salvation she belongs to the whole Church, as a member, because she, too, has been saved by Christ. In the holy sacraments of the Church we can see the divine presence of God. The presence of the Spirit in the incarnation and his continued work in the Church through the Holy sacraments is of great importance for Ephrem. The sanctification that Mary receives through the presence of Christ in her womb is analogous to the presence of the ‘fire’ of the Holy Spirit in the baptismal water. This is seen in Ephrem:

See fire and Spirit are in the womb of her who bore you, Fire and Spirit are in the river in which you were baptized; Fire and Spirit in our Baptism, and in the Bread and Cup are Fire and Holy Spirit.

Though the Holy Spirit had descended upon Mary in a special way at the time of the Incarnation, He now communicated to her a new degree of grace. Perhaps, this Pentecostal grace gave to Mary the strength of properly fulfilling her duties to the nascent Church and to her spiritual children. We may also suppose those in Mary especially were verified the words of Acts 2:42: “And they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers”. Thus Mary was an example and a source of encouragement to the early Christian community.

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217 F.G. McLeod, Narsai’s Metrical Homilies, PO 41 (Brepols 1979), p. 45.
218 Luigi Gambero, Mary and the Fathers..., p.222.
219 See HFaith 10.
4. Motherhood

Like Abraham who inaugurated the Old Covenant, Mary paved the way for the New Covenant. Israel had been formed and chosen because of Abraham’s act of faith. Mary’s act of faith became the source of blessing for the “New Israel”, because therewith she prepared herself for the Incarnation that led to the redemption.\(^\text{221}\) God told Abraham, “the father of many nations” (Rom 4:18) that he “will be a blessing” (Gen 12:2). In the new alliance, Mary “is a blessing”. She can be called “the mother of the believers” for she, by her example sets the Church in the way of faith, obedience and trust in God.

Mary, the mother of Christ is mystically the mother of all members of Christ in the mystical Body. The Church joins with Mary in praising God.\(^\text{222}\) The members of the Church render praise and thanksgiving in the Church commemorating the Blessed Virgin Mary as the perfect Mother.\(^\text{223}\) From the womb of Mary, the head of the Church rose and from the womb of the Church that is through Baptism the children (members) of the Church came forth. The Church is the mother of all believers. Through the baptism she gives spiritual infants to God new and holy sons.\(^\text{224}\) The baptismal font is a womb of the Church that gives rebirth to Christians at baptism. Mary’s motherhood and the motherhood of the Church towards the faithful are two realities that are often mixed together. Mary is the mother of Christ and Baptism, the mother of Christians. Through Mary the divine becomes human; through baptism the human becomes divine.\(^\text{225}\) Mary gave birth bodily to the head of the Church; the Church gives birth spiritually to the members of the Head. In both cases virginity is no impediment to fruitfulness. Mary is the physical Mother of the Redeemer, while the Church is the spiritual

\(^{222}\) *Hpaktu* after proclamation, Tcr.27, p. 83.
\(^{223}\) On your commemoration, O’ Blessed Pure and Holy Virgin Mart Mary the Blessed, the desirable and perfect mother, the heavens thunder in praise and men make a joyful sound of praise and thanksgiving within the church and they offer always the worship to the Lord who exalted (lifted up) you in the creation. He made you the haven and also the treasury and established you as the fountain of good things to all generations and races. (Lbakta – lesson, Tcr.27, p.91)
\(^{224}\) *HNat* 13:1, (CSCO 187, Syr.83) p.175.
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Mother of the redeemed.226 Mary brought up Christ in a spiritual manner but the Church brings up the members through its sacraments. Mary’s spiritual motherhood is based on her presence at the foot of the cross as Jesus entrusted His Mother to John saying, “Woman, behold, your son!” and John to His mother “Behold, your mother” (Jn 19:26-27). John is representing all the children of God who believe in Him. She is mother to every believer. “Behold your mother” from it she became the mother of all children of the Church, because John represents the entire believers.

Eve as ‘Mother of all the living’ is the type of the Church, begetting all to the eternal life. Here Mary has a twofold relationship to the Church. She is in the Church, the first of the redeemed; but also, since the Church is Christ’s body, Mary, the Mother of Christ’s personal body, is mystically mother of all Christ’s members in the mystical Body. Thus Mary and the Church are interwoven as types.227

Among the early writers, Origen is the only one who considers Mary's motherhood of all the faithful in this connection. According to him, Christ lives in his perfect followers, and as Mary is the Mother of Christ, so she is mother of him in whom Christ lives. Hence, according to Origen, man has an indirect right to claim Mary as his mother, in so far as he identifies himself with Jesus by the life of grace.228 Eve is our natural mother because she is the origin of our natural life; so Mary is our spiritual mother because she is the origin of our spiritual life. She became our mother at the moment she consented to the incarnation of the Word, the Head of the mystical body whose members we are; and she sealed her motherhood by consenting to the bloody sacrifice on the cross which is the source of our supernatural life.

226 Luigi Gambero, Mary and the Fathers..., p.224.
5. Haven and Refuge

The imagery of ‘haven’ or ‘harbour’ is closely related to the imagery of the ship which is commonly used in East Syriac Liturgical prayers. This metaphor is used in connection with Christ, the Virgin Mary and the Church etc. In the liturgical prayer, especially in the season of Qudaš ‘e(d)ta of the Church of the East, the Church is presented as a haven or harbour of peace: “A harbour of peace, O Christ, you have established on earth ...”.229 Here, the Church is seen as the harbour of peace. Peace is the eschatological gift of the risen Lord to his Church, achieved through his death and resurrection.230 Christ has established the Church on Earth as a haven of peace and it is modeled on his heavenly habitation.231 The Church herself is the haven,232 the refuge for the weak and the sinners; and she is the place of refuge for all who are persecuted. This house of refuge has a universal character.233 In the liturgy of Hours for the commemoration of Virgin Mary we sing:

In Mary the promise of life confined itself in the course of its way; and in her limbs he enters, rests and dwells as in the harbour.234
Mary is the fountain of good things and harbour of all helps to the race of the mortals; may we be preserved from damage (by) the power of her prayer and may we become inheritors of the kingdom with her.235
The daughter of men became the harbour of tranquillity to the nature of men; and severe waves of passibility did not disturb it again.236
He made you the haven and also the treasury and established you as the fountain of good things to all generations and races.237

From the above citation we can see that Mary is also the harbour of peace in one way or another. In Mary God dwelt and she gave birth to the Christ, the Creator of everything and he is our peace. And in the Church also God dwelt and gave

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235 Suba’a.
237 Lbaka.
peace to its inhabitants because he bought his bride by giving his own body and precious blood as a dowry, thus disclosing his love and concern towards the creation.

