CHAPTER VI

THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

Divine office is the breath of the Church and its members. The Church proclaims her faith on the risen Lord through the various liturgical actions such as Divine office, Holy Eucharist, Paschal feasts, commemorations and so on. The Church proclaims this faith daily through the Divine office, weekly through the Holy Eucharist and yearly through the Paschal feasts and commemorations.

In the history of Christianity, the periods in which Marian doctrine and devotion have flourished range from the second to the ninth centuries, especially the Patristic era. During this time, the Church reflected on Mary’s role as the New Eve and acclaimed her divine maternity and perpetual virginity in patristic writings and various Councils. This was also the period when the great Trinitarian and Christological dogmas were debated and defined. ¹

Mary is the virgin mother of Jesus Christ. Her divine motherhood is effected by her faith (Lk 1:43 ff), and so it is not a merely biological occurrence. She is the person who was redeemed in the most perfect way, and so she is the proto-type of the redeemed and of the Church in general, comprised in the will of God decreeing the redemptive and therefore triumphant Incarnation of the Word of God. She is the finest result of the redemptive work of her divine Son. ²

Mary is the new Eve, the mother of new creation, and the hope of creation on its earthly pilgrimage. Through her glorious Assumption, she is also the hope of the new heaven and the new earth where Christ will ‘be all in all’ (Col 3:11). She helps all humanity to be constantly renewed in the image of Him who is the Creator of man (cf. Col 3:10).

¹ Paul Haffner, The Mystery of Mary, p.4.
Mariology is not an independent and free-standing element in the rich tradition of the Eastern Christian Churches. It is not studied in itself. Rather, Mariology—doctrine and devotion—is an essential element of Christian theology, christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. This section attends specifically to the theological implication of the liturgical prayer for the Commemoration of the Virgin Mary. I will examine how the liturgical appropriation of the prayer of Mary can be said to contribute to the theological tradition’s development of the motif in matters of Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, eschatology, ecclesiology, and Mariology.

For the Church of the East the implication of venerating Mary “within the limits of orthodoxy” is that no matter how or when she is venerated through her devotions and memorials, the Virgin Mother is never to be elevated above her Son, or even equated with Him (1 Tim 2:5-6). Liturgy of the Church venerated Mary in terms like “Handmaid of the Father”, “Mother of the Son”, and “Temple of the Holy Spirit”. Mary is the mother of Christ not God the Father. From the fifth century onwards Christological controversies faced by the Church of the East through misunderstandings (about the terms of Christotokos and Theotokos for Mary). However, this situation has been overcome with the signing of the “Common Christological Declaration” in 1994. The Trinitarian pattern of divine action is seen in Mary’s life: the Incarnation of the Son is initiated by the Father’s election of the Blessed Virgin and is mediated by the Holy Spirit. For the theological analysis of this prayer of the commemoration I use the other printed versions of Hudra texts and the themes from the patristic writers such as Aphrahat, Ephrem, Narsai, Jacob of Serug and so on.

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3 Lk 1:30-35, 38.
4 In hymns we recite: All the generations will give you the fine praises since he was blessed in you, 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 the temple in you; and on this account behold watchers and men glorify you (Tcr.27, p. 91).
I. CHRISTOLOGY

Christology is a human attempt to discover and articulate the mystery of Jesus Christ, how God is related to man and how man is related to God in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is both God and man. Christology is just a human attempt to grasp this unique mysterious union of two natures in Christ.

The Christological tendency stressed Mary’s relationship with her Son as Mother of Christ. Her privileges which derive from this relationship are parallel to Christ’s because she is intimately associated with Him. For example, her virginity is a consequence of her divine Maternity. Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, was born of Mary, is flesh of her flesh, because she conceived Him by the power of the Holy Spirit, gave birth to Him, suckled Him at her virginal breast, and brought Him up. Mary is therefore truly the Mother of Jesus, and therefore between her and the incarnate Word there exists an indissoluble bond.

The titles which she acquired ‘tabernacle’, ‘temple’ and so forth, have a Christological reference. The Mother of Christ was never worshipped in place of Christ or for herself alone, but rather for her role in helping to bring about the miracle of the incarnation as it is written:

Without intercourse the Virgin gave birth to Emmanuel, more elevated than the Sun, who became the Lord of all creatures. And Mary gave birth to the one who is declared (to be) God and man; and this is Christ, and not as the heretics have spoken impiously.

For the understanding of the Christological aspects of the prayers for the commemoration of the Virgin Mary we can use the following terms:

1. Christ the Medicine of life

Christ is the ‘Medicine of Life which flew down from the High’. Mary has provided humanity with the fruit of the Tree of Life which will undo the

5 In the prayer of liturgy of prayers for the commemoration of Virgin Mary we can see the prayers which are paradoxically described as Christ is the giver of life to the entire world, who sucked from the breasts of Mary.


7 In antiphon ܠܥܸܠܡܢܫܡܫܒܬܘܠܬܐܝܠܕܬܐܕܐܝܬ̣̤ܠܥܡܢܘܐܝܠܕܐܝܬ̣̤ܘܗܝܡܪܐܕܟܠܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ܀ see Tcr.27, p. 84.
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disastrous effects of the transgression of Adam and Eve, for whom the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, which they had picked in their disobedience to God’s ‘tiny command’ (St. Ephrem), had proved to be so bitter. But through Mary’s obedience to the will of God, the humanity can re-enter into the paradise and get the Tree of Life. It will happen only through the hidden power\(^8\) which had come out into the open, and brought Adam back to life or paradise. In the *Hymns on Mary*, Ephrem writes that through the use of medicine of life Adam and Eve received comfort and were enabled to enter into paradise.\(^9\)

In the prayer of *Compline* on the day of the commemoration we recite:

> Mary who gave birth to the Medicine of Life for the children of Adam, through your supplication may we be able to find mercy on the day of resurrection.\(^10\)

At the last Supper ‘the Lifegiver of all blessed the food and it became the Medicine of Life for those who ate it’.\(^11\) On Christ’s descent into the Sheol Ephrem too depicts Christ as the medicine of life:

> Let Eve to-day rejoice in Sheol, / for her daughter’s Son, / has come down as the Medicine of Life / to revive His mother’s mother.\(^12\)

\(2.\) **He put on body**

“Putting on the body” is of course a standard metaphor for the incarnation in early Syriac writers;\(^13\) and this expression is used in many ways such as: ‘the Word may put on the body’, the ‘body of Adam’, ‘our body’, ‘humanity’, or even ‘Adam’.

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\(^8\) Christ himself descended to the Sheol in order to give life to Adam.

\(^9\) The virgin Vine gave forth the Cluster of grapes whose wine is sweet. Both Adam and Eve who were mourning received comfort in their grief:

> Having tasted of that Medicine of Life, they received comfort in their grief \((HMary 1:14); \) cf. Sebastian Brock, *Bride of Light*, p.35.

\(^10\) *HAZym* 14:16; ET from Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, chap.6, p.77.


According to Sebastian Brock, the standard Syriac phrase ܠܒܫ ܦܓܪܐ 'he put on body' is used for the incarnation; in the course of the fifth century this was replaced first by ܐܬܓܫܡ 'he was embodied', and finally by ܐܬܒܣܪ 'he was enfleshed'. While the synod of Išo'yahb I (585) uses the terms ܐܬܓܫܡ and ܡܬܓܫܡܢܘܬܐ, Mar Awa (544) uses the native Syriac terminology, ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܕܠܒܫ 'the humanity which he put on'; 14 the verb ܐܬܒܪܢܫ 'he became man' and the noun ܡܬܒܪܢܫܢܘܬܐ 'in homination', never feature in the credal statements of the sixth-century synods: ܐܬܒܪܢܫ they, however, occur in the secondary East Syrian revision of the translation of the Nicene Creed. 15

In divinity he was born from God the Father and in humanity he was born from the Virgin Mary and through love he humbled himself and put on our nature from the Virgin Mary and saved the humanity. 16 In the liturgical prayers for the commemoration of the Virgin Mary the Church explained the reason for his incarnation in its prayers:

And by his mercifulness and great love he put on (ܠܡܠ) our nature and saved him (human being) from death and brought him up to heaven. 17

On the glorious day of the commemoration of the blessed mother let us, together with the spiritual beings sing praise to the Son who is from her, who through his love humbled himself and put on (ܠܡܠ) our nature. 18

Christ, the Creator clothed our weakness with the glory which he brought from the Father 19 in order to save the humanity. In the incarnation, God clothes Himself

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14 Babai the Great uses the related phrase ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܠܒܫ 'he put on our humanity' (Liber de Unione, p.48), though elsewhere he normally uses terminology of Greek origin.

15 The ancient Syriac metaphor of clothing in connection with the incarnation thus only continued in widespread use in the Church of the East, and throughout the sixth and seventh centuries we find numerous reflections of it, such as “garment of humanity” in Mar Aha’s Letter of 544, or “the robe of his humanity” in the Synod of 576. For further details see Sebastian Brock “The Christology of the Church of the East” in D. Afinogenov and A. Muraview (eds), Traditions and Heritage of the Christian East (Moscow: Izdatelstvo “Indrik” 1996), pp.159-179.

16 All these changes did the Merciful One make

Stripping off glory and putting on a body;
For He had devised away to re-clothe Adam

In that glory which Adam had stripped off (HNat 23:13; cf. Sebastian Brock, the Luminous Eye, p.65; see for another ET Kathleen E. McVey, Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns, p. 190).

17 Tcr. 27, p.77: ܘܒܼܡܪܚܡܢܘܼܬܹܗ ܘܼܒܪܘܬܵܐ ܘܐܼܣܩܹܗ ܠܼܫܡܼܝܵܐ.

18 Tcr. 27, p.90: ܒܝܵܘܡܵܐ ܫܒܝܵܐ ܕܝܵܚܵܐ ܕܕܘܟܪܗ ̇ܕܐܡܐ ܡܒܪܟ̣̇ܬܵܐ ܢܸܙܡܼܪ̣ ܫܘܼܒ̣ ܥܵܡܪ̈ ܘܚܢܐ ܠܒ̣ ܪܐ ܕܡܢܗ̇ ܕܒܝܕ ܚܘܼܒܹܗ ܐܸܬ̇ ܬܼܒܬܝ̤ ܘܠܒ̣̣ ܫܹܗ̣ ܠܼܟ̣ ܝܵܢܢ.
in a body. In *HNat* 16:11, Ephrem writes “The Son of the Most High came and dwelt in me, / and I became His Mother. As I gave birth to Him/- His second birth- so too He gave birth to me/ a second time. He put on His mother’s robe/ His body; I put on His glory”. Through the Incarnation Mary put on robe of glory as the type of our baptism. Through the putting on of body his divinity did not change.

3. Mary the New/Second Heaven
In the Bible, heaven occupies an important place, for it is the throne of God (Mt 5:34) and it is the dwelling place of God. Son of God has come down and dwelt in Mary then she became the second or new heaven for Him. Since the eternal Lord of all, the Only-begotten Son of God, whose eternal dwelling-place is in Heaven, did, in the fullness of time (at the incarnation), descend to the world and make the womb of the Virgin his dwelling-place, truly a ‘New/Second Heaven’. Mary is therefore named ‘Heaven’ because of God’s unique relationship with her, whose womb became the Sanctuary of his Son. Mary’s title ‘Second Heaven’ implies that the two Apostolic Marian traditional teachings of the ‘virginal conception’ of Jesus and of her Mother’s perpetual virginity are consequently taken in their literal sense, for theological and pastoral usage.

In this liturgical prayer the Church proclaimed that the Lord chose the new heaven that is Mary in order to dwell in us. The mystery is the Son of God whose throne is the vast heaven but now he limited himself and dwells in the womb of Mary silently. In the same prayer for the commemoration we recite that

19 In *HNat* 9, Ephrem wrote: “Christ, you are the Son of the Creator, who is like his Father.-As Creator he created for himself in the womb a chaste body. He put it on and went out, - and clothed with glory our weakness-through the grace which he brought from his Father”.
20 *HNat* 16:11; ET Sebastian Brock *The Harp of the Spirit*, p. 15; also Kathleen E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*.
22 In  "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’ see Tcr. 27, p. 85."
Mary is higher or more exalted than the heaven. It signifies that Mary was more worthy than heaven to carry the Son of God:

- Fire was carried in her womb; the Tabernacle was venerated in her body.
- The Spirit brooded in her soul (spirit) 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. 23

In the prayers for the commemoration we called Mary a ‘second heaven’ for the eternal light and hidden rays of un-rounded Sun dawmed from this Rational Sphere, Second Heaven, the Ever Virgin and she is abode or dwelling place of the revelation of mysteries. 24 Mary has become a heaven for us, because she bears God. 25 Narsai called her a “Second Heaven” and he emphasized her purity and poverty. In one sogita he writes that “she was to become mother to him who created Adam and the world”. 26 And Jacob of Serug writes: “She is a second Heaven; for in her womb the Lord of the Heights dwelt, and dawned from her to drive the darkness from every quarter;...”. 27

4. Mother of the Second Adam (\textit{ܐܡܐܕܐܕܡܕܬܪܝܢ})

Second Adam, a favourite Pauline figure for Christ 28 as head of the restored human race, we find this theme rather often in Ephrem and liturgical texts. In the piercing of Christ’s side Ephrem sees him as the second Adam: “Because the fire that burned in Adam burned in him on account of his rib; therefore the side of the second Adam was pierced, and there came forth a stream of water from it, to quench the fire of the first Adam...”. 29 Through Adam death entered and corrupted his race, but by Adam, the second, He will release those oppressed by death. 30 Through the sin of Adam the human beings are under the bondage and

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24 See \textit{Hudra} Vol. 1, p.600.
26 F. Feldmann, \textit{Syrische Wechsellieder von Narses}, Leipzig (1896); I use the ET from Hilda Graef, \textit{Mary...}, p.125; also in Sebastian Brock, \textit{Bride of Light}.
28 1 Cor 15:20-22.
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slavery of sin. To restore all to His Knowledge and love and to fulfill the eternal salvific plan, God the Father sent His Word to dwell within the Second Adam and redeem the universe through his death.\(^{31}\)

In this liturgical prayer God made Adam, the head of human being, from the earth but he chose the second Adam from the land of living mother and He made him as the head of heavenly beings.\(^{32}\) Mary is the mother of Christ the second Adam and not of divine Essence;\(^{33}\) and through him the daughter of poor parents who became the mother of the deliverer. And like the earth, she gave birth without marriage. That command, which gave a sign to the earth and it bore Adam, depicted an image inside of her limbs in the likeness of Adam.\(^{34}\) In *Hymns on Epiphany* Narsai describes the fashioning of the second Adam and his authority over the first Adam.\(^ {35}\)

5. Divinity as Fire dwelt in Mary

The fire stands for transcendence of God; in the case of Old Testament sacrifices, the descent of fire from heaven was an indication of divine acceptance (I Kings 18:38). Fire is a symbol of the consecratory role of the Holy Spirit whose descent is invoked by the priest in the epiclesis.\(^ {36}\) In the night prayer for the commemoration the Church depicts the Holy Spirit and divinity as a fire and the

\(^{31}\) Narsai, *Nativity* 1-2, 43-70; *on Epiphany* 51-54; *on Passion* 49-56. See PO 41.