Mary enjoys a very privileged position in the Church. The children of the Church look towards Mary as their refuge:

The Holy Virgin is the great refuge to the faithful who request her prayers always. May our congregation be blessed by the power of her prayer; and may the Church offer sacrifice in tranquillity and harmony.\(^{238}\)

O! Honourable Mary through your supplication may tranquillity reign among the creation and through your intercession, full of hope, the children of the Church will be protected. Come! O mortals let us take refuge under the wings of the Blessed Mother so that we may be worthy of forgiveness.\(^{239}\)

She is presented as the harbour of peace to men and spring of good things and harbour of all helps.\(^{240}\) She is the strong fortress in this world for us.\(^{241}\) Mary is continuously interceding for the Church through her prayers:

Through your intercession, full of hope, the children of the Church will be protected.\(^{242}\)

And through your prayers may the Church and her children be preserved from the Evil one. On the glorious day on which his majesty will be revealed; may we be worthy to rejoice with you in the Bridal Chamber of Light.\(^{243}\)

\(^{238}\) Šabah - Onitha d-Batar, Tcr.27, p. 76.

\(^{239}\) Šabah- Basaliq, Tcr.27, p. 76.

\(^{240}\) She was the harbour of peace to man, and remained undisturbed by the violent waves of the mortals. Mary is the spring of good things and harbour of all helps to the race of mortals because the powers of her prayer will keep from guilt and become inheritors in kingdom with her. (Tcr.27, p.79); the daughter of men became the harbour (haven) of tranquillity to the human nature (Tcr.27, p. 82).

\(^{241}\) Our Lord the prayer of Mary your mother became the strong fortress in this world for us (Tcr 27, p.80); her prayer became the exalted fortress for us and takes refuge from the artifice of wicked enemy (Tcr.27, p.80); Your prayer became the fortress for our souls (Tcr.27, p. 80).

\(^{242}\) Šabah- Basaliq, Tcr.27, p. 76.

\(^{243}\) (Onitha d-Qdam, Tcr.27, p.75); The Holy Virgin is the great refuge to the faithful who request her prayers always. May our congregation be blessed by the power of her prayer; and may the Church offer sacrifice in tranquillity and harmony (Šabah - Onita d-Batar, Tcr. 27, p. 76); The Pure Virgin Mary Mother of Christ beseech your son that he make dwell his tranquillity and peace within the churches in the four regions of the world. And may the priests and kings be established
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In *suba’a* we sing:

One spiritual being has been sent from the Father and he gave peace that is full of life to the Virgin.

Gabriel gave the peace that is full of life to the Virgin and the peace is her conception also. So she is the harbour of peace which gave blessings and good things to the believers.

**6. Life-giving Bread**

In the prayer of *suba’a*, we sing: “Mary who gave birth to the medicine of life for the children of Adam, through your supplication let us be able to find mercy on the day of resurrection”.

The medicine of life is the imagery for the Holy Eucharist and Christ himself. Mary gave the medicine of life to us, and the Church gave the medicine of life or Eucharist to the believers for the remission of sins and the renewal of life.

According to Ephrem, Mary and the Church are the anti-type of Eve. In the place of the bread of weariness that Eve gave, Mary and the Church gave the living and the life-giving bread. The Church and Mary have in common the effort to ensure that believers have the true bread of life, the Eucharist. In the *Hymns of Unleavened Bread* Ephrem links Church and Mary too:

The Church gave us the living bread

For that unleavened bread which Egypt gave.

Mary gave us the bread of refreshment

For the bread of weariness which Eve gave.

According to Ephrem, in as much as Mary is intimately united to Christ, She is united deeply with the mysteries of the Church as well. Church is the body of Christ (*Diat IV*, 15, 16). If the Church is the spouse of Christ, it is related to Mary as well (*HNat* 6, 6; 16, 10). Mary and the Church are intimately related. Ephrem in their realms and may he cause his love and harmony to reign from age to age (*Suba’a*, Tcr.27, p.78); O full of grace, beseech the Child who rose from your womb, so that he may make to dwell his peace and tranquillity within his Church, which was bought by his own blood. Mary rejoiced since she gave birth to him and John (rejoiced) when he baptized him (*Tešbohta*, Tcr.27, p.91).

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*Suba’a*

*HAzym 6:6-7.*
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illustrates the relation between the historical body of Christ in the incarnation and the mystical body of Christ in the Church. Evoking the memory of Mary, Ephrem sings on Bethlehem, *the house of bread*, which in turn, is the house of the true bread of life. Referring to the prophecy of Isaiah on the virgin birth, Ephrem says that the Church realizes the Emmanuel prophecy by Christ’s dwelling in it. The Church is the new and eternal Bethlehem, where Christ is always present as the Shepherd, the Son and the nourishment:

Blessed are you, O Church, in whom rejoices /Even Isaiah in his prophesy: / ’Behold, a virgin will conceive and bring forth/A child,’ whose name is a great mystery, /Two names were joined together and became one:/ Emmanuel. El is with you always,/Who joins you with His members,/Blessed are you, O Church, by Micah who cried out /’A shepherd will come out from Ephrata.’/For he came to Bethlehem to take /From it the rod of Jesse and to rule the peoples… /You, O Church, are the eternal Bethlehem,/Since in you is the bread of life.  

Mary is a type of the Church, since in her we see the visible figure of the Church’s spiritual reality, and in her spotless motherhood, the announcement of the Church’s virginal motherhood. In Mary, the spiritual reality proclaimed is completely fulfilled.

V. MARY AND EUCHARIST

Christ’s body was born out of Mary in such a way that she is related to the Eucharist. Mary is presented as the first tabernacle, a model of faith and submission for those who participate in the Eucharist. It is a familiar theme in the Syriac circle, which exposes the theology of Eucharist in a Marian perspective. Aphrahat is the first Syriac Father who related Mary with the Eucharist. According to him the salvation history started at the advent of the Child of the blessed Mary and it culminated in the cup of salvation that is Eucharist. The

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247 Paul Haffner, *The Mystery of Mary*, p.239.
Eucharist is depicted as the fulfillment of the new salvation economy which begins with the advent of Christ from the blessed Mary. As the Syrian tradition, the consecration of the Eucharistic bread and wine is effected by the Holy Spirit, just as the same Spirit formed Christ’s body in the womb of Mary.