\(^{32}\) Huda\(\textbf{r}\) Vol. I, p.603. On the *HNat* Ephrem also depicted Christ as a second Adam, who is the head of heaven from the Virgin and the virgin earth gave birth to that Adam (first), the head of earth. Cf. Kathleen E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*, p. 65.

\(^{33}\) Antiphon: 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 (Narsai, *Nativity*, 455-6).


\(^{35}\) His (good) pleasure descended unto (one) whom He fashioned in fitting love; and He depicted on the tablet of Adam’s body, a Second Adam. In the (same) order as Adam, He depicted a (Second) Adam with the colour of [(His Divine) will, And renewed Adam and his offspring through (this) Son of Adam. The Second Adam came forth from the womb as from the earth; And he is entirely like that First (Adam) whom the earth bore. But authority, he is the Lord of Adam and his offspring He is equal in nature, but greater in honour than all those who have come to be; And the witness is vigilant one, who announced his conception and called him 'Lord’].

In many ways, the Second Adam is greater than Adam; [Narsai, *Hymns on Epiphany*, 52- 61]. See PO 41, pp.72-75. God created the first Adam in the likeness of Second Adam-this theme is also seen in the *Homily on Creation* of Jacob of Serugh.

incarnation through Mary is compared with the formation of the first man from the dust:

How does the fire dwell in 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. 37

The Old Testament concept of the Temple is that of the dwelling place of God on earth. 38 But in the New Testament this term applies to every Christian. 39 Mary is a Temple full of grace because Christ the sun of righteousness 40 rose from her. 41 Ephrem describes the divinity as fire; thus at the incarnation ‘Fire entered Mary’s womb, put on a body and came forth’. 42 Fire is the ‘symbol of the spirit’ 43 and at the Eucharist ‘the Spirit is in the Bread and Fire in the Wine’. 44 In an Annunciation hymn, Jacob of Serug described her as an ark full of fire because the Lord who appeared as ‘fire’ dwelt in Mary. 45 For Narsai ‘we are the dwelling place of His divinity’. 46 God did not send unto us one of the spiritual beings instead of his behalf but the Word of the Father came to us in order to save us from the Evil one.

6. Hostage (ܗܡܝܪܐ)

Syriac ܗܡܝܪܐ is a loan word from Greek, and the borrowing must have taken place very early in the history of classical Syriac for it already features a number of times in the Peshitta Old Testament. 47 More of direct interest for the background of ܗܡܝܪܐ in a Christological context are various metaphorical uses of

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37 Antiphon, Tcr. 27; also in Narsai, Hom. On Mary, Vat. Syr. 588, p.15.
38 1 Kg 8.
39 Jn 2:19, 21; John interpreted the temple as “the temple of His body”.
40 Mal 4:1.
41 “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.
42 HFaith 4:2.
43 HFaith 40:10.
44 HFaith 10:8.
45 They looked on her as the habitation of the Godhead; and she was regarded by them as an ark full of fire. Cf. Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serugh on the Mother..., p.53.
46 Narsai Homily on Nativity 63-64;
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the term. This term is used to describe the two nature characters of the East Syrian Christological tradition.

The transition is from Adam as the hostage led off by Christ from death to the “body of Adam” which the divine Word “put on”. It was to move from Adam, the hostage taken off from death by Christ and to shift to “body of Adam”, assumed or “put on” by the Word, which is itself now described as a hostage, and at the same time is separated from the theme of the Descent. This usage also can be found already in both Aphrahat and Ephrem in the fourth century.

The Church fathers use the imagery of Christ as a hostage that we encounter in the prayers for this commemoration. In the suba’a prayer we recite:

… He dwelt and prepared a path for us to the kingdom. Through His fasting He conquered death and Satan and he overcame our nature. And he was raised in praise, the hostage that is from our race and he exalted us by his ascension. Bless, worship and confess the child who rose from Mary. Praise to him.

Blessed are you, O Mary the blessed Mother, because your womb carried Jesus Christ; for through the love of God He came towards us and took a hostage from our race for his honour. And behold in our days he is on the right side of the Father and beseeches for the sake of all of us ….

7. Two births of Christ

In divinity Christ is born from the Father before the ages but in the latest days, the same is born of the Virgin Mary in humanity. We praise Mary because in her the Word of the Father united himself to us for our sake. On the day of her

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50 Christ defeated the evil one not by his divine powers, but by his human weapon of fasting (HVirg 12:1). Fasting is the medicine for the first ‘grave ulcer’ (Adam transgressed the commandment and ate from the tree. Hence, poison entered in him causing sickness which is called the first grave ulcer). By fasting the celestial Adam became the healer of the terrestrial Adam who ate without discernment. (HS III, 5-7). Divine mercy gave fasting as a medicine (Hleiuôn 4:1). Genuine fasting is the fasting from evil things (Hleiuôn 4:3). Added to this Aphrahat speaks about ‘pure fasting’ based on the purity of the heart of the one who fasts (Dem 3: 1,2).
51 Tcr. 27, p.77.
52 Tcr. 27, p.77.
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commemoration, let us sing praise and thanksgiving to Christ, who was born from her womb, the man Jesus Christ, who became the Lord by his union with the Word, (and) who was born from the Father before.\textsuperscript{54} In \textit{HNat}, Ephrem writes that our Christ has two births:\textsuperscript{55}

The Son of the Highest, who came and took up his abode in me
And I became his mother. And as I gave birth to him
In a second birth,\textsuperscript{56} he, too, has given birth to me in a second birth.
The garment of his mother which he put on, his body, I have put on its glory.

The Logos or Word having entered Mary quite literally through her ear:
Through her ear the Word entered
And dwelt secretly in the womb.\textsuperscript{57}

Without intercourse the Virgin gave birth to Emmanuel, more elevated than the Sun, who became the Lord of all creatures. And Mary gave birth to the one who is declared (to be) God and man; and this is Christ, and not as the heretics have spoken impiously.\textsuperscript{58} It is important to remember that the theological approach towards the Virgin was entirely Christocentric. Mary, who gave birth to Christ the hope of the entire world,\textsuperscript{59} was not praised in isolation but for her relationship to Christ, her Son. In the Old Testament the temple is the dwelling place of God and the divine presence resides in it. There the Great one became small to dwell in the temple built by human hands. But here in the fullness of time God willed to send his only begotten Son to this world and for this the Holy Spirit fashioned a temple in the womb of the Virgin Mary. We should praise her because she is worthy to bear the temple of God the Word. It is incomprehensible to us because the Unlimited One emptied himself to the limited one.

\textsuperscript{54} \textsuperscript{H\textit{Tcr.} 27, 78.}
\textsuperscript{55} \textsuperscript{HNat} 16:11.
\textsuperscript{56} i.e., in his human birth, after the eternal birth of the Son from the Father.
\textsuperscript{57} \textsuperscript{HNat} 11:6.
\textsuperscript{58} \textsuperscript{H\textit{Prayers}}, see \textsuperscript{Tcr.} 27, p. 84
\textsuperscript{59} \textsuperscript{H\textit{PNR}} \textsuperscript{\textit{PNLR}}
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II. PNEUMATOLOGY

In all prayers and liturgical celebrations of the Church of the East we can see the Pneumatological aspects of the Eastern tradition. The Holy Spirit is the operating power in all the Sacraments; the emphasis given to ‘Epiclesis’ in the Oriental Liturgical traditions is an indication of this importance given to the Spirit in the Oriental Liturgies. From the Eucharistic consecration we can understand how important is the role of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Qurbana and the Liturgy of the Hours also contains a rich theology on the Holy Spirit, especially in the hymns and prayers of the liturgical seasons of Epiphany, Resurrection and Apostles.

In Nazareth, Mary is the first Christian who through the Power of the overshadowing Holy Spirit gives birth to Jesus. In the Upper Room, she is joined by other believers, men, women, all of whom again experience the coming upon them of the Holy Spirit. The humanity of Christ was fully related to the Holy Spirit. This relation began in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin Mary was a mortal woman, but by the grace of the Holy Spirit she was able to bear Christ. When Christ ascended to heaven, he took with him a pledge, from humanity: the human body in which he was incarnated. According to the Gospel of Luke, Mary is implicitly the ‘handmaid of the Father’, the ‘Mother of the Son’, and the ‘Temple of the Holy Spirit’.

Furthermore, as the conception is from the Holy Spirit, Mary became holy by the power which dwelt in her and she conceived the Maker of all, the Son of the Substance/Being/

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61 On the day of Pentecost, in the form of fiery tongues, God the Holy Spirit came and renewed the apostles. With hearts restored with new spirit steadfast, fervent and divine, they went out through all the earth, witnesses of the good news [cf. ‘Oniti da’Qdam of the Ramša of the Sunday of the Apostles].
63 Lk 1:30-35, 38.
64 Cf. Lk 1:35.
65 For Mary becoming holy through the intervention of the Holy Spirit within the Annunciation; see R. Murray, “Mary, the Second Eve in the Early Syriac Fathers”, ECR 3 (1970-71), pp. 374-375. The sanctification of Mary, who has been chosen by God and was worthy of Gabriel’s visitation, took place, when the angel started talking to her and not before.
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ousia (ܘܼܒܪܐܝܬܐ), the Son of God (ܒܪܐܠܗܐ), Lord and King (ܡܪܝܐܘܡܠܟܐ). Holy One and the Son of the High One (ܩܕܝܫܐܘܒܪܥܠܝܐ). 66 Jacob of Serug usually distinguishes the Holy Spirit from the Power of the Most High with reference to Luke 1:35. 67 The ‘Spirit’ being the Holy Spirit who first sanctifies Mary’s womb, and the ‘Power’ being the Word, who then enters and dwells there. According to Sebastian Brock the basic reason for this exegesis is evidently a grammatical consideration: 68 In Syriac ሃው, ‘spirit’ is feminine and in early Syriac literature the Holy Spirit, ሃውܕܩܘܕܫܐ, is mostly construed grammatically as a feminine, although later on, under the Greek Influence, it was treated as a masculine (Syriac having no neuter). 69 The word for ‘Power’ on the other hand is masculine (whereas dunamis of the Greek is feminine). In this view the Holy Spirit (ܚܘܫܡܬܐܝܬܘܬܐ) came first upon Mary and sanctified her womb, and then the Power of the Most High (ܐܠܗ ISC) overshadowed her, 70 which is the Word who entered and dwelt in her. 71

67 Jacob of Serugh, A Homily on the Blessed Virgin Mother of ..., 365-385.
69 And according to Sebastian Brock, at the end of the fourth century, the Syriac writers began to become wary about addressing the Holy Spirit as Mother (Dem 18:10; in Acts of Thomas we can also see this term), no doubt due to abuse of this imagery by certain groups whom they regarded as heretical. One consequence of this reaction was a tendency to change the grammatical gender of ruḥa from feminine to masculine whenever ruḥa referred to the Holy Spirit. [See Sebastian Brock, “<Come, Compassionate Mother…Come, Holy Spirit>: a forgotten aspect of early Eastern Christian Imagery” in ARAM 3(1991), p.252].
70 First, the Spirit, and then the Power dwelt in the pure one, as he told her, “The Spirit shall come upon thee and the Power shall dwell within thee”. Now, the Power of the Most High is He that is begotten of the Most High, even He who dwelt within her that He might be born according to the flesh. Christ Himself is the Power of the Father, as it is written (1 Cor 1:24), and before Him the Holy Spirit came unto Mary.
Thus did the watcher, who came from the Father, bring her tidings that the Spirit would come and then the Power of the Most High would dwell within her. The Holy Spirit came unto Mary to loose from her that first sentence of Eve and Adam.
He sanctified her and purified her, and made her blessed among women, and set her free from Eve her mother’s curse of pain (Gen 3:17).
She was called to become Mother to the Son of God;
And the Holy Spirit hallowed her and then the Son made His abode within her.
The Spirit freed her from that condemnation,
that she might be above all offense when He dwelt in her chastely.
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The ruha,\textsuperscript{72} which in the Old Testament descends on Judges, Kings, especially prophets, and is promised to the whole people of God, will be given especially to the Messiah.\textsuperscript{73} In the old Testament the verbs like ‘reside upon’,\textsuperscript{74} ‘be upon’,\textsuperscript{75} ‘put on’,\textsuperscript{76} ‘take’,\textsuperscript{77} ‘lead’\textsuperscript{78} and ‘hover’\textsuperscript{79} are used for denoting the ‘Spirit’ of God. For the Pneumatological aspects of the prayers of the commemoration of the Virgin Mary we can discuss the following terms:

1. Dwelt (ܥܡܪ [ܥܡܡܪܐ = noun])

In the ‘onita d-Basliqe Mary is described as the glorious abode of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit moulded Christ in Mary’s womb and she became a palace for His hiddleness.\textsuperscript{80} Through the annunciation Christ the Consubstantial Son of God the Father abode/dwelt in her without any change.\textsuperscript{81} His divinity does not come from His Mother and His humanity does not come from His Father.\textsuperscript{82}

He refined His Mother in the Holy Spirit when He dwelt in her, that without sin He might receive a pure body from her. [Jacob of Serugh, A Homily on the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God, lines 365-384; see in The True Vine Vol. 5/1, issue No. 17 (1993), pp.3-28.]

\textsuperscript{71} See Sebastian Brock, The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition, Syrian Churches Series 9 (Kottayam 1979), p.4; also see his introduction to Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serugh on the Mother of ..., pp.4-5.

\textsuperscript{72} The noun ruha means breath of life, wind, vapour, spirit, spiritual being, ghost, etc. [J. P. Smith, Compendious ..., p. 533]. In the Madrashe for the Sunday of Pentecost the Spirit is presented also as the medicine of life: “Blessed be the one who cured us freely with the medicine of the Holy Spirit and did not avenge our iniquity through actions”. See Madrâshe, Ḥudra Vol. 3, p.144.


\textsuperscript{74} Num 11:26; 2 Kg 2:15; Is 11:2 (‘rest and reside upon’; the Hebrew and Greek only have one verb).

\textsuperscript{75} Jud 6:34 (Greek ‘empower’); I Chr 12:19; 2 Chr 24:20.

\textsuperscript{76} I Kg 18:12; 2 Kg 2:16 (Greek ‘find’); Ezra 3:12, 8:3, 11:1 and 24.

\textsuperscript{77} Ps. 143:10; Is 63:14.

\textsuperscript{78} Gen. 1:2.

\textsuperscript{79} “O Virgin who has given birth to Christ, the glorious abode of the Holy Spirit [ܥܡܪܐ ܫܒܝܚܵܐ (virgin) in whom the Lord of all was pleased to renew our image that was corrupted. …. You will receive the wonderful conception for the power of the Spirit moulds Him in your inner limbs, so that it will become dwelling place for His hiddleness and ….” (onita d-Basliq). See also in Ḥudra Vol. I, p. 586.

\textsuperscript{80} Ḥudra Vol. I, p. 589.

\textsuperscript{81} See Qala Ḥudra in 3 Vols., “The orders of watchers glorified the honour of the chaste one, Mary. Christ the king was born from her but not the nature of the Essence that you are worshiped by all. In his divine essence he is neither born from Mary nor from his parent. In his divinity he is
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2. Descend (ܢܚܬ)

The Power, which descended (ܢܚܬ) from High, sanctified and adorned Mary and from her the true light, the hope and life of the creatures, rose. The triune Power descended’ and the Power of God rested upon her at the Annunciation. In the doctrinal hymn of this commemoration, Mary explains about her conception to Joseph:

Joseph said to his wife Mary that Reveal and explain to me what did these things? Mary said to him “the power descended (ܢܚܬ) upon me and the Lord who desires me he reveals to me his hidden things (secret).”

In the baptism of our Lord in the Gospel we can see the same term for denoting the action of the Holy Spirit.

3. Make descent or rest upon (ܐܓܢ) (ܪܒܡܐܢܘܬܐ = descent, overshadowing)

’agen (ܐܓܢ) is hard to translate exactly, but evidently became a technical term for the Spirit’s activity from an early date in the Syriac-speaking Church, for it is used to render a number of different Greek verbs. The term ’agen in fact has its born from the Father and in his humanity he is born from Mary. The divine being and man Have mercy upon us” (p. 63). In the tešbohta of the first Sunday of Annunciation the Church recite as “One is Christ the Son of God adored by all in two kyane. For, in his divinity he was born from his Father, without beginning, beyond time. In his humanity he is born from Mary, at the completion of time, joined with the body. His divinity is not of the kyana of his mother; nor is his humanity from the kyana of his Father. The kyane are kept with their qnome in the very same parsopa in one filiation, and as Godhead is three qnome in one substance. Thus the Holy Church has learned to confess the Son who is Christ. O Lord, we adore your divinity and your humanity without doubt” (p.118)

83 Praise to the triune power which descended ܠܢܚܬ ܘܠܩܝܘܕܪܐ in the virgin and he created the man from her and he made the temple for his habitation and he promised the new and true life to our mortality ( Hdr ܕܡܚܪܐ ܐܝܢܐ Hdr in 3 Vols. p.97).

84 Without seed and marriage, she conceived Christ; on her alone the Holy Spirit descended and the Power of God rested in her. (Third Sunday of Annunciation, Hdr Vol.1, 142)

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background in the *Peshitta* Old Testament and *Targumim*, but never in the context of the ‘spirit’.

What is surprising is that occasionally we also find in ‘tabernacle in’, under the influence of “And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us” but in this present manuscript we cannot find this term for expressing the function of the Holy Spirit in connection with Mary. In the printed version of *Hudra* we can find this term. “Thus in [ܡܠܬܐ ܒܣܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܘܐܓܢ ܒܢ ] this poem must, on stylistic grounds date from at least the seventh century, at the very earliest; this makes the preservation of feminine grammatical gender for the Holy Spirit noteworthy. There are fewer explicit allusions to Luke 1:35 [ܢܚܬܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܬܐܬܐ ܘܚܝܠܗ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܢܓܢ ܥܠܝܟܝ ] but in this present manuscript we can find this term, “Thus in [ܒܡܪܝܡ ] Mary the Virgin did the Holy Spirit (fem.) tabernacle ”: this poem must, on stylistic grounds date from at least the seventh century, at the very earliest; this makes the preservation of feminine grammatical gender for the Holy Spirit noteworthy.

is not used in the baptismal passages Mt.3:16 Mk 1:10, Lk 3:33 but the verb is used. In East Syriac *Hudra* is not used for Christ’s baptism. But in the litany prayers for the commemoration of the Virgin on

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89 E.g. Targum Ex 12:13 ‘I will overshadow (protect) you with my Memra’. The verb is used as being etymological related to Hebrew *m’agen* ‘shield’.
90 In 1:14.
91 *Hudra* Vol. 1 p.594.
93 Gabriel said that peace to O Mary; Holy Spirit will come and His power will overshadow you, for you should accept the conception and give birth without man (Ter 27, p. 77). And Mary received the annunciation filled with all redemption. Without seed and marriage, she conceived Christ on whom alone the Holy Spirit descended and the power of God rested in her (Third Sunday of Annunciation, *Hudra* Vol.1, p. 142; “...the Power of the lover of men dwelt upon her only” *Hudra* Vol. 1, p.605.
94 The Holy Spirit was sent and he rested over the baptism and formed immortal children (= who won’t die), in the womb of
95 But in the *Denha* season this term is used for denoting the Christian Baptism: The Holy Spirit was sent and he rested over the baptism and formed immortal children (= who won’t die), in the womb of
August 15\textsuperscript{th} the term \textit{ܡܓܢܢܘܬܐ} is used.\textsuperscript{96} The noun \textit{ܡܓܢܢܘܬܐ} is first attested in the context of the incarnation in Philoxenius’ writings of the 480s, appearing to have been originally based on John 1:14, rather than Luke 1:35.\textsuperscript{97}

In the baptismal and eucharistic epiclesis\textsuperscript{98} the phraseology of \textit{ܐܓܢ} is used but the origin of this terminology can safely be identified in the angel Gabriel’s greetings to Mary, ‘The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the Power of the Most High shall overshadow you’.\textsuperscript{99}

4. He/she may come (\textit{ܢܐܬܐ} or \textit{ܬܐܬܐ})

The Church calls the Spirit directly on the oblation for blessing and consecrating them at the Eucharistic epiclesis.\textsuperscript{101} In the West Syrian tradition the terms \textit{ܫܕܪ} and \textit{ܢܐܬܐ} are used for the invocation of Holy Spirit in their liturgical

\textsuperscript{96} Christ chose the pure virgin, daughter of mortal ones and he adorned and sanctified her with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who resided / dwelt in her limbs. (Karozuta for the commemoration on August \textit{ Hdra} Vol. I, p.608).

\textsuperscript{97} Sebastian Brock, “From the Annunciation to Pentecost: The travels of a Technical Term”, in \textit{Studia Anselmiana} 110 (Rome 1993), p.90

\textsuperscript{98} In the Anaphora of Theodore: \textit{ܟܝܬܐܒܪܬܡܝܘ̈ܬܐ} [And may the grace of the Holy Spirit come upon us and upon this \textit{Qurbana}, and may she dwell and rest upon this bread....] see Jacob Vadakkel, \textit{The East Syrian Anaphora of Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia: Critical Edition, English Translation and Study}, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India (OIRSI) 129 (Kottayam 1989), p. 72.

\textsuperscript{99} Lk 1:35.

\textsuperscript{100} It is used where the \textit{ܘܪܚܐ} retains the feminine gender.

\textsuperscript{101} The expression \textit{ܬܐܬܐ} or \textit{ܢܐܬܐ} is used for the invocation of Holy Spirit in 3 Anaphoras of Church of the East and in the anaphora of St. Basil. (See Jacob Vadakkel, \textit{The East Syrian Anaphora of Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia}, pp. 182-183.


\textsuperscript{103} In the Anaphora of St. Cyril of Alexandria ‘ \textit{ܘܢܐܬܐ}ܪܘܚܟ... \textit{ܘܢܐܓܢ}� (…let your Holy Spirit come down, abide, move upon and rest over us and…..). See Mar Athanasios Samuel, \textit{The Book of the Divine Liturgies ...}, pp. 323-326; 359-360.
consecration. Because the Word Himself came down and became flesh, the Holy Spirit came down to perfect his conception.\textsuperscript{104}

The same term ܢܐܬܐ is used in this Suba’a prayer:

Gabriel said that peace to Mary; the Holy Spirit will come and His power will overshadow you, for you should accept the conception and give birth without man, He will be called by the name Jesus, who is Saviour and he will be a head, Lord and judge in height and in depth. And his power will be great upon the entire creation that was formed with his hands. And in him the creatures were renewed and therefore we say loudly to him praise.\textsuperscript{105}

\textbf{5. Reside, dwell (ܬܫܪܐ)}

The term used for the sanctification which takes place in the epiclesis is that of ‘dwell’ (ܬܫܪܐ).\textsuperscript{106} It is very old because we find it also in the Acts of Thomas.\textsuperscript{107}