According to the East Syriac Tradition, the Christian life is centered on the Eucharistic Mystery. For Theodore of Mopsuestia, we are enabled to maintain our existence through the Eucharistic food.\(^\text{250}\) The Eucharistic centred life promulgated in the East Syrian tradition is evident also in the words of Narsai when he describes the Eucharist as ‘a pledge of life for mortals’.\(^\text{251}\) Ephrem considers the Eucharist as the wedding feast of Christ, where the bride is both Church and the individual soul.\(^\text{252}\) It is Christ who really abides in the baptismal water and in the Eucharistic bread.\(^\text{253}\) The reception of this sacrament grants salvation and justification;\(^\text{254}\) therefore Ephrem calls it ‘the Cup of salvation’.\(^\text{255}\)

In the incarnation, Christ the fruit of life came forth from Mary and saved our corrupted race. So now the same fruit comes to us through the Eucharist and gives the remission of sins and eternal life. The Eucharist is the type of incarnation, being the fruits of incarnation which are now extended to us through the Eucharist.\(^\text{256}\) We find these links between the Eucharist and incarnation in Ephrem’s *Hymns on Faith* 10:17.

In the Eucharist also we can see there is an essential continuity between the Old Testament types and the Church’s realities. “The Church has given us living bread/ in the place of the unleavened bread which Egypt gave”.\(^\text{257}\) The tabernacle of the Old Testament appears as a type of the Eucharist in the Church:

\[
\text{Moses built a tabernacle in the desert for the God-head;}
\]

\(^{250}\) For details see Thomas Kuzhuppil, “The Patristic Foundation …”, p.58.


\(^{254}\) *HFath* 10:9.

\(^{255}\) *HNat* 4:25.


\(^{257}\) *Hazy* 6:6.
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Because he dwelt not in their hearts, he shall dwell in the holy of holies.
For the gentiles the Church was built, as a gathering for prayer
… and by his power, which has to dwell in the bread, he entered and
rests in us. 258

Ephrem identifies the body of Christ that came from Mary and Eucharistic
bread. 259 The Life-giving Bread is a present of Mary. Mary gives us the living
bread in the place of that bread of toil that Eve gave us. “And He took and broke
bread, a different one, and unique symbol of that unique body from Mary”. 260
“The same body, which Christ took from Mary, is perceivable in faith in the
Eucharistic bread, which is hidden to the heretic who has no faith. The believers
see Him in the Eucharist internally”. 261 The Eucharist is the spiritual bread that
enables a person to reach Paradise. 262 It is a medicine of life also. Through faith
Mary accepted Christ in her womb at the incarnation and now we receive Christ
from the Eucharist through faith only.

1. Medicine of Life
The Eucharist bread is the medicine of Life (ܣܡܚܝܐ). By the Lord’s blessing
the bread became the medicine of life during the last supper. 263 It is because of
His hidden presence in the Eucharistic body that the Eucharist becomes the
Medicine of Life. And therefore, the Eucharist also becomes a treasury of healing
as His physical body. 264 As a Medicine of Life the Eucharist frees us from the
chains of sin, purifies and remits our debts, which are the consequences of sins.
In the suba’a prayer of this commemoration we recite Christ as the medicine of
life who was given for the children of Adam in order to become the sons of his
kingship.

261 HNat 16:4-6.
262 HAZY 17:8-9.
263 HAZY 14:16.
264 Sebastian Brock, Luminous Eye, pp.77-91.
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Mary who gave birth to the medicine of life for the children of Adam, through your supplication let us be able to find mercy on the day of resurrection.

As she gave birth to the medicine of life, the Church gave its sacraments to its inhabitants. Christ is the good physician and he has healed our race through his salvific action and through the work of the Holy Spirit the Eucharist became the medicine for the remission of sins and eternal life.

As a reference to the Eucharistic mystery, Ephrem uses the expression, ‘Medicine of Life’ (ܡܣܡܢܚܝܐ) to explain the life-giving presence of our Lord in the Eucharist. And Narsai employs the imagery of fire and ‘medicine of life’ to explain the mystery of the Triune God and the Eucharist respectively. Ephrem furthermore inherited a number of themes and symbols from Ancient Mesopotamia; one which he employs a great deal is the term ‘Medicine of life (or salvation)’, ܡܣܡܢܚܝܐ in Syriac, corresponding to sam balati in Akkadian, which had the same meaning. Very often Ephrem refers the term to Christ himself (the flew from on high, Discourse 3), or to the Eucharist (‘your body is the Nisibien Hymns 76:6).268

Let us consume in holy fashion that Body / which the people pierced with their nails; / let us drink, as the medicine of life, / the blood which flows from His side.269

There came forth from Christ water; Adam washed, revived and returned to Paradise.270

Ephrem frequently characterizes Christ both as physician and as the medicine of life. The image is especially developed in CNis 26:3-7, 27:1 and 34, where it is

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265 HVirg 31:3; CNis 46:8. See G. Widengren, Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism (Uppsala/Leipzig 1946), pp. 129-138.
270 CNis 39:7.
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applied to Old Testament types and Christian bishops as well. Ephrem’s use is firmly rooted in Syriac tradition.\textsuperscript{271}

Blessed is the Physician who descended and cut painlessly / and healed the sores with a mild Medicine. / His Child was the Medicine that takes pity on sinners.

Blessed is the One Who dwelt in the womb, and in it He built / a palace in which to live, a temple in which to be, / a garment in which to be radiant, and armour by which to conquer.\textsuperscript{272}

Therefore they answered, “Today let Eve / rejoice in Sheol, for behold the Son of her daughter / as the Medicine of Life came down to save / the mother of His mother-the blessed Babe / Who will crush the head of the serpent that wounded her [Gen 3:15].\textsuperscript{273}

At the time of annunciation she got the new tidings from above. In the \textit{suba’a} prayer of this commemoration we can see that she accepted the peace that is full of life from above: “One spiritual being has been sent from the Father and he gave peace that is full of life to the Virgin.” Mary is the cause of life whereas Eve is the cause of death. Christ is the life-giver who gave life to the departed ones when he descended to Sheol: “The dead ones heard the new tidings from the Life Giver (vivifier) as the tidings which Mary received from the spiritual one”.\textsuperscript{274}

Christ who gives life to others, conversely received milk for life from his mother: “He has sucked the breasts and behold He gives life to the entire world”.\textsuperscript{275} The relation of Church and Christ with the medicine of life or Eucharist is prophesied in the relation of Ruth and Boaz:

Ruth lay down with Boaz because she saw hidden in him the medicine of life; today her vow is fulfilled since from her seed arose the Giver of all life.\textsuperscript{276}

Mary gave birth to the medicine of life for the renewal of our entire world. And through him we got salvation and we became the sons of God. This happened

\textsuperscript{271} Cf. Robert Murray, \textit{Symbols...}, pp. 89-91, 199-204.
\textsuperscript{272} \textit{HNat} 3:20.
\textsuperscript{273} \textit{HNat} 13:2.
\textsuperscript{274} Antiphon.
\textsuperscript{275} \textit{Onita d-Qdam}.
\textsuperscript{276} \textit{HNat} 1:13.
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only through the interference of Holy Spirit at the time of conception and the faith of Mary. Here the Church gives the medicine of life that is Eucharist to its children. We require faith as the faith of Mary to receive this. Through the brooding of the Holy Spirit the bread and wine become the body and blood of our Christ, to provide for the remission of our sins and eternal life.