ܫܙܝ  (whence ܓܢܘܢܐ = bridal chamber) is used for action of the Holy Spirit in the conception as in Lk 1:35. In the poems of Narsai and especially Jacob of Serug it is noticeable that they usually prefer to employ the archaic ܬܫܪܐ = reside, rather than ܫܙܐ in allusions to Lk 1:35.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[104] ܢܐܬܐ part of the prayer for the commemoration of the Virgin, see Tcr 27, p.82. See also in Narsai, \textit{Hom. on Mary}, Vat. Syr. 588, p.15.
\item[105] In the Anaphora of Theodore ܢܐܬܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ ܕܐܝܬܣܝܬܐ ܕܒܪܘܡܐ ܘܒܐܥܠܝܲܢ ܥܠܝܟܝ ܕܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܗܢܐ ܛܝܒܘܬܐ ܕܡܪܐ ܘܡܪܵܐ ܘܕܝ ܢܐ ܒܪܘܡܵܐ ܘܒܐܥܠܝܲܢ ܥܠܝܲܢ ܓܒܪܐ ܘܛܢܵܐ ܠܬܸܐܠܕܝܢ ܕܠܐܵܐ ܓܒ ܪܵܐ ܘܢܬ ܩܪܐ ܫܡܗ ܝ ܫܘܥ ܕܪܘܩܐ ܦܪܘܩܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܪܫܾܐ ܘܡܪܵܐ ܘܕܝ ܢܐ ܒܪܘܡܵܐ ܘܒ ܥ ܘܡܩܵܐ ܘܢܗܘܐ ܪܫܵܐ ܘܡܪܾܵܐ ܘܕܝ ܢܐ ܒܪܘܡܵܐ ܘܒ ܥ ܘܡܩܵܐ ܘܢܗܘܹܐ ܪܫܵܐ ܘܡܪܾܵܐ ܘܕܝ ܢܐ ܒܪܘܹܡܵܐ ܘܒ ܥ ܘܡܩܵܐ ܘܢܗܘܹܐ ܪܸܫܶܐ ܘܡܪܶܵܐ ܘܕܝ ܢܐ ܒܪܘܶܡܵܐ ܘܒ ܥ ܘܡܩܶܵܐ ܘܢܗܘܹܐ ܪܸܫܶܐ ܘܡܪܶܵܐ ܘܕܝ ܢܐ ܒܪܘܶܡܵܐ ܘܒ ܥ ܘܡܩܶܵܐ ܘܢܗܘܹܐ ܪܸܫܶܐ ܘܡܪܾܶܵܐ ܘܕܝ ܢܐ ܒܪܘܶܡܵܐ ܘܒ ܥ ܘܡܩܶܵܐ ܒܪܝܬ ܐܝܕܘ ܗܝ ءܬ ܓܒ ܠܬ ܚܕ ܬܢ ܒܪ ܝܬ ܵܵܐ ܕܒ ̈ ܗܝ ܐܬ ܓܒ ܠܬ ܚܕ ܬܢ ܒܪ ܝܬ ܵܵܐ ܕܒ ̈ ܗܝ ܐܬ ܓܒ ܵܠܬ ܩܥ ܝܢܢ ܠܗ ܫܘܼ ܐ. (Tcr. 27, p. 77).
\item[106] In the Anaphora of Theodore ܢܐܬܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܫܠܝ ܚܐ ܢܪܚܦ ܢܫڕܐ ܥܠ ܩܘܪ ܒܢܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܘܢܐܓܢ ܘܢܕܝܪ ܒܠܒܘ ܬܢ �� ܢܕܝܪ ܒܠܒܘ ܢܪܚפו ܢܫڕܐ ܥܠ ܩܘܪ ܒܢܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܘܢܐܓܢ ܘܢܕܝܪ ܒܠܒܘ ܬܢ �� ܢܕܝܪ ܒܠܒܘ ܐܬ ܓܒ ܠܬ ܚܕ ܬܢ ܒܪ ܝܬ ܵܵܐ ܕܒ ̈ ܗܝ ܐܬ ܓܒ ܵܠܬ ܩܥ ܝܢܢ ܠܗ ܫܘܼ ܐ. (…may the grace of the Holy Spirit come upon us and Upon this Qurbana, and may she dwell and rest upon this bread….) and in Nestorius ܢܐܬܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܫܠܝ ܚܐ ܢ穰ܛܠ ܗܵܕܹܐ ܩܥ ܝܢܢ ܠܗ ܫܘܼ ܐ. (And may the grace of the Holy Spirit come and may it dwell and rest upon this Qurbana…) see ܢܐܬܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܫܠܝ ܚܐ ܢ穰ܛܠ ܗܵܕܹܐ ܩܥ ܝܢܢ ܠܗ ܫܘܼ ܐ. (…let the Holy Spirit come down, hover and rest upon these offerings and may He descend and dwell in our hearts…. ) See Mar Athanasios Samuel, \textit{The Book of the Divine Liturgies}, pp. 323-326; and in Mor Ivanious this term is used. See Kuriakose Corepiscopa (ed), \textit{Syriac Orthodox Church Trilingual Eucharist Service Book}, Mor Adai Study Centre (Kottayam 2008), p.331.
\item[107] In Chapters 121 and 157.
\end{footnotes}
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Mary you are blessed because the Father took pleasure in you, and the Son dwelt in you and the Holy Spirit fashioned the temple in you and because of this the earthly and heavenly beings glorified you. In the *Karozuta* for the commemoration of the Virgin Mary on August 15th we proclaim:

Christ chose the pure virgin, daughter of mortal ones and he adorned and sanctified her with the indwelling of Holy Spirit, which resided in her limbs.

6. Brood over, hover (ܪܚܦ)

In the Old Testament usage of *ܪܚܦ* implies the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit. The verb is used of the Spirit of God hovering over the primeval waters in Gen 1:2. At the annunciation, by the salutation of Gabriel the Archangel the Holy Spirit hovered over her as sanctuary. Mary is the Mother of Christ, the Son of God, for the Father was pleased in her, and sent His consubstantial Son and He dwelt (ܥܡܪ) in her and the Spirit who descended (ܢܚܬ) and escorted (ܙܝܚܗ) her and brooded over her (ܪܚܦܗ̇). Mary carried the fire (Divinity) in her womb and tabernacle in her body, the Spirit brooding over her soul and through it she became a heaven for Christ.

But the verb *ܐܓܢ* (hover) is the most important word of all, for it has become, together with *ܪܚܦ* (‘over shadow’, taken from the NT), a technical term for the action of the Holy Spirit in Syriac writers. The noun ‘*ܪܘܚܦܐ*’ is also used a number of times, always translating Hebrew words for ‘mercy/ pity’. *ܐܓܢ* and *ܪܚܦ* signify the transforming presence of the Spirit who descends upon the

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108 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 the temple in you; and on this account behold watchers and men glorify you (L’baktha Tcr. 27, p.81).

109 *ܒܪܬܡܝܘܬܐ*.

110 *ܕܟܝܬܐ*.

111 Pael *ܪܼܲܚܸܦ* = he brooded, hover over, waved, moved, hovering; brooding over; overshadowing; indwelling; tabernacling. Cf. J. Payne Smith, *Compendious Dictionary*, p. 538.


Eucharistic elements as well as upon the community.\footnote{This is related to the verb \textit{ܫܪܐ} (= to dwell, to rest; to abide). Hovered (\textit{ܪܚܦ}) is a very important word in Syriac sacramental theology. In Ephrem’s writings the verbal noun from \textit{ܪܚܦ}, \textit{ܪܘܚܦܐ}, ‘hovering’ or ‘brooding’, is used of the Spirit’s action in the sacraments: in Baptism,\footnote{HFaith 51:7, 77:20; HVirg 7:8.} in the Eucharist,\footnote{HFaith 10.} in the Holy Order.\footnote{HFaith 10.} The whole primitive Judaeo-Christian and Syrian tradition regarded the Holy Spirit as Mother, both of Christ and of ourselves.\footnote{Robert Murray, “A Hymn of St. Ephrem to Christ on the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit, and the Sacraments” in \textit{Eastern Churches Review (ECR)} vol. II No.2., 1970, p.149.} The divine initiative in human history is proclaimed in the good news of the virginal conception through the action of the Holy Spirit.\footnote{Mt 1:20-23; Lk 1:34-35.} 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. It is especially indicated in \textit{HFaith} 10. As a bride of Christ the mother of Christ represents the whole body of the living Church. Her determination to accept the action of the Holy Spirit within her body and to bear Christ was interpreted symbolically by the Fathers as each Christian’s reception of the Holy Spirit in Baptism.\footnote{Mary Cunningham, “The Mother of God ….”, p.62.} In the \textit{HFaith} 10:14-15, St Ephrem points to the important parallelism between the activity of the Holy Spirit at Mary’s conception of Christ, and at the invocation to the Spirit both in the baptismal service and in the Eucharistic liturgy. In this hymn he explained the relation between Mary and the Eucharist in a Pneumatological perspective. What takes place in the Eucharistic liturgy on the altar by the power of the Holy Spirit is in the image of what happened to Mary in the incarnation.\footnote{HFaith 10: 16- 18.} }
The Fire and Spirit descended on Mary in the incarnation. Ephrem points out that the same reality is found at Jesus’ baptism in the river of Jordan and in the Eucharistic liturgy of the Church.\(^{125}\)

The role of the Holy Spirit in the divine dispensation is clearly expressed in relation to the incarnation of Christ and his offering to the Father on Calvary. In the third G’hanta\(^ {126}\) it states that it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that God the Word put on human nature from the Holy Virgin. Narsai comments on the Incarnation as follows:

> The Creator, adorable in his honour, took a body which is from us, that by it He might renew the image of Adam which was worn out and effaced: a reasonable temple the Holy Spirit built in the bosom of Mary.\(^ {127}\)

By ‘Temple’ Narsai refers here to the body of Christ. This is clear from his description of Christ.\(^ {128}\) 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.\(^ {129}\) 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

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\(^{125}\) In the womb that bore you are Fire and Spirit
Fire and Spirit are in the river where you were baptised,
And in the Bread and Cup are Fire and Spirit (HFaith 10, 17; cf. Sebastian Brock, “Mary and the Eucharist,”, p. 31).

\(^{126}\) Third G’hanta prayer: “…. Because for us men and for our salvation, the Only Begotten, God the Word, who is the image of God, did not regard it robbery to be the equal of God, but emptied himself, and received the likeness of the servant, when he descended from heaven and he put on our humanity, a mortal body and a rational, intelligent and immortal soul, from the Holy Virgin by the Power of the Holy Spirit…..” See Jacob Vadakkel, The East Syrian Anaphora of Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia, pp. 85-86.

\(^{127}\) Narsai, Liturgical Homilies, pp.13-14. also see in Narsai Nativity, PO 40 (1979), p. 45. “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” [115-116 lines].

\(^{128}\) Narsai says that “He raised his temple by his mighty power”. See Narsai, Liturgical Homilies, p. 15.

\(^{129}\) 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 (On Nativity 1:115; See F.G. McLeod, Narsai’s Metrical Homilies, p. 45).
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.\textsuperscript{130} 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 (on Mary) in the incarnation.\textsuperscript{131} Furthermore, Communion can be seen as providing the Christian with the possibility of a metaphorical birth-giving, analogous to that of Mary-and again only made possible through the cooperation with the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{132} This is beautifully illustrated in a prayer of preparation for Communion by the eighth-century Syriac writer Joseph the Visionary.\textsuperscript{133} He is the Spirit of adoption that allows us to know that we really are children of God capable of living lives befitting Abba, our Father.\textsuperscript{134} Petro used the term \textit{pneumatophora} for Mary as suggesting to us not simply a passive receptacle of the Spirit or the dwelling place of the Spirit, but an active receiver and distributor of the Spirit to others.\textsuperscript{135} There is sufficient biblical and liturgical evidence to warrant such a conclusion. In the Nicene Creed, it is stated “and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the giver of life…” indication clearly that any supernatural life is given by the Holy Spirit.

\section*{III. Soteriology}  

The place of honour Mary holds in the Church of East is one which elicits a sense of affinity and profound veneration among the faithful. This follows from the Church’s emphasis upon Mary’s unique role in the history of our salvation, and its recognition of her relationship both to Christ and to the community of the faithful.

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\textsuperscript{130} Hom 21, R.H. Connolly, \textit{Liturgical Homilies}, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{131} Hom 17, R.H. Connolly, \textit{Liturgical Homilies}, pp. 20-21.
\textsuperscript{132} Sebastian Brock, \textit{Bride of Light}, p.12.
\textsuperscript{133} “May I receive You, not into the stomach which belongs to the body’s limbs, but into the womb of my mind, so that You may be conceived there, as in the womb of the Virgin…” For further study see Sebastian Brock, \textit{The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life} (Kalamazoo 1987), p. 360.
\textsuperscript{134} Gal. 4:5-7; Rom. 8:9-16.
\end{flushright}
The importance given to Mary by the Church is not simply based on her appearance in the Bible or upon her privileges but derives from her particular and unique role in the history of salvation. The foundation for this is the theological conception of the human person, who is called to play an active part in the work of salvation. Everyone has a particular role, but Mary’s is unique because only she is Mother of the Saviour and Mother of the Church. Mary’s participation in human salvation consisted in her unique relation to the Redeemer. Mary gave birth to Christ, the Redeemer of humanity. Jesus’ rising from death and return with Adam to Paradise is the culmination work of redemption and inauguration of salvation for all. By his death Christ destroys the power of death by descending, destroying death, restoring life, and raising up the righteous ancestors, and ascending to paradise. Birnie has pointed out that the unique place of the mother of Christ in the Salvation history, and her singular relationship to her Son, the “Son of the Most High”, are the subject matter of much hymnody in the Church.

According to some authors “the whole new covenant is summed up in the announcement of the angel to the Virgin Mary: You shall give birth to a child and you shall call his name Jesus, that is Yahweh saves”. Mt 1:21 refers to the name of Jesus and says: “because he will save his people from their sins”. The term soteria is also employed to mean the deliverance from sins (Mt. 1:21; Lk 1:68-69, 71, 77) and from “the wrath to come” (Rom 5:9; 1 Cor.3:15). It is also used to mean the salvation of the souls (Mk. 8:35; 1 Pet 1:9). According to Karl Rahner the theology of salvation begins from the basic human need for salvation:

This need for deliverance signifies the condition in which man inescapably finds himself in his experience, and which he feels to be incomplete, ambiguous and full of suffering. And he feels this to be so in all the dimensions of his reality so that the experience of

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this state, as both individual and collective, is practically identical with his existence itself. Semmelroth, a Mariologist, sees Christ’s referral to Mary as “woman” as showing her part in the history of salvation, in reference to Genesis 3:15. Mary is thus raised to the level of a spiritual motherhood, and thus is the symbol of the Church. Eastern Christendom lays the emphasis on the being of Mary, in the economy of salvation, while Western theology has often, since St. Augustine, focused on Mary as an example and as a disciple. The eastern tradition speaks about the relationship of the Christotokos and the Holy Trinity in the context of the history of salvation. The work of salvation and renewal of the world is made by God the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Mary is called a cause of life and salvation, and through her son the renewal of humanity happened. Christ, the medicine of life, came from Mary and she is the mother of life whereas Eve is the mother of death. And from these themes we can understand the soteriological aspects of the prayers of the commemoration of the Virgin Mary:

1. Mary – The Cause of Life:

The word ‘life’ (&nbsp;ܐܒܐ) is often used in Syriac for salvation, where the connotation is not so much deliverance (salvation in this sense is &nbsp;ܦܘܪܩܢܐ) as the new mode of existence given by Christ, as in St. John’s use of ‘life’. In the liturgical prayers for the evening of the Commemoration of Virgin Mary we recite:

She, the Holy one, became the cause of life to the race of men; and from her the radiance of the Father and the light of the world were revealed.
The daughter of men became the harbour of tranquillity to the nature of men; and severe waves of passibility did not disturb him again.

141 Paul Haffner, The Mystery of Mary, p.9.
142 Jn 10:10, 28 etc.
143 &nbsp;ܗܦܟܬܐ (Tcr. 27, p. 83)
Mary is the one who brings life to the children of Eve who was only the cause of death.\textsuperscript{144} Death entered through the ears of Eve (Gen 3:1) and the whole humanity was affected by it. Life entered through the ears of Mary (Lk 1:28) for all the chosen people.\textsuperscript{145} Mary and the Church are likened to the “Second Eve” because in both cases there is the element of new life.\textsuperscript{146} Ephrem identifies the body of Christ that came from Mary and Eucharistic Bread.\textsuperscript{147} 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”.\textsuperscript{148}

2. Mary – The Cause of Salvation

And in suba’\textsuperscript{a} prayer for the commemoration, Mary is called a treasure of salvation for the race of Adam. “...And through His great love He put on our nature and saved us from death and brought us up to heaven”.\textsuperscript{149} Jesus, the Saviour of all, who came towards us and took hostage (ܗܡܝܪܐ) from our race for his honour. God’s plan of salvation reached its culmination in the mystery of the resurrection and ascension of Christ. He redeemed the world in the humanity that He received from Mary, the Chalice of Salvation.\textsuperscript{150} Concerning her co-operation in the miraculous nativity of Christ Sebastian Brock writes:

The descent and miraculous birth of God into the world requires the co-operation of an individual human being with the Holy Spirit; only then can the miraculous birth of the sacraments from Christ’s side effect the ascent of man to God. Mary’s role is thus essentially to be seen as

\textsuperscript{144}HNat 13:2
\textsuperscript{145}HEccl 29:7
\textsuperscript{147}Thomas Anikuzhikattil, “Theology of St. Ephrem: …”, p.124.
\textsuperscript{148}HCruc 3:9.
\textsuperscript{149}ܪܝܫܬܐ Tcr. 27, p.77.
\textsuperscript{150}“Blessed is thy dwelling, in which was broken / that Bread from the Blessed sheaf! / In thee was pressed / The Cluster [that came] form Mary, / The Chalice of Salvation”. Humanity of Christ that He had received from Mary see, HCruc 3:9, CSCO 248 Syr. 108, pp.51-52, ET by Robert Murray, Symbols ..., p. 120.
complementary to that of the Church and the sacraments in the process of the Divine Economy.\textsuperscript{151}

The turning point in human salvation was the moment of the Annunciation. Ephrem in his Commentary on \textit{Diatessaron} says that ‘Eve’s sin was overcome by Mary at the Annunciation, and that the complete acquittal of humanity from sin took place at Christ’s death on the Cross.\textsuperscript{152} In this commemoration prayer Mary is called a cause of salvation and treasure of salvation:

New are the mysteries of your divine providence, O Lord, for you have showed that the causes of sin became the cause of salvation. Through a woman (Eve) the first Adam transgressed, (but) through the virgin, he (first Adam) was renewed from the corruption by Christ. Through the stars the magi confirmed their own error, (but) through the star they learnt the truth from you. And in the flesh you were seen in this world on account of men. And you were revealed as the physician for the pains of our nature. Mysteries of divine providence are great.\textsuperscript{153}

\section*{3. Renewal of Human race}

Christ’s descent down to the earth was in order to cause the human being to ascend to his kingdom. Through the renewal the human being can enter into the Paradise like First Adam who was there before their fall. Aphrahat says that by the birth of Jesus the door of the Paradise was re-opened for mankind.\textsuperscript{154} The role of Mary, then, is extremely significant: without her, God's Spirit, the pledge of Christ,\textsuperscript{155} would not have been given to humanity. In the ‘\emph{onita d-Basliq} the Church called her a ‘glorious abode of Holy Spirit in whom, the Lord of all was

\textsuperscript{152} “Death had entered through Eve’s ear; consequently life entered through Mary’s ear. It was through the wood that humanity had contracted debts; consequently when Our Lord came, it was through the wood that he acquitted them” \textit{CDiat}, XX, § 32, ET by C. McCarthy, \textit{Saint Ephrem’s Commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron}, (An ET of Chester Beatty Syriac Ms 709), Oxford, 1993, p.311.
\textsuperscript{153} \textit{Tr. 27}, p.93.
\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Dem 23: on Cluster of Grapes}, § 61.
\textsuperscript{155} \textit{Dem 23: on Cluster of Grapes}, § 51.
pleased to renew our image that was corrupted’. In the proper hymns for the Holy Qurbana in the day of the commemoration of Mary we recite:

*Pagrāk (Your body):* On the glorious feast of the mother of the King we may sing praise to the Son who is from her. You are blessed, Mary, the race (kinswoman) of Eve, since in you was renewed the race of Adam. Blessed is he who wove the garment for him from Mary and hid your brightness and has saved our race.

According to Narsai, the only-begotten Son went forth from his Begetter by his Love and dwelt in the womb for the redemption and renewal of our life and the exalted one humbled himself in his love in order to raise Adam up from his fallen state. The fundamental reason for Ephrem’s great devotion to the Virgin Mary lies in the fact that she has given us the new cloth of our salvation.

### 4. Medicine of life - Salvation

In the Eastern theological tradition there exists a combination of the themes of salvation and healing. Ephrem frequently introduces imagery from the sphere of medicine into the context of salvation. In the *suba‘a* prayer of this commemoration we recite:

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.

Ephrem wrote, in the *Nativity Hymns*, that Christ is a medicine of life for saving us from the Sheol and raising us into the heights where he is sitting with his Father. Christ descended into Sheol after the crucifixion for giving life to the dead ones:

Today (Christ’s Nativity) let Eve rejoice in Sheol. / For lo, the Son of her daughter has descended / as the medicine of life to raise the mother of his

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156 ḫ,l, ܕܒܣܠܝܩܐ, (Tcr. 27, p. 76).
157 Tcr. 27, p.94.
158 Narsai *Nativity* 91-92
159 Narsai *On Passion* 662-3
160 *HParad* 4:5; *HEccl* 26:4
161 Tcr. 27, p. 80. also in * השונים על חשף (Hudra, 3 Vols. p.194)*
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mother. / The blessed child crushes the head of the serpent which has wounded her.162

Eve, the mother of all living, became the source of death for all the living. But Mary caused a new branch to sprout forth from Eve, the ancient vine, and in this (the new branch) the new life made its abode. The mother of Christ is the mother of the new life, as Eve was the mother of old life; in the body that was taken from her Christ could enter Sheol and thus redeem Eve, and so once more Mary has her indirect share in the redemption of the world, extending even to Sheol, the underworld of the dead.163 This association of the Mother with her Son in his redemptive work becomes most strikingly evident in Ephrem’s treatment of Mary’s share in the Eucharist, because for him the Eucharistic body of Christ is identical with his human body taken from Mary. In the Hymns on Unleavened Bread 6:7 “Mary gave us the living Bread instead of the bread of trouble, which Eve gave”.

5. Eve And Mary
Some of the aspects of Mary’s role in salvation history have already been touched on, in particular, her role as a counterpart to Eve. Jesus is a New Adam and Mary is the New Eve. This is the primary and soteriological aspect of her veneration in the Church. Mary, by her total obedience, restores something absolutely essential in the order of creation. In this commemoration the Church recites:

Peace to you, Mary, the kinswoman of Eve, the mother of death, since the fruit which (will come forth) from you (will) loosen the bonds of mortality.164

…Through a woman (Eve) the first Adam transgressed, (but) through the virgin, he (first Adam) was renewed from the corruption by Christ….165

And in the hymns which are sung in various seasons of the liturgical year we can find the following themes:

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162 HNat13:2.
163 See Hilda Graef, Mary..., p.62.
164 Tcr. 27, p.85 and in Narsai, Nativity, 111-112.
165 Tcr. 27, p.93
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Humankind which was defiled with the deceit of Eve is sanctified by the Virgin, the Second Eve. God redeemed our race through the child who is from Mary and He raised us up from our low state through His own death and conquered Satan. By the cause of Eve, our mankind was made guilty in the land of Eden through the transgression of commandment; and again by the cause of the daughter of Eve, he freed us from the curse of evil and death that ruled over us. Through Mary, Christ the King came for our salvation and redeemed us from slavery of sin.

In this connection we also find her portrayed in a number of the poems of St. Ephrem. And, as Sebastian Brock says, Ephrem portrays her as a partner with Gabriel in negotiating the arrangements for the cancellation by God of the huge burden of debt incurred by humanity through the Fall (an idea based on Col 2:14). In Hymns on Church, Ephrem uses Eve-Mary typology. “Behold the world; two eyes are placed in it; Eve was the blind, left eye; the right, shining eye is Mary”. It is basically the contrast of death and life. Eve gave birth to Cain the murderer, Mary to the Life-giver. Eve-Mary typology is used in the course of contrast between Fall and Restoration. There appear to be two rather different ways of looking at this contrast between Eve and Mary, as indicated by Sebastian Brock:

On the one hand, one can take a cyclical view of salvation-history, and regard Mary as reversing what Eve brought about, in which case Mary starts off, as it were, in the position to which Eve had reduced the human race, but through the Incarnation Mary is able to bring mankind back to Paradise, the pre-Fall state. I shall call this the “dynamic” view. On the other hand, one can regard Mary’s position as having been throughout her life that of Eve before the Fall. This I shall call the “static” view.

Now the dynamic view is quite certainly the earlier, and as far as I can see, the normal view of the Fathers, of whatever language; it is certainly

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166 ግaviolet $\Rightarrow$ ነ (Hudra, 3 vols. p.32).
167 ግaviolet $\Rightarrow$ ነ (Hudra, 3 vols. p.46).
168 ግmouseout $\Rightarrow$ ነ (Hudra, 3 vols. p.178).
169 ግmouseout $\Rightarrow$ ነ (Hudra, 3 vols. p.203).
170 Sebastian Brock, Bride of Light, p. 10.
171 HEccele 37:5.
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view of Ephrem and Jacob, the two Syriac poets who have the most to say on the subject of Mary. Narsai also used Eve-Mary typology for explaining the importance of Mary in the salvation history. Through the ear the Word the God entered into Mary and from her the life which gives life to the universe is born. For Narsai Eve is the Mother of death but the fruit of Mary has loosened the bonds of mortality. Mary is equal with other ladies but her offspring gave praises to her within the community. Adam and Eve were stripped of their original ‘robe of glory’ when they were expelled from the Garden of Eden. With the coming of Christ, however, the ‘robe of glory’ is restored for mankind in the sacrament of baptism. Jacob of Serug stressed Mary’s role in it and Ephrem says Mary received the robe of glory at the birth of Christ. According to Jacob of Serug, through Mary’s divine motherhood, “Adam has been delivered from his servitude... through her the heavenly powers have been reconciled with the mortals... through her the closed way to paradise has again been made passable”. Thus Mary is intimately connected with the redemption, in which she has a share because she is the mother of the Saviour, she is the link between heaven and earth; she is almost a cosmic figure, a representative of all creation. In the divine plan, Mary was destined to co-operate with God to re-establish the lost harmony in creation. God created Eve as the mother of the

172Cf. Sebastian Brock, Introduction to Mary Hansbury’s Jacob of Serug on the Mother of..., p. 9.  
173He sent His (good) pleasure through a spiritual envoy; and the vigilant one proclaimed a new message in the ears of flesh (103-4). By Mary, He abrogated the word (spoken) in the ears of Eve; there, death; and here, a life that gives life to the universe(Narsai Nativity, 463-4).  
174Peace to You, Mary, kinswoman of Eve, the mother of death,because the fruit that (will come forth) from you (will) loosen the bonds of mortality.(Narsai Nativity 111-2)  
175Narsai Nativity 425-6  
176“...it was the daughter (Mary) who wove the robe of glory and gave it to her father (Adam), who then covered his body that had been naked ever since the affair of the tree”. Cf. Mary Hansbury’s Jacob of Serug on the Mother of ..., p. 19.  
177“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” (HNat, 16:11) cf. Kathleen E. McVey, Ephrem the Syrian Hymns, p.150.  
178 Jacob of Serugh, Homily on the Blessed Virgin Mary.; see Holy Transfiguration Monastery, “A Homily on the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, Mary by Jacob, Bishop of Serugh (†521)” in The True Vine vol. 5, no.1, issue No. 17, 1993; for Ephrem, Through the Incarnation Mary is able to bring mankind back into Paradise, the pre-Fall state.  
179 Hilda Graef, Mary..., p.122.
whole human race. But unfortunately she did not carry out the design of the Creator. She turned out to be a cause to upset the whole end of creation. So in the re-establishment of the lost harmony Mary discharged the role of Eve.

In the prayer for the liturgical hours on the commemoration of Virgin Mary we recite:

Mary, you are blessed because you bore the hope and salvation to our souls; and he who delivers the creatures and who redeems the worlds and nations rose from you. 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. Mary gave birth to Christ, and he redeemed and saved the creature. The vigilant one greeted Mary at the beginning of his words; since the one who had risen from her to us had loosened the bonds of mortality. The Virgin Mary became for our nature a good cause because from her womb our Lord has risen for our entire salvation.