2. Fire / Spirit (Pneumatological aspect)

From the Old Testament onwards the symbol of fire is used to denote the divine presence. If the fire coming from above is an evidence of divine presence (e.g., sacrifice of Elijah) and in the New Testament at the time of Pentecost all the disciples are gathered together with Virgin Mary at that time the Holy Spirit brooded over them in the likeness of fiery tongue. In the commemoration of Virgin Mary we recite in a *Hpakta*:

How does the fire wage war with the flesh without consuming it?
The divinity dwelt in the virgin and she was not burnt.
That artist who took the dust without hands;
the fruit in her he formed which resembles that first one.\(^{277}\)

In the *šabah* of a *Qala* from the *Hudra* we sing:

Like the burning bush which was not consumed that Moses saw,
Mary bears the Fire in her womb which does not consume her (cf. Ex 3:2).
And the burning fire dwelt (stayed) three and six months in her.
Fire was carried in her womb; the Tabernacle was venerated in her body.\(^{278}\)

What takes place in the Eucharistic liturgy on the altar by the power of the Holy Spirit is in the image of what happened on Mary in incarnation (*HFaith* 10, 16; 18, 10). The Fire and Spirit descended on Mary in incarnation. Ephrem frequently describes the divinity as fire; thus at the incarnation ‘Fire entered Mary’s womb, put on a body and came forth’ (*HFaith* 4:2). Fire is a ‘symbol of the Spirit’ (*HFaith* 40:10), and at the Eucharist ‘the Spirit is in the Bread, the Fire in the

\(^{278}\) *šabah* of *Qala*; cf. *Hudra* Vol I, p. 593.
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Wine’ (*HFaith* 10:8). In the case of Old Testament sacrifices, the descent of fire from heaven was an indication of divine acceptance (1 Kings 18:38; *HFaith* 10:13), while at the Eucharist ‘the Fire of Mercies has become a living sacrifice for us’, Fire which we actually consume (*HFaith* 10:13). This divine Fire has a double aspect, for it can both sanctify and destroy:

Blessed are you, my brethren, / for the Fire of Mercy has come down
utterly devouring your sins /and purifying and sanctifying your bodies.\(^{279}\)

Through the Eucharist we consume the divine fire which is in the body and blood of our Lord which helps for the remission of sins and for purifying our bodies and gives the eternal life. The aim of consuming the divine Fire\(^{280}\) is to give perfection to all\(^{281}\) for the entrance to the kingdom of our Lord. Tatian’s *Diatessaron* and the Gospel of Rabbula mention the descent of fire at the baptism of Christ. Ephrem also follows this tradition.\(^{282}\) On *HFaith* 10:17 we can see the common presence of Divine fire in a historical and primordial time such as in incarnation, baptism of our Lord and also in our baptism and Holy Eucharist:

See Fire and Spirit are in the womb of her who bore you;
See Fire and Spirit are in the river in which you are baptized.
Fire and Spirit are in our baptismal font,
in the Bread and the cup are fire and Holy Spirit.

Just as the residing of the Divinity in Mary’s womb resulted in her giving birth, so too the result of communion, when the ‘hidden power’ takes up residence anew in the communicant, should also be birth giving.\(^{283}\) Humanity is allowed to take and eat this ‘Coal of Fire’ whereas angels were not allowed to eat. Jacob of *Serug* finds the chariot in Ezekiel as the altar and the ‘Coal of fire’ as the Eucharist:

A Flame dwells in your blessed womb,
And even the seraphim are shaken if they look at it.
The living Flame and the kindler of worlds is silent in you;

\(^{279}\) *HNat* 3:10.
\(^{280}\) *HArm* 47: 13-14.
\(^{281}\) *HAzym* 1:10
\(^{283}\) *HEccl* 30:1.
that Flame which purifies the thorns of false worship when it is uncovered.\textsuperscript{284}

Referring to the bread and cup of the Eucharist, Narsai says that Christ, born of Mary, is the bread of life and the cluster of vine:

\begin{quote}
In the first month Gabriel sowed conception in her ears
And there sprang forth a stalk of the bread of life in the ninth.
In April He grafted the power of vitality into the vine of her body;
And she carried the cluster that gladdens the universe in the month of December.\textsuperscript{285}
\end{quote}

Narsai’s depiction of Mary as the vessel of the divine treasure, and palace of the presence of the king, are reminiscent of the mystery of the Eucharist, in which Christ is present in the heart and lives of the faithful:

\begin{quote}
Mary carried the great wealth within her limbs / And went forth to learn
the truth of) the vigilant one’s words through experience. / The wealth-laden vessel entered the house of poor ones; / And the barren womb suddenly became enriched at the sound of her words / The castle of the king greeted the mother of the servant…. / The Virgin carried the fulfillment of the mysteries and the expectation of the gentiles.\textsuperscript{286}
\end{quote}

### 3. Epiclesis

The most important part of every Eucharistic liturgy is the priest’s supplication that the Holy Spirit come, or be sent, upon those gathered and upon the bread and wine in order to effect their becoming the Body and Blood of Christ. Dionysius Bar Salibi comments on the epiclesis of the Eucharist and its connection with the annunciation: “The priest’s invocation of the Holy Spirit symbolizes Gabriel’s annunciation to the Virgin”.\textsuperscript{287} According to Sebastian Brock the Eucharist is to be seen as providing a model for the proper relationship between the material

\textsuperscript{284} Jacob of Serugh, \textit{Hymn on Mary} Et by Mary Hansbury, \textit{Jacob of Serug on the Mother...}, p.79.
\textsuperscript{286} Narsai, \textit{Nativity} 1:210-211; cf. McLeod, \textit{Metrical Homilies}, p. 51.
world and the heavenly. At the epiclesis the Holy Spirit effects this new, and proper, relationship of the created world to the Creator: the bread and wine, which represent both ‘fruit of the earth’ and the ‘work of human hands’, are transformed into the saving Body and Blood of Christ.

Ephrem finds links between the Eucharist and the Incarnation: “See, Fire and Spirit in the womb that bore you! See, Fire and Spirit in the river where you were baptized! Fire and Spirit in our baptism; in the bread and cup, Fire and the Holy Spirit”! It shows that the Eucharist is a type of Incarnation, that is, the fruits of incarnation are now extended to us through the Eucharist. Ephrem presents the Christian life as centered on the Eucharistic Mystery.