Mary, like every human being, was in need of salvation. Mary called God “my Saviour” in the Magnificat. The early Christian community had proclaimed Christ as the Saviour and Mediator between man and God. On the HNat, Ephrem speaks about redeemed Mary and here he makes it clear that she is redeemed along with all humankind by Christ. Based on the resurrection and ascension of Christ, Jacob of Serug presented Mary as the first one to enjoy the joy of heaven. Mary is the first of the redeemed. “Mary, you are blessed because you are worthy to become the mother and maid-servant of the Lord of all creatures”.

Mary was redeemed in a more sublime manner than all other men

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180 ḫelwōz ḫlo (Hudra, 3 vols. p.9)
181 Ms. Tcr. 27, p.91.
182 Ms. Tcr. 27, p.83
183 Narsai, Nativity, line 107
184 Ms. Tcr. 27, p. 84.
185 Lk 1:46-47.
186 1 Tim 2:5.
187 “For I am [Your] sister form 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 HNat 16:10 (cf. Kathleen E. McVey, Ephrem the Syrian Hymns, p.150).
188 James Puthuparampil, Mariological Thought..., p. 328.
189 ḫalwōz Tcr. 27, p.79.
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and women, in view of the merits of her Son, and therefore she is the first fruit and the greatest fruit of the redemption. She is the icon and model of redeemed humanity. As mother of the Redeemer and as His generous disciple, she co-operated in a most special manner in his work of Salvation.

IV. ESCHATOLOGY

Eschatology means the ultimate unity of all in Christ, which was inaugurated in the incarnation, with the death and the resurrection of Christ. It will be fulfilled in the second coming of Christ, with the glorious manifestation of the kingdom of God. This unity is gradually achieved and manifested in and through Baptism and the Eucharist. It is manifested in every liturgical celebration. If the unity of all in Christ is the essence of eschatology, liturgy precisely aims at it.\textsuperscript{190} The most striking characteristic of Christian eschatology is the fullness of the dynamic presence of God, which is the very essence of Christian worship.\textsuperscript{191} The Eastern Liturgical texts, in general, are very rich in eschatological theology. The earthly liturgy becomes an anticipation of the heavenly liturgy. The eschatological dimension of our Christian life is emphasized in so many ways, especially in the hymns and prayers of the period of Elia, Sleeva and Moses. The passing nature of the earthly realities and hope in eternal life should motivate us for a life of conversion, detachment and patience in suffering. In the liturgical prayers, the Church is presented as a haven or harbour of peace. Peace is the eschatological gift of the risen Lord to his Church, achieved through his atoning death and resurrection.\textsuperscript{192} Christ has established the Church here on earth as a haven of peace and it is modelled on his heavenly habitation.\textsuperscript{193} In other words, though the

\textsuperscript{191} Baby Varghese, \textit{West Syrian Liturgical Theology}, Liturgy, p.110.
\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Hudra} Vol. 3, 567; \textit{Breviarium}, Vol. 3, 395. \textit{ܥܘܢܝܬܐ} :O Christ, you have made for those who praise you a harbour of peace on the earth in the figure of your heavenly dwelling. And although you are sitting in heaven on the right side of the Father, o glorious King, you have filled your church with the splendour and beauty of your cross. Therefore, angels and men rejoice about it and sing praise in her dedication. For the Father laid her foundation, and the Son fully built her
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Church is established on earth, its foundation, fashion and final destination etc. are heavenly.

Every liturgical action is the celebration of the mystery of Christ in signs. The signs such as types and symbols found in nature and Scripture serve as pointers to the existence and creative activity of God: “creation gives birth to Christ in symbols, as Mary did in the flesh”\(^{194}\). The signs of the Liturgy of the Hours indicate the eschatological aspects of the mystery of Christ: the time and community, both are brought into contact with the mystery of Christ. With the consummation of time the new earth and heaven will come into existence; the sun that illumines the earth and heaven will be replaced by the light of the risen Christ. Every liturgical celebration is a foretaste of our participation in the heavenly liturgy. The liturgy is the expression of Church’s love for the Bridegroom who is with her, and is to come. In its worship the Church continues to exhort its members to repent, the very condition of entering the Kingdom. The repentance is the acknowledgement of the loving-kindness of God, his infinite mercy and willingness to save us.

From the prayers of the commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary the theology of the second coming or eschaton can be derived. In the ‘onitha d-qdam the Church recites:

O Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus our Saviour, beseech and supplicate mercy to the Child who rose from your womb so that through His grace He may remove from us the times that are full of griefs and implant peace and tranquillity among us. 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 (ܓܢܘܢ ܢܘܗܪܐ).

Faith tells us that even before the common resurrection and the consummation of all things in Christ, Mary is fully alive, beyond the destruction and separation of death. Mary’s total unity with Christ destroyed her death. “On the glorious day of Christ’s majesty revealed we will be held worthy with her in the delightful bridal

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\(^{194}\) HVirg, 6:8; cited in Sebastian Brock, Luminous Eye, p. 39.
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chamber”.\(^{195}\) “Christ made Mary the haven and also the treasury and established you as the fountain of good things to all generations and races”.\(^{196}\) Every individual member of the Church as well as the Church as a collective could be regarded as the Bride of Christ.\(^{197}\) Mary is also a bride of Christ. In the New Testament parables the marriage feast and the bridal chamber (ܓܢܘܢܐ)\(^{198}\) belong to the eschaton and the second coming; in the life of the Church, however, this second coming can also be understood as being anticipated (as it were) in Christ’s presence in the Eucharist. From the second century onwards the Syriac writers use the heavenly ‘bride chamber’ instead of paradise imagery for the eschatological event.\(^{199}\) Aphrahat also used the bride-chamber instead of Paradise.\(^{200}\) According to Aphrahat the Eucharist is a foretaste of the eschatological banquet:

> …and to the Virgins\(^{201}\) who do the will of God, / the door has been opened,\(^{202}\) and the path lies trodden out, / and the fountain flows\(^{203}\) giving water to the thirsty, the table is set out,\(^{204}\) / and the banquet is ready, the fatted ox has been slain, / and the ‘cup of salvation’ is mixed,\(^{205}\) enjoyment has been prepared,\(^{101}\) and the Bridegroom is close at hand to take his place, the Apostles have sent invitations, / and those invited are many indeed.\(^{206}\) You who are chosen, prepare yourselves….\(^{207}\)

The imagery comes especially from Mt 22:4; the laid table, from Prov 9:4 (which had doubtless influenced the language in the parable of the wedding-feast in Mt

\(^{195}\) Hudra Vol. I, p. 608.

\(^{196}\) Tcr.27, p. 91.

\(^{197}\) Sebastian Brock, Ephrem the Syrian: HParad, St. Vladimir’s seminary press, Crestwood, New York, 1990, p.27

\(^{198}\) Mt 25:10; cf. also Sebastian Brock, The Luminous Eye, chaps. 3 & 8.

\(^{199}\) In the Acts of Thomas (Chapter 12) Thomas prays, “When you see that true Wedding Feast and are among those who give praise there, may you be numbered with those who enter the Bridal Chamber”; cf. Sebastian Brock, “The Bridal Chamber of Light: a distinctive feature of the Syriac Liturgical tradition” Harp 18 (2005) p.181.


\(^{202}\) Mt 7:13-14.

\(^{203}\) Jn 7:37-38.

\(^{204}\) Ps 23:5; Mt 22:4.

\(^{205}\) Ps 116:13.

\(^{101}\) This passage alludes to the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a banquet which anticipates the eschatological banquet which will be realized only in the Kingdom

\(^{206}\) Mt 22:10; Lk 14:16.

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22); the Bridegroom’s arrival from Mt 25:10; ‘the cup of salvation’ from Ps 116:13; most of these are traditionally linked with the Eucharist.

St. Ephrem uses the individual soul and collective Church as brides of Christ in HFinth 16:5:

The soul is Your bride, the body Your bridal chamber, / Your guests are the senses and the thoughts. / And if a single body is a wedding feast for You, / how great is Your banquet for the whole Church.

Here, with deliberate paradox, the poet speaks of Christ the Bridegroom entering the bridal chamber of the body, where the bride, the soul, is already residing—a remarkable illustration of the very positive attitude of St. Ephrem toward the body.208 Sebastian Brock explained the bridal chamber as follows:

The term gnona is particularly important in Ephrem’s religious vocabulary: it may refer to the Kingdom in its eschatological dimensions, or it may refer to the Kingdom as realized, or as realizable, here on earth by individuals. Where the reference is to the eschatological Kingdom (synonymous with Paradise in Ephrem’s thought), then we are provided with another illustration of the relationship between events in historical time, here and now, and events in eschatological time: the betrothal is seen as taking place in historical time (whether the bride to be is collective or individual), while the marriage feast and the mystery of the consummation of the marriage in the bridal chamber belong to the eschaton.209

Christ’s own wedding feast is the holy Eucharist, where the bride is both the Church and the individual soul. Each individual soul is the bride at each celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy that takes place in historical time, while the collective Church is the bride at the eschatological wedding feast.210 In Ephrem’s thought the Virgin Mary is seen very much as a model for the ideal pattern of relationship between the human individual and God. In the third madraṣa of these commemoration prayers211 Ephrem says she is not only a mother, virgin but also a bride of Christ:

[Notes]

208 Sebastian Brock, Ephrem the Syrian: HParad, p.28.
209 Sebastian Brock, The Luminous Eye, p. 93.
210 Sebastian Brock, The Luminous Eye, p.102.
211 Tcr. 27, p. 87; (also in HNat 11:2).
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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 (bride) with the chaste women. In everything, behold, you adorned her, Beauty of Your mother.

But Mary is the only bride for whom the sacred marriage is literally consummated in the ‘bridal chamber’ of her body in historical time\(^{212}\) as on the next stanza of the above madraša:

For she was your bride as usual (according to nature) before you came. Again she conceived in an unusual manner (outside of nature), after you came, O Holy One, and she was virgin when (although) she gave birth to you chastely.\(^ {213}\)

In the period of Qudash ‘edtha the Church commemorates the second coming of our Christ and the last judgement. In another hymn the Church affirm her faith in the heavenly habitation.\(^ {214}\) In this season the Church recollects about the eschaton life she has with her bridegroom in a collective way of thinking. But in the prayers of the commemoration of Mary, the Church speaks more in an individual way because here she recites “let us be rejoicing with Mary in the Bridal Chamber of light”.

The Church is the chosen spouse of Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom and He made her enter with Him into the chamber of light.\(^ {215}\) Bridal chamber serves as a metaphor to indicate the intimacy of the union of God with human beings. This certainly lies behind the description of Mary’s womb as a Bridal Chamber in one of the *Hymns on Mary* 12:4.\(^ {216}\) According to Sebastian Brock,\(^ {217}\) by introducing

\(^{212}\) Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, p.103.

\(^{213}\) Cf. *HNat* 11:3.

\(^{214}\) Cf. *HNat* 11:3.

\(^{215}\) O Church, chosen spouse of Jesus the heavenly bridegroom, adorn yourself for that one who by his love espoused you and by his precious cross gave you inheritance (= treasure of children) and by his living blood left by will your dowry and clothed you with a spiritual incorruptible garment. He made you (Church) enter with him into the chamber of light. Blessed are you church, for behold, the voice of the groom resounds in you. He in his mercy, has invited your children to the kingdom of heaven (2\(^{nd}\) Sunday of dedication of church, *Ḥudra* Vol. 3, p. 586).

\(^{216}\) In a womb of flesh was a Bridal Chamber set out
The Bridal Chamber in Mt 25:10, in the place of the Wedding feast, we can see that the distinctive Syriac tradition thus applies the parable both to the paradigm—the Bride being the collective Church—and to the individual Christian soul—the Wise Virgins who enter the Bridal Chamber, each individually being a bride of Christ. In his book entitled *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual world vision of St. Ephrem the Syrian*, Brock explains that in Syriac tradition the robe of glory is associated with Mt 22:1-14:

The robe of glory is the eschatological wedding garment which is received at baptism, but which must be kept unspotted for the eschatological wedding feast. The wedding feast belongs to sacred time to the eschaton, when the righteous, those who have ‘preserved’ their wedding garments spotless, will fully realize the existence of their eschatological robes of glory. The robe is a metaphor for the body. Ephrem uses ‘to put on the body’ as a metaphor for the incarnation. He [Christ] put on His mother’s robe, her body, while I [Mary] put on his glory. Another association is that the ‘figure of clothing is applied to God’s election of the Church’.

In the liturgy of Hours or any other liturgical services the Church of the East recites ‘the hymn of resurrection’. This hymn deals with the salvific activity of Jesus, that he is the one who brings bodies to life. Christ descended to
Sheol and brought life to those sleeping the sleep of death. The language and imagery of Aphrahat and Ephrem could be used to describe the eschatological impact of the descent: Jesus left there the leaven of life that is the pledge of resurrection from the dead. This leaven will ferment and fill all of Sheol. Likewise, in a Mopsuestian line of thinking, the assembly participated sacramentally in the death and resurrection of Christ and so has received the pledge of resurrection to eternal life. Part of the ritual action that accompanies this hymn is now the veneration of the cross, connecting the assembly to the triumphant cross of the risen Lord.

The liturgical prayer is focused on the participation and anticipation of the resurrection of all the dead. It extols the promise that is oriented to the mystery of God who seeks the renewal of all human beings. The symbolic usage of haven in the Syriac tradition has different shades of meaning. Generally speaking the phrase possesses an eschatological meaning. “Mary is the fountain of good things and haven 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”. Christian life is one kind of journey to reach the Kingdom of God.