The sanctification that Mary receives through the presence of Christ in her womb is analogous to the presence of the ‘fire’ of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist. In his Commentary on the Mystery of the Eucharist, Narsai speaks of the incarnated body of Christ, as a “reasonable temple that the Holy Spirit built in the bosom of Mary”. The mystery of the annunciation is the point of departure of Narsai’s theological reflections on the mystery of the Eucharist in his liturgical homilies. The coming and overshadowing of the Holy Spirit on Mary in incarnation is a paradigm to explain the theology of both baptism and Eucharist in Narsai. In his commentary “On Baptism and Mysteries of the Church” Narsai explains that just as Mary listened and submitted to the Word of God in the annunciation, and as a result incarnation took place, in baptism, through the words of prayer at the epiclesis, the water in the baptismal font attains a new life. In the commentary on the liturgy of the Eucharist, Narsai says that the bread and wine are turned into the body and blood of Christ through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit in the epiclesis similar to what happened (to Mary) in the incarnation.

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289 Sebastian Brock, “Mary and the Eucharist…”, p.53.
290 HFaith 10:17.
293 Hom. 21, R.H. Connolly, Liturgical Homilies, p. 50
4. Christ the Pearl from Mary

The Eucharist is called the ‘Pearl’ (ܡܪܓܢܝܬܐ). The body and blood of the Son are pearls of life, and this is to meet the need of our state of nature. Another aspect of the relation between Mary and the Eucharist, which Ephrem likes to highlight, is the analogous nature of the dynamics that worked at the incarnation, and the action of the Spirit in the epiclesis in the liturgy of Eucharist. Ephrem employs the myth of the pearl’s formation in antiquity, according to which pearls are formed when lightning struck the pearl oyster in the water. The fire of the lightning and water are the components in the formation of a pearl. Likewise, Ephrem contemplates on the mystery of incarnation. Christ the pearl is formed by the power of the Fire of the Holy Spirit in the watery womb of the Virgin (HFaith 81-85). Jacob of Serug applies this imagery in the epiclesis of the Eucharistic celebration:

The Holy Spirit goes forth from the Father / and descends, overshadows and resides on the bread, / making it the body / making it treasured pearls / to adorn the souls that betrothed to him.

5. Clothing imagery/ Put on body

Ephrem is a great devotee of the Virgin Mary because she has given us the new clothing for our salvation. Mary has brought the clothing of Paradise, but it is Christ Himself who takes this clothing and saves us. “Your Christ’s shining purity is that garment of glory. He is just, the one who is clothed with it”. Mary is the Mother of life and Eve is the mother of death. ‘Clothing’ as a figure for the body is natural to Ephrem because in Syriac tradition ‘He clothed himself in the body’ is the commonest expression for the incarnation.

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295 HS II, p.222.
296 Sebastian Brock, “Mary and the Eucharist…,” pp. 35-36.
297 HS IV, p. 597; Sebastian Brock, “Mary and the Eucharist…,” p. 38.
298 HPar 4:5; HEccl 26:4.
Christ formed a garment from Mary in order to hide his brightness and save our race.\textsuperscript{301} Until the consent of the Virgin Mary He hid himself from the people in heaven: “Our Lord was concealed in heaven since six thousand years and did not save the human race until she became a dwelling place to Him”.\textsuperscript{302} At the creation God clothed humanity with robe of glory and at the disobedience they lost it until the incarnation. At the incarnation she gave the garment for his body and he gave the robe of glory to her. The conception is the second birth of Mary and at that birth she got the robe of glory. In the Nativity Hymns Ephrem says that Christ is our Bread, our bridal chamber and the robe of our glory.\textsuperscript{303}

The two things you asked, we have by your birth.
You put on our visible body; let us put on your hidden power.
Our body became your garment; your spirit became our robe.
Blessed is He who was adorned and adorned us!\textsuperscript{304}

Here Ephrem uses the paradox to explain the garment and robe of glory. You put on our visible body at the incarnation and when we receive your body at the Eucharist we get your hidden power and we become children of the kingdom. And our body became your garment and through the Eucharist your Spirit became our robe. Then at the incarnation the divine one became human and at the Eucharist the human being becomes divine. In the hymns Ephrem often speaks of Christ’s body as a garment he put on, and also as a source of salvation to men. This leads to the Eucharistic sense of Christ’s body in the *HFaith* 10:

Thy garment, Lord, is a fountain of healing; / in thy visible dress dwells
thy hidden power. / A little spittle from thy mouth / was a mighty wonder,
for light was in the clay it made.

‘Light’ here can allude to the gift of sight, which Christ restored by means of spittle in John 9:6, or more generally for salvation.\textsuperscript{305} The miracles worked by Christ through his physical body are taken as type of the sacramental order, to which Ephrem passes in the next stanza:

\textsuperscript{301} of the mystery of the commemoration of the Virgin Mary; Tcr. 27, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{302} of *Qala Hudra* Vol.1, p. 593.
\textsuperscript{303} *HNat*, 17:6.
\textsuperscript{304} *HNat* 22:39.
\textsuperscript{305} Robert Murray, *Symbols…*, p.74.
In thy bread is hidden a Spirit not to be eaten, / in thy wine dwells a fire
not to be drunk. / Spirit in thy bread, fire in thy wine, / a wonder set apart,
(yet) received by our lips.\(^{306}\)

This emphasis on Christ’s physical body as the source of salvation, worked out
through the sacramental dispensation, was evidently stimulated by the need to
defend the dignity of the body. This same imagery is seen in the writings of Jacob
of Serug:

Daughter who wove a garment of glory\(^{307}\) and gave it to her Father;
He covered himself because he was stripped naked among the trees.\(^{308}\)
The maker of the worlds interweaves a garment in your pure womb
And prepares himself a cloak of flesh on the web of your womb\(^{309}\).

In the antiphon of the liturgical prayer of this commemoration we sing: “And with
his mercifulness and his great love he put on our nature and saved him from death
and brought him forth to heaven.” Christ’s human body is the ‘garment of His
divinity’ (\textit{HFaith} 19:2), so too the Eucharistic Bread is another garment. This
metaphor is used to indicate the incarnation and it is in order to bring out the
continuity of salvation history that he often extends the image including specific
reference to Adam:

Glory to You who clothed Yourself in the body of mortal Adam,
Thereby making it a fountain of life (or salvation) for all mortals.\(^{310}\)

The standard Syriac theological expression for Christ’s manifestation in the body
is his ‘clothing of humanity’, well attested in Aphrahat and Ephrem.\(^{311}\) Through
his medium ‘clothing’ Christ gave redemption and salvation to humanity. “Glory
be to You Who clothed Yourself in the body of mortal Adam, and made it a
fountain of life for all mortals”.\(^{312}\)

\(^{306}\) \textit{HFaith} 10:7-8.
\(^{307}\) Aphrahat says of Christ, “He is the garment and robe of glory which all the victorious put on”.
See Dem 14.
\(^{308}\) Jacob of Serug, \textit{Hymn on Mary}, tr. by Mary Hansbury, \textit{Jacob of Serug on the Mother}....p.19.
\(^{311}\) Cf. Robert Murray, \textit{Symbols} ..., p.70.
\(^{312}\) Ephrem the Syrian, \textit{Homily on Our Lord}, 9.
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6. Fruit- Fruits of Life

In the prayers of the Liturgy of Hours for the commemoration of the Virgin Mary we can see the term of fruits many times. The fruit (Christ) of Mary which came forth to loose the bondage of mortality.

Compared with Eve’s fruit, Mary’s fruit is precious because it gives life to the world. The fruit of Mary is the Lamb of God and sweet fruit that is full of life that we might eat from it (Eucharist) and live forever with God. For Ephrem The winter period of the Nativity lacks natural fruits, but the Fruit of life was sent with mercy from the Rich One by sprinkling treasures. Blessed seed springs forth from the earth that is not ploughed. “Blessed be the Fruit Who bowed Himself down for our hunger”.

According to Jacob of Serug, the consent of Mary is essential for the Incarnation and then the fruit abode in her womb: “She gave her consent and henceforth she received the fruit in her womb.”

In the Commentary on Diatessaron Ephrem compares Christ’s body with the fruits of the tree of paradise:

We have eaten Christ’s body in the place of the fruit of the Tree of Paradise, and the altar has taken the place of the Garden of Eden for us; the curse has been washed away by his innocent blood, and in the hope of the resurrection we await the life that is to come, and indeed we already walk in this new life, in that we already have the pledge of it.

Ephrem compares Mary with the Tree of Life which was planted in Paradise, bearing fruit that is Christ which gives life to the creation. This is also Eucharist which we eat now for the remission of sins and eternal life:

In the place of the Tree of Knowledge, full of death, / Mary became for us a tree of life, / bearing a Fruit that dissolved that death, / giving life to humanity through its being eaten.

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313 Antiphon
314 Karozuta for the commemoration on May 15 as on Ms. Tcr. 29.
316 Jacob of Serugh, Hymn on Mary tr. by Mary Hansbury, p.40
317 Cf. HNat 3:1.
318 HS I: 415-6; cf. FH, p.60.
319 C Diat xxii:25. I adopt the ET from Sebastian Brock’s “Mary and the Eucharist.”, p.54.
320 Anonymous Hymns on Mary, no.6:5, in British Library Manuscript Add.14520.
In the *Hymns on Mary*, Ephrem uses the tree of Life to symbolise the God/Trinity itself and the fruit which was sprung forth from Mary the Christ:

> The Tree of Life, which lay hidden in Paradise, / has sprung forth in Mary, and shot up from her; / in its shade all creation sits / as it showers its fruit / on both those far and near.\(^{321}\)

In West Syrian tradition we can see the term of fruit for Christ in their prayers:

> In March Gabriel announced and in December we beheld your birth, glorious offspring from the Father and lovely fruit from Mary, of which the creation took and lived by it for ever.\(^{322}\)

### 7. Communion (ܪܘܬܦܘܬܐ)

At every communion, the Christian needs to make Mary’s reply to the angel his or her own. Only thus is the potential to sanctify possessed by the Bread and Wine to be realized. The *Acts of Thomas* has a formula of giving communion which stresses the aspect of the remission of sins.\(^{323}\) This is for the remission of sins as Theodore says:

> The communion of the holy sacraments will, without doubt, grant us the remission of trespasses of this kind, since our Lord plainly said: “This is my body which is broken for you for the remission of sins, and this my blood which is shed for you for the remission of sins.”\(^{324}\)

Mary gave us the fruit of the “tree of Life”, the Eucharist, is Christ’s body given to the children of the Church for nourishment. The Eucharist is like the fruit of the tree of Paradise\(^{325}\) and if we eat it we shall not die. So the Eucharist is also called the food of immortality. From the Epiclesis of the Holy *Raze*,\(^{326}\) we can understand that the Eucharist gives us the pardon of debts, remission of sins and

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\(^{321}\) *Mary* 1:11, cf. T.J. Lamy, p.520.  
\(^{322}\) *Qolo dbotar Pirmo, Sapro* on Tuesday; cf. Awsar Slawoto, p.423.  
\(^{325}\) Sebastian Brock, “Mary and the Eucharist…”, p.54.  
the great hope of resurrection from the dead and new life in the kingdom of heaven with all those who have found a favour in your presence.

VI. EVE AND MARY
The parallelism of Mary with Eve and Mary’s name as the ‘New Eve’ or “Second Eve” is a common patrimony of the Church Fathers in both East and West Tradition. Saint Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ, shall all be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22). This also very much influenced the early Fathers. The Apostle is making the obvious contrast between Adam, the bearer of death, with Christ the bringer of life. The paradigm of Mary as the New Eve follows the same train of thought with the exception that it is not meant to imply that she possesses divinity but rather that she is the willing human bearer of divinity, viz., Christ, the incarnate Word. The paradigm of Mary as the New Eve has deep roots in Christian antiquity. Understanding Mary as the New Eve is an important part of the Church's experience down through the centuries, an experience that continues to be articulated as a reasonable ingredient of its faith and practice. Mary, the New Eve, is the willing, obedient instrument of the incarnation; and the incarnation, as both mystery and fact, remains the hope of the human race.327

The comparison of Eve and Mary is brought out first in connection with the Annunciation. In the East Syriac Liturgical tradition Mary, as the New Eve, is the one who loosened the corruption caused by the Old Eve. This imagery tells us of the role of Mary in the economy of salvation. If the fruit that Eve ate brought bitterness to humanity, Mary presented the world with a sweet fruit or fruit of life. Through this sweet fruit, life was transmitted to Eve. Eve is the mother of death and Mary became the mother of life and loosened all the corruption incurred by Eve. In Mary the cause of sin became the cause of salvation. The image of God, that man lost through the sin of the first parents is returned to him through Mary.

327 “Queen of All Hearts”, a Bi-monthly Marian review published by the Montfort Missionaries (Bay Shore NY July-August 1998), p. 11.
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The Lord made Mary, the daughter of Eve, a door to life. This parallelism is declared firstly by Justin the Martyr (+165). Justin typologically compares Eve and Mary, a theme developed by Irenaeus.