V. ECCLESIOLOGY

In the Liturgy of the Hours, a rich ecclesiology can be seen, especially in the hymns and prayers of the Liturgical Seasons of ‘Summer’ and ‘Dedication of the Church’. The Church as Bride, Virgin and Mother is also very much highlighted in the hymns, especially of the period of Dedication of the Church. The Church born out of the pierced side of Jesus in Jn 19:30 and 34 is seen as parallel to Eve made out of the rib taken from the side of Adam in Gen 2:21-22. The idea of the Blessed Virgin Mary as prototype or archetype of the Church has been the source

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223 The veneration shifted to this hymn, but originally seems to have been done during the anthem of the rails (from the tenth century). See Yousif, “Divine Liturgy”, pp. 201-202.
225 Tcr. 27, p. 79.
Theological Analysis

of much theological speculation for centuries. Mary, who was receptive to the
working of God’s Spirit at the birth of Christ (Lk 1: 35-38), is here part of the
community of disciples waiting in prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit at the
birth of the Church.\textsuperscript{227}

Trinitarian aspects are seen in both Mary and Church as for example: on the
commemoration of the Virgin Mary, “All the generations will give you the fine
praises since he was blessed in you, 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 the temple in you; and on this account behold watchers and men glorify
you”\textsuperscript{,228} and in the first Sunday of the Dedication of Church, “Therefore, angels
and men rejoice in you [Church] and sing praise at her dedication, for the Father
placed her foundation and the Son built and completed her and the Holy Spirit
descended and sanctified her”.\textsuperscript{229}

As a bride of Christ the mother of Christ represents the whole body of the living
Church. Her determination to accept the action of the Holy Spirit within her body
and to bear Christ was interpreted symbolically by the Fathers as each Christian’s
reception of the Holy Spirit in Baptism.\textsuperscript{230} The Virgin Mary was a mortal woman,
but by the grace of the Holy Spirit she was able to bear Christ. The Church is a
continuing passage from the old into the new, from this world into the kingdom of
God. As heart of the new creation, Mary is the icon of Christ, the Bride of the
Bridegroom, as is the Church. Through her living experience the Church herself
discovers this identification of the Church with Mary, and expresses the life of the
Church in the Mary-Church context.\textsuperscript{231} The ecclesiological tendency emphasizes
Mary as figure or type of the Church. Due to this parallelism between Mary and
the Church, her privileges must be understood in light of the properties of the
Church. For example, her divine motherhood is a prototype for the Church and
constitutes the moments of the Church’s formation.\textsuperscript{232} Mary has a twofold

\textsuperscript{227} Acts 2:1
\textsuperscript{228} Tcr. 27, p.91.
\textsuperscript{229} Hdrd, Vol. 3, p.567.
\textsuperscript{230} Mary Cunningham, “The Mother of God …”, p.62.
\textsuperscript{231} John M. Samaha, “The perception and prominence of Mary in Eastern Christian Traditions”
\textit{Harp} 20/2, p.126.
\textsuperscript{232} Paul Haffner \textit{The Mystery of Mary}, p.10.
Theological Analysis

relationship to the Church. She is in it, the first of the redeemed; but also, since the Church is Christ’s body, Mary, the Mother of Christ’s individual body, is mystically mother of all Christ’s members in the mystical Body; this is the meaning which the Fathers found in ‘Behold thy Mother’. 233

1. Mary and the Church:
Both Mary and Baptism fill the role of the New Eve: Mary gives birth to Christ, Baptism to Christians. Baptism is the womb of the Church; the rebirth of the people happened in this womb. 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 both the baptismal water and in the Eucharistic elements. 234 This is clearly seen in Ephrem: “See, Fire and Spirit are in the womb of her who bore you, Fire and Spirit are in our Baptism, and in the Bread and Cup are Fire and Holy Spirit”. 235 In the East Syriac tradition the Church is depicted not only as mother and bride but also as daughter and daughter of light. Christian traditions have certain images that speak of the journeying of the Church using images such as ship, haven etc. 236

2. Church as Ship
In the divine plan, the Church is meant for the salvation of mankind. She is presented as the spring of salvation. To bring everyone to salvation, and to a happy end, the Church must navigate in a stormy world and reach the harbour. The Church in this world is like a ship in the sea and her journey to eternal life is straight. 237 The Syriac Fathers, especially Ephrem, 238 also compare the Church to the ark of Noah which is guided by Christ the ‘steersman’. So also Mary, the type

236 Sophy Rose, Church as Mystery and Communion..., p.324.
237 ивать the first Thursday of Dedication of Church, Hadra vol. 3, p. 596.
238 HFaith 49: 3-6, CSCO 155, t. 74, p.132.
and true model of the Church, is compared to a ship in the East Syriac liturgical tradition.  

3. Mary as Ship

In the liturgical prayer, Mary is also depicted in terms of ‘ship’, the bodily ship that carried the wealth. Even if she is presented as a ship that is not at all a dissonance in the theological thinking since she is the type, the true model of the Church. “Blessed are you (Mary) the ship carrying the heavenly riches with which the celestial and earthly ones enrich themselves”. In this commemoration, like the pilgrim Church, Mary carried our race and placed it in the exalted Kingdom in order to obtain the gift of peace:

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.

She is a ship bearing the treasures and cargos, bringing to the poor the riches of heaven. From her the dead ones have been enriched, for it is Life that she bore.

Again, it is Ephrem who gives further evidence to the testimony of the liturgical prayer. In the Hymns on Mary, No.7, attributed to St. Ephrem, Mary is described as a ship who bears the “great steerman of creation” who brought peace to heaven and earth. In short, in the early Christian tradition, the symbol of ship is being taken as a symbol of the Church whether universal or local. It is a symbol of the pilgrim Church that is journeying towards its destiny, that is, the eschaton, to receive the imperishable life eternally. Ephrem uses this imagery in the Hymns on Mary as follows: “…She the ship that bears joy from the Father./ that carries good life to the mortals is hidden in you. Blessed are you the corporeal palace, for the Son of the King dwelt inside you bodily. Blessed are you, the haven for the series of the Just ones of old is pleased or rested in you. Blessed are you, Mary, for the word, which Isaiah said, is fulfilled in you that “Behold the Virgin shall conceive and give birth to the Son and his name is Emmanuel which means Our God with us”; then the blessing to you (Mary), and the good hope to us and the glory to Him (Hudra 3 Vols. p. 104).”

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239 See under the title of Mary and Church.
240 See under the title of Mary and Church.
242 Tcr. 27, p. 87; see *HMary* 2: 4-5.
news in her pure womb…”\textsuperscript{244} and in the verse Homily on the Virgin Mary we sing of Mary as “Ship whose cargo is God”.\textsuperscript{245} Narsai describes Mary as ship and Christ as the wealth in it:

For nine months, she sheltered the wealth in the ship/vessel of her body, until it descends into the haven of birth according to the order for child bearing. She proceeded amid the waves of calumny (stirred up) by the insolent, until she descends to Bethlehem according to expectation.\textsuperscript{246} According to Jacob of Serug Mary’s poverty is contrasted with the spiritual riches she has given to the world; she is “the ship bearing treasures and blessings from the House of the Father, which came and poured out riches on our destitute realm…”\textsuperscript{247} In this same hymn Mary is seen as representing the Church when she asks the angel how she is to bring forth a son: “With that inquiry, the wise Maiden became the mouth of the Church, and learned the explanation on behalf of all creation”.\textsuperscript{248} Like a Ship Mary carried in her womb the entire human race and disembarked it on the heavenly shore.

4. Haven

The symbolic usage of haven has different meaning. This metaphor is also used in the Bible.\textsuperscript{249} Generally speaking the expression ‘Church as haven’ contains a soteriological and an eschatological meaning.\textsuperscript{250} This metaphor is variously applied; it is applied to Christ,\textsuperscript{251} to the Virgin Mary,\textsuperscript{252} to the Church\textsuperscript{253} etc. In the HNat, St. Ephrem writes as if Mary is saying:

I became a haven for your sake, Great Sea

\textsuperscript{244} Ephrem, HMary no. 7; T. J Lamy, Sancti Ephraem Syri Hymni et Sermones, II (Malines, 1886), 519-590; cf. Sebastian Brock, The Bride of Light, p.44.
\textsuperscript{245} Sebastian Brock, Soghyatha Mgubbyatha (St. Ephrem’s Monastery, Glane 1982); cf. Sebastian Brock, The Bride of Light, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{246} Narsai Nativity 231-234; cf. PO 41, pp.50-53.
\textsuperscript{249} Gen 49:13; Ps. 107:30; Is.23:1.
\textsuperscript{251} See Qala 18: Šušlapa 1; Ḥudra 3 Vols., p. 169 and Breviarium, 3 Vols., p. 151.
\textsuperscript{252} See Qala 11; Ḥudra 3 Vols., p.104 and Breviarium, 3 Vols., p. 93.
\textsuperscript{253} ‘Onlia d-Qanke, first Sunday of the Dedication of the Church, Supplementum Mysteriorum, 155.
Theological Analysis

Behold the Psalms of Your father David
And also the words of the prophets, like
Ships discharged in me Your great wealth.\textsuperscript{254}

Moreover, it is applied to baptism, to the Church, to Christ’s resurrection, to the mysteries of the Eucharist, to the sacraments and even to the saints.

5. Christ as haven

The Acts of Thomas present Christ as the haven, more precisely, the haven for those who accept baptism in a ‘sea of trouble’\textsuperscript{255} and in Aphrahat’s Demonstration we also see it.\textsuperscript{256} In the ‘onita d-batar of this commemoration there are prayers which call Christ a peaceful haven who dwelt in Mary when the race of men had sunk into error in the storms of paganism;\textsuperscript{257} and in the liturgical hymns of the Church of the East Christ is likewise called a haven; the one example is:

Our Lord, you became a haven of peace and a strong refuge to those who are afflicted. Simon called you when he was sinking into the troubled sea and you stretched out your hand and you lifted him up from the waves that surrounded him.\textsuperscript{258}

6. Church as Haven

According to the Biblical revelation, peace is the gift of God\textsuperscript{259} and Christ himself is our peace.\textsuperscript{260} When we say that the Church is a haven of peace, it hints at the truth that the Church is the secure place of salvation and those who come to this haven will experience the God-given gift of peace. On the first Sunday of the

\textsuperscript{254} HNat 11:4. What the author meant is that Mary is the harbour into which the Old Testament types come to rest as ships. To say it more concretely, the promises given to David and the prophets are fulfilled in Jesus born of Mary. Cf. K. M. McVey, Ephrem the Syrian .., 124.
\textsuperscript{256} “He is the narrow and straight way, let us travel in his footsteps, so that we may arrive at the haven”; see Dem 14: on Exhortation, cf. Kuriakose Valavanolicckal, Aphrahat’s Demonstration, p.92.
\textsuperscript{257} Lord, all the generations will give bless the Holy Virgin rightly, for, when the race of men has sunk unto error and in the storms of paganism, she carried you in her womb, O my Lord, who art a peaceful haven. There is none who is holy like you! O lover of men glory to you ( \textit{ibid.} Tcr. 27, p.75).
\textsuperscript{258} \textit{cf.} \textit{Hdura} 3 vols., p.178.
\textsuperscript{259} Gal. 5:22.
\textsuperscript{260} Eph. 2:14.
Theological Analysis

‘Dedication of Church’ we recite in the ܥܘܢܝܬܐܐܕܩܢܟܐ that ‘Church is haven of peace on earth as the type of heavenly abode’:

O Christ, you established the haven of peace (the Church), on earth for those who praise you, on the type of your heavenly abode. When he (King of glory) has sat on the right side of the Father in the heights, then the King of glory will fill your Church with glory and beauty of your Cross. And because of this the watchers and men rejoice in her and they sing praise on her dedication because the Father placed her foundations and the Son built and restored her and the Spirit descended and sanctified her. We beseech you that she may become a strong fortress, and keep her with continuous peace.261

The Church is a haven founded on earth as the type of Christ’s heavenly habitation. The Church is a divine reality instituted by the divine act of Christ more specifically by the divine and sublime activity of the Holy Trinity.

7. Mary as Haven

God made Mary as a haven,262 the fountain of good things and harbour of all helps to the mortals.263 Mary, daughter of poor parents became a haven of tranquility to the nature of men and any rough paths did not disturb it.264 In the Karozuta we proclaim: “Christ has made his mother the harbour for exhausted lives and a wonderful refuge for the afflicted ones and a helper to all those who are taking refuge through her prayer”.265

Narsai says that “in Mary the promise of life confined the course of its way; and in her limbs he enters, rests and dwells, as in the harbour”266 and Ephrem called her “Haven in which the world finds rest”.267 The main points of the allegory represent the Church as a ship on its voyage to the heavenly haven (ܠܡܐܢܐ),

261 Hudra, Vol. 3, p. 566
262 “He made you the haven and also the treasury and established you as the fountain of good things to all generations and races”. Tcr. 27, p.91.
263 “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”. Tcr. 27, p. 79.
264 Tcr. 27, p. 83.
265 Karozuta prayer for August, Hudra Vol. 1, p. 608.
266 Narsai, Hom. on Mary, Vat. Syr. 588, p. 15) and in Tcr. 27, p.82.
267 Sebastian Brock, Soghhyatha Mgabbyatha; cf. Sebastian Brock, Bride of Light, p.140.
Theological Analysis

guided by the helmsman (gubernite) and manned by sailors (ܡܹܠܵܚ ܹܐ). Ephrem uses this imagery in his hymns to explain the pilgrimage of our Christian life to the Kingdom of our Lord. The helmsman is primarily Christ, sometimes the bishop. The ship may be typified by Noah’s ark, often it’s mast is the cross, and wind in its sail the Holy Spirit. Jacob of Serug uses the imagery of ship for Mary: “Ship which bore treasure and blessings from the house of the Father/ and came and poured out riches on our destitute earth”. Narsai narrated Mary as the Harbour of peace to man who remained undisturbed by the violent waves of the mortals.