1. Ears of Eve and Mary (ܐܕܢ ܐܕܚܘܐ ܘܡܪܝܡ)

In the Hpakta of the night prayer, one can find out that the ears of Eve and Mary are the causes of death and life and they brought them to this world. Eve gave birth to the mortals but the daughter of Eve (Mary) gave birth to the King and to the Lord of kings and greatest of the wonder (Hpakta). In the ears of Eve, the rebel sowed the bitterness of death; and in the ears of Mary, a vigilant one proclaimed a hymn of thanksgiving. In the suba ‘a prayer we recite as follows:

Peace to you Mary, the race of Eve brought forth death,
but the fruit, which comes from you looses the bondage of mortality.

In the Hpakta we sing at night:

The Blessed Mary sits among the trees; the Hebrew women serve her with their children. New tidings the watcher made fall into the ears of Mary, and she wondered much at the fresh word that he spoke with her.

The reference to ears is a peculiarity of Syriac tradition. The idea is not merely that Eve listened to the serpent and Mary to the angel, but positively, that Mary conceived by the Word entering her by the ear:

In the ears of Eve, the rebel sowed the bitterness of death;

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328 James Puthuparampil, Mariological Thoughts..., p.243.
329 In the Mariology of Justin Martyr, as H. Graef observes it is a question of how Eve and Mary responded to the serpent and the angel. “[…] both were virgins when the decisive words were spoken to them; but whereas Eve’s reaction to them meant disobedience to a divine command and resulted in death, Mary obeyed God and so received faith and joy by becoming the Mother of the Saviour.” H. Graef, Mary a History of Doctrine and Devotion, p. 38; cf. James Puthuparambil, Mariological Thoughts..., p.243.
330 CH 3.32.20; Irenaeus perspective on Mary has been considered as the basis for the later development in Mariology. “[…] And if the former did disobey God, yet the latter was persuaded to be obedient to God, in order that the Virgin Mary might become the patroness (advocata) of the virgin Eve. And thus, as the human race fell into bondage to death by means of a virgin, so is it rescued by a virgin; virginal disobedience having been balanced in the opposite scale by virginal obedience.” Cf. H. Graef, Mary a History of Doctrine and Devotion, p.38; James Puthuparampil, Mariological Thoughts..., p.243.
331 Narsai Nativity 463-466.
332 Narsai, Nativity 189.
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And in the ears of Mary, a vigilant one proclaimed a hymn of thanksgiving.\(^{333}\)
The pattern of complementarity begins with Mary’s wise questioning of the angel, counterbalancing Eve’s foolish failure to question the Serpent. In Ephrem’s view this already traditional contrast between Mary’s obedience and Eve’s disobedience has given rise to the image of Satan pouring poison into Eve’s ear. We also find this description having gone through her ear: \(^{334}\)

Just as from the small womb of Eve’s ear / Death entered in and was poured out, / So through a new ear, that was Mary’s / Life entered and was poured out.\(^{335}\)

According to Sebastian Brock Mary again is the model when Ephrem turns to auditory imagery: her listening and obedience, born out of faith, is contrasted both with Eve’s disobedience and Zechariah’s lack of faith:

By Mary, He abrogated the word (spoken) in the ears of Eve;
there, death; and here, a life that gives life to the universe.\(^{336}\)

In the *Nativity Hymns* of Jacob of Serug we can also find this imagery:

Her words went out like guards from the royal court
so that the Royal Son might enter along with them by the door of the ear.\(^{337}\)

According to Jacob of Serug Eve is reprehensible, despicable, foolish and has a debt, whereas Mary is glorious, wise and has repaid the debt that Eve incurred. Mary’s response gives hope to humanity.\(^{338}\) Her response to Gabriel resulted in the birth of the Son of God who has lifted up the fallen race which had fallen due to response of Eve to the Serpent. If humanity were to be rescued from the consequences of the first transgression, there must be a second Adam and a second Eve who was to be the mother of the new Adam. The seed of the woman

\(^{333}\) Narsai *Nativity* 463–466.
\(^{334}\) The image is common in Ephrem (e.g. *HVirg* 6:9; 23:5) and other early Syriac writers, whereas among contemporary Greek and Latin writers it is rare (though in medieval art the idea came to be represented pictorially quite often).
\(^{335}\) *HEccl* 49:7.
\(^{336}\) *CDiat* 1:10-17.
\(^{337}\) *HS* I: 407-8; cf. *FS*, p.60.
is the Word Incarnate and the woman whose seed or son He is, is His Mother, Mary.

2. Eve’s purification

In the *Hpakta* of the night prayer we sing that through this conception God the Father mingled the peace with grace and gave it to the pure one (Mary) for the washing away of the bitterness or corruption which the evil one sowed in the ears of Eve:

The Head of the Angles has worshipped in front of her and gave peace to her; since darkness was removed and light rose up through the Child who is from her. Peace He mingled (together) with grace and gave (it) to the pure one, in order to wash away the bitterness that the evil one sowed in the ears of her mother.  

3. Eve’s garment (*ܠܒܘܫܐ ܕܚܘܐ*)

At the paradise Adam and Eve lost their garment that is robe of glory and concealed themselves within the trees through the disobedience of Eve. But within the womb of Mary, God the Father formed a garment for him and hid his brightness in her. This theme is recited in one hymn used for the Holy *Raze* of this commemoration:

You are blessed, Mary, the race (kinswoman) of Eve, since in you was renewed the race of Adam. Blessed is he who formed (wove) the garment for him from Mary and hid your brightness and saved our race.

In an Adam-Christ parallelism Ephrem develops the ‘how our Lord clothed himself in a body, and about the passion of Christ’ as: Adam and Eve’s discovery of their nakedness symbolizes their loss of the ‘garment of glory’ which Christ wins back for humanity. In this recovery of the robe of glory Mary, as second Eve, plays an important part; in another of the *Nativity Hymns* of Ephrem we sing as follows:

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Names and Titles of Mary

In her virginity leaves of shame / did Eve put on; your mother put on
in her virginity a robe of glory, / sufficient for all. ‘A little cloak,
the body, I gave to the Clothes of all’. \(^{341}\)

4. Mary, saviour of Eve

Though Mary is the daughter of Eve, through her conception and giving birth she
became an important person in the economy of salvation for the race of Eve. In
one hymn for the commemoration of Mary we understand that she has played an
important part in salvation:

> Our Lord concealed Him in heaven since 6000 years and not saved
> the human race until she became a dwelling place for him. \(^{342}\)

In the ‘onita d’Raze we sing:

> Through a woman (Eve) the first Adam (humanity) transgressed, (but)
> through the virgin he (first Adam) was renewed from the corruption by
> Christ.

And again in the ‘onita d’Lelya we recite:

> …peace to you (Mary) the fount that has received the dew from the high,
> peace to the life that was transmitted to Eve…

We can see this same imagery in the Hymns of Mary of Jacob of Serug:

> Second Eve who generated Life among mortals,
> and paid and rent asunder that bill of Eve her mother. \(^{343}\)
> Instead of the mother who wrote among the trees what she owed,
> the daughter paid all the debts of Adam, her father. … \(^{344}\)

In the Hymns of Fast Ephrem gives the following comparison with the help of
bread:

> Mary gave us the bread of refreshment
> For the bread of weariness which Eve gave. \(^{345}\)

The Church counted the glories of Mary in many prayers on the prayer of the
commemoration. Eve was cheated by the deceitful words of the serpent. Mary,

\(^{341}\) HNat 17:4.
\(^{342}\) Hexudra Vol. I, p. 593.
\(^{343}\) Jacob of Serugh, Hymn on Mary tr. by Mary Hansbury, p.19.
\(^{344}\) Jacob of Serugh, Hymn on Mary tr. by Mary Hansbury, p.30.
\(^{345}\) HAzym 6:6-7.
though disturbed\textsuperscript{346} at the words of Gabriel, had prudence and humility to inquire into the possibility of her conception by the power of God.

5. Physical effects of Maternity

Like every woman Eve also bore children in pain; but Mary is the antitype of Eve and her role can be expressed symbolically in the moment of her childbirth by saying that the ‘curse’ of pain was reversed. In Odes of Solomon 19 emphasis is on Mary’s childbirth being without pain, not on the physiologically impossible notion of her undergoing no physical change.\textsuperscript{347} Absence of physical effects of maternity is a nice example of Eve-Mary parallelism. We find this idea explicitly in Ephrem’s \textit{Hymn on Virginity}:

\begin{quote}
Blessed are you, O castles of the King, / whose gate is greater than mortal beings./ The glorious King dwelt within you. / Let His love be a bulwark for your beauty. / Your womb escaped from the pangs of the curse. / By the serpent the pains of the female entered. / Let the defiled one be put to shame, seeing that / his pangs were not in your womb.\textsuperscript{348}
\end{quote}

\textit{Virginitas in partu} is also seen in Mary’s life. How can we call Mary ‘virgin’ since she gave birth to Christ? After giving birth to a child every woman is no longer called virgin. But here a supernatural thing happened that just as the Lord entered through all closed doors, so he came out of a virginal womb, for this virgin bore him truly and really but without pain so we call her the ‘Blessed among the women’.

In the commentary of Nicene creed we can see how Theodore commended the incarnation and its effects: The fact that He was not born of a man but was only fashioned by the Holy Spirit in the womb of His mother, is beyond the nature of the children of men, and the (Apostle said) that He was made of a woman in order to show us that He was fashioned from the nature of a woman and was born according to the law of nature; and this does not cause any injury to nature,

\textsuperscript{346} See ‘\textit{onita d’ewangelion}


\textsuperscript{348} \textit{HV}ir 24:11.
because Eve also was made of Adam, and her birth is different from that of all men since she received her existence form a rib only, without marital intercourse. It was a novel thing to have been fashioned from a woman without marital intercourse, by the power of the Holy Spirit, but He is associated with the human nature by the fact that He is from the nature of Mary, and it is for this reason that He is said also to be the seed of David.

In Genesis we read that Eve was called the “mother of all the living” (Gen 3:20). But Mary became “the mother of the living” as she gave birth to Christ, who is “life” (Jn 11:23; 14:6). The doctrine of Mary's spiritual motherhood of men is contained in the fact that she is the antitype of Eve: Eve is our natural mother because she is the origin of our natural life; so Mary is our spiritual mother because she is the origin of our spiritual life. St. Ephrem in his homily on Our Lord portrayed how Mary became the ‘Mother of all the living’, in the place of Eve. This is also seen in the Commentary on Diatessaron, where St. Ephrem states that Mary gave birth to the “Life-giver”:

Eve gave birth to the murderer, but Mary gave birth to the Life-Giver.
The former gave birth to him who shed the blood of his brothers, but the latter to him whose blood was shed by his brothers. The former saw him who was trembling and fleeing because of the curse of earth, the latter [saw] him who bore the curse and nailed it on his cross.

The symbolism of the “Second or New Eve” expresses the theme of Mary’s participation in the salvation mystery. If death entered through Eve, life entered through Mary, the Mother of the Son of God. Eve is our natural mother because she is the origin of our natural life; so Mary is our spiritual mother because she is the origin of our spiritual life.

350 2 Tim 2:8.
351 “And with a body from a virgin He entered Sheol, broke into its vaults, and carried off its treasures. Then He came to Eve, mother of all the living. She is the vine whose fence death broke down with her own hands in order to sample her fruit. And Eve, who had been mother of all the living, became a fountain of death for all the living. But Mary, the new shoot, sprouted from Eve, the old vine, and new life dwelt in her”. Cf. Ephrem, Homily of Our Lord, ET by E. Matthews & J. Amar, St. Ephrem the Syrian: Selected Prose Works, p. 278.
In the West Syriac tradition also we can see the same parallelism between Eve and Mary in their prayers:

Glory to the Son of God, who was pleased to come forth from the blessed holy Virgin; by her ear she received him and she bore him in her womb; he came forth from her womb and it remained sealed and confounded the unbelievers.\textsuperscript{353}

The fruit of life descended from the highest heaven / and entered by the ear of Mary and dwelt in her womb. / He remained in it, became a son of man / and came forth to visit the creation, preserving the seal of virginity / of the Mother who brought him forth…\textsuperscript{354}

CONCLUSION

The prayers of the commemoration of Mary depict her as the Mother of Christ and at the same time as a virgin. The divine motherhood of Christ is explained through the images of New Heaven, Castle of King and Temple of God. Her virginity is compared to the unploughed land and the eyes into which light enters. Her virginal conception is the fruit of her ears receiving the Word of God. Her virginity is the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. Mary is one who co-operates with God in the work of salvation. Therefore she is viewed by the members of the Church as their refuge, strong fortress and harbour and so on. The prayers indeed illustrate many other attributes of the Blessed Virgin Mary. These prayers very well explain the East Syrian understanding of Mary’s position in the Church.

\textsuperscript{353} Qolo d botar pirmo, Ramsho on Wednesday; cf. Awsar Slawoto, p.467.

\textsuperscript{354} Qolo, Revelation to Joseph, Night vigil; cf. Francis Acharya, Prayer..., p.104.