8. Bride of Christ –Church & Mary

In the liturgical celebration, the Church realizes her identity as the Bride of Christ. She becomes aware of her calling and mission. This concept is one of the prominent and lovely images in the East Syrian tradition especially in their liturgical prayers. In this liturgical prayer especially in madraše the Church calls Mary as Christ’s Mother, Sister and Bride also:

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...

268 HFaith 49:3-4:
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./ ….
Along its path it drew the banner of its Keeper./ the Cross of its Sailor, the Tree of the Mariner/ Who came, constructing a church for us in the midst of the waters./ delivering its inhabitants by the Name of the Three…..

269 In HNat he uses the ‘Guarded ship’ for Mary:
“O guarded ship, where has your swift (prow) sunk?
And which seas snatched away your merchandise amidst its waves? (cf. FH, p.68.)

270 Jacob of Serug Homily on the mother of God: cf. Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serug On the Mother..., pp.19, 70.

271 And it also see in Narsai’s HNat: For nine months, she sheltered the wealth in the ship/ vessel of her body, / until it descends into the haven of birth according to the order for child-bearing. / She proceeded amid the waves of calumny (stirred up) by the insolent, / until she descends to Bethlehem according to expectation (Narsai Nativity 231-234; cf. PO 41, pp.50-53).
(bride) with the chaste women. In everything, behold, you adorned her, Beauty of Your mother.\textsuperscript{272}

For she was your bride as usual (according to nature) before you came. Again she conceived in an unusual manner (outside of nature), after you came, O Holy One, and she was virgin when (although) she gave birth to you chastely.\textsuperscript{273}

In the prayers for the season of dedication of the Church we can see the Church as Christ’s Bride, and daughter-in-law of God the Father:

Blessed are you, for you became the daughter-in-law of the Father and the spouse of the Son of God. Blessed are you because David in the psalms called you as bride and the Son as groom.\textsuperscript{274}

O Church, chosen spouse of Jesus the heavenly bridegroom, adorn yourself for that one who by his love espoused you and by his precious cross gave you inheritance (= treasure of children) and by his living blood left by will your dowry and clothed you with a spiritual incorruptible garment. He made you enter with him into the chamber of light. Blessed are you, Church, for behold, the voice of the Groom resounds in you. He in his mercy has invited your children to the kingdom of heaven.\textsuperscript{275}

9. Temple of God- Mary & Church

In the first Sunday of Dedication of the Church we recite that “God sent his power from heaven and it dwelt in your Temple (Church) by which you with your children are protected from the artifices of the devil”.\textsuperscript{276} In the \textit{Onit\texta} on the commemoration of Mary, the Church called Mary “Temple of God because she carried the Word the God in her womb”:

Peace to you because you are worthy to carry solemnly the temple of God, the Word. Peace to you who became the haven of all prophecies.\textsuperscript{277}

\textsuperscript{272} \textit{Onit\texta}, Tcr. 27, p. 87.

\textsuperscript{273} \textit{Onit\texta}, Tcr. 27, p. 87.

\textsuperscript{274} \textit{Hadra} Vol. 3, p.585

\textsuperscript{275} \textit{Hadra} Vol. 3, pp. 585-586

\textsuperscript{276} \textit{Onita}: at the procession on the First Sunday of the Dedication of Church, \textit{Hadra} Vol. 3, pp. 563-4.

\textsuperscript{277} \textit{Onit\texta}, Tcr. 27, p. 89.
Theological Analysis

The Church is the New Eve born of the New Adam as the blood and water gushed form his side; Mary is the New Eve whose obedience at the Annunciation restores the order broken by the disobedience of the First Eve. The prophets present Israel as bride of Yahweh. The Church is the mother of the faithful. Ephrem makes a comparison between Mary and Eve. Mary and the Church are the anti-type of Eve. The mutually typical relationship of Mary and the Church, found on the early patristic doctrine of the second Eve that is the birth of Eve from the side of Adam is the type of the birth of the Church from the side of the second Adam; and Eve as ‘the mother of all the living’ is the type of the Church, begetting all to eternal life. Here Mary has a two fold relationship to the Church: she is in it, the first of the redeemed; but also, since the Church is Christ’s body, Mary, the Mother of Christ’s individual body, is mystically mother of all Christ’s members in the mystical body. Thus Mary and the Church are interwoven as types. We find the Church compared with Mary again in the first Hymn on the Pearl.

Mary is Mother of Christ, who is the head of the Body of Christ. Accordingly, she as Mother of the Head of the Church would be Mother of the Church. As Mother of the Church, much like in her role as Model of the Church, Mary is seen to be the first disciple of Christ. She is the bridge that carries forward the awesome reality of the Incarnation to humanity. One of the most curious features of Ephrem’s doctrine concerning Mary as type of the Church is found in a passage where he speaks of the appearance of the risen Christ to Mary Magdalene.

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

278 “The Church gave us the living bread/ for that unleavened bread which Egypt gave/ Mary gave the bread of refreshment/ for the bread of weariness which Eve gave” (Hieun 6:7; cf. CSCO 248, Syr. 108, p.13).
280 There was Mary whom I saw therein,/ her pure conception; there was the Church,/ and the Son within her; a likeness of that cloud/ which carried him; symbol of heaven/ from whence streams forth his glorious radiance (HFaith 81:4, CSCO 154, Syr.73, p.208).
281 cf. Jn 20:11-18; but in the Memra for Holy Week, Ephrem stated that Mary, the virgin, was the one to whom the risen Lord first appeared.
Christ.  If the Church is the spouse of Christ, it is related to Mary as well.

Mary and the Church are intimately related. Ephrem illustrates the relation between the historical body of Christ in the incarnation, the mystical body of Christ in the Church, and the sacramental body of Christ in the Eucharist. In the *HFaith*, Ephrem says that Christ’s own wedding feast is the Eucharist, where the bride is both the Church and the individual soul. In *HNat* Ephrem says Mary is not only his Mother but his sister and bride also. But Mary is the only bride for whom the sacred marriage is literally consummated in the ‘bridal chamber’ of her body in historical time. The Church is his mystical bride forming one body with Him in receiving the fruits of his work his pleroma of grace. The Church is also the mystical mother giving birth to individual souls through imparting of divine grace. Mary is the perfect type of the Church because in her is fulfilled perfect motherhood and she is the perfect spouse of Christ.

The Church is at once virgin and mother, the virgin-spouse of Christ and the mother of the faithful. The Church receives the Word of God which grows within it. In Mary the Word was made flesh, after having been first conceived in faith. Our Lord speaks (in the Gospel) of the true believer as His mother and sister and brother. The Church is the mother of the mystical body as Mary is the mother of the head of the mystical body. The Church is the spouse of Christ, the new Adam. At first Mary is seen as the bridal chamber in which took place the marriage of the divine and human natures; she is also the model of the Christian virgin who is Christ’s spouse. Mary is not only the mother of Christ but of the whole mystical body of Christ. The faithful soul is the daughter of Mary and the daughter of the Church. The Church is not only the mother of the individual soul born at Baptism;

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282 *CDist*, 4: § 15, 16.
284 See Jose Kochuparampil, “Syriac Fathers on Mary …”.
285 The soul is Your bride, the body Your bridal chamber, / Your guests are the senses and the thoughts. / And if a single body is a wedding feast for you, / How great is Your banquet for the whole Church (*HFaith* 14:5.).
286 *HNat* 11:2
287 She was, by her virgin nature, Your bride already / Before You came; she conceived in a manner / Quite beyond nature, after You had come, / O Holy One; and she was a virgin / When she gave birth to You in most holy fashion (*HNat* 11:3).
288 George A. Maloney, *Mary the Womb of God*, p. 150.
she is also the mother of Christ, for Baptism is also the birth of Christ in the Christian soul.\textsuperscript{290} 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.

\textbf{VI. MARIOLOGY}

Mariology is the area of Christian theology concerned with Mary, the Mother of Christ. Within Eastern Christendom, Mariology is not a separate theological discipline. Eastern Christians have never developed a separate Mariological ‘theology’, but always treat it as an inseparable part of Christology, Pneumatology, and Ecclesiology, and so on.\textsuperscript{291} The Eastern Liturgical texts give a well balanced and deep dogmatic insight into Mariology. The importance of Mary is intimately linked with Christ. The East Syrian Liturgical Tradition testifies to the fact that we give the greatest veneration to the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the Liturgy of the Hours, Wednesdays\textsuperscript{292} throughout the year, are fully set apart to exalt the praises of the Blessed Mother and in the Annunciation period we praise her too very high. She is the acknowledged Virgin and Mother of God the Lord. She is understood as the source of all helps, and the one who consoles the world in its tribulations from the wicked one. From the beautiful prayers in the Liturgy of the Hours, general and particular, we can get a real insight into the Mariology in our East Syrian Liturgical Tradition. Mariology is not a doctrine, but the life and fragrance of Christian doctrine in us.\textsuperscript{293} Mariology expresses something fundamental to the Christian life itself, to the Christian experience of the world.\textsuperscript{294} In the Eastern traditions Mariology developed through liturgical veneration within the framework of the commemorations; that is, it followed the development of Christology and the Church's contemplation of the incarnation. All Marian devotion—liturgical and

\textsuperscript{290} Noel Dermot O’Donoghue, “Our Lady and the Church”, p. 233.
\textsuperscript{291} Paul Haffner, \textit{The Mystery of Mary}, p.9
\textsuperscript{292} see \textit{ܥܘܢܝܬܐܐܕܪܡܫܐ} of Wednesdays.
\textsuperscript{293} John M. Samaha, “The perception and prominence...”.
Theological Analysis

popular—remained organically connected with the mystery of Christ. This has always been the norm and criterion. In dogmatic theology, Mariology is a point of encounter, since in Mary all is oriented to God the Father for whom she is the servant and beloved daughter, to God the Son for whom she is true Mother, generous and devoted disciple, and finally to the Holy Spirit who filled her with grace from the moment of her conception and overshadowed her that she might bear the Saviour, and accompanied her until she was assumed into heaven. In the history of Christianity, the periods in which Marian doctrine and devotion have flourished range from the second to the ninth centuries, especially the Patristic era. Syriac tradition stressed Mary’s place because “without Mary, the incarnation would not have taken place”.295

The whole of Mariology—the theology of Mary’s motherhood, her virginity, her mediation, her sinlessness, and the incorruptibility of her body—are foreshadowed in a tendency from the beginning to associate Mary as the Second Eve with Christ as the Second Adam. In his writings, Ephrem captured something of the original wonder of Mary’s motherhood, her giving birth as a virgin, her role of mediation, and her absolute sinlessness. Though the Church of the East has not developed a separate doctrine of Mariology in the past, many of the prayers pay respect to Mary. The title of Mary was a crucial question in the Christological controversy between Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople. There is suspicion in the minds of many that the Church of the East is not giving sufficient respect to Mary because of its refusal to use the title of Theotokos.296

1. Sinlessness of Mary

“Rejoice so highly favored”, “Hail full of grace” (Lk 1:28). Both translations are derived from the Greek word kecharitomene which refers to a person transformed by the grace of God. The angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary is of great consequence

295 Paul Haffner, The Mystery of Mary, p.20.
298 Mar Aprem, Nestorian Theology (Trichur 1980), p.113.
for our understanding of Mary and Marian doctrine. The Church of the East calls
the blessed Virgin “Chaste” (ܢܟܦܬܐ) and “Pure” (ܕܟܝܬܐ) which is often used as
an adjective to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Prayers.\textsuperscript{299} The blessed Mary was
found full of grace at annunciation by the angel Gabriel.\textsuperscript{300} It looks more
reasonable to use the word ‘pure’ from the moment of annunciation until her
death. Since the Fathers of this Church have not discussed any dogma of the
Immaculate Conception of Mary we do not have specific reference to prove or
disprove this idea.

In the martyr’s anthem of Wednesday evening we recite: “Thy body, O Chaste
Virgin, is to us a treasure of blessing and its abundant help enriches the
worlds”.\textsuperscript{301} Here the word used for “chaste” is ‘ܢܟܦܬܐ’. The body of the virgin is
described as pure. This may mean that she was sinless. It is true that there is no
mention of Mary’s sin before the angel Gabriel appeared to her in the writings
of the Church of the East.\textsuperscript{302} She was pure and chaste and that must be the reason
why she was chosen by God to be the Mother of Christ.

In the \textit{ܫܒܚ} of this commemoration we recite:

O Eyes, how modest they were? Pupils (of eye), how straightforward
they were? So that Sun of the vigilant angels is seeing and they are not
enough to look at him.

O Ear, which was not obedient to man and did not listen to his word but
she listened to the greetings from the head of the angels, but she did not
listen to the greetings of any woman. O Honourable lips, chaste and
humble ones (lips) that did not speak with the man of word and did not
kiss the flesh of the word. O Mouth full of purity and tongue full of calm,
which was not used for discourses but for praising and thanksgiving. O
pure hands, pure and holy, holy and respectable (hands), which carried
the Lord of the creation. O terrestrial (carnal) knees and fiery eyes, the
cherubic wheels also (he) emulated long days with them.

Who would not give praise to her childhood? Who would not glorify her
youth? He who does not subdue her lordship his soul is (in accord with)

\textsuperscript{299} \textit{Hudra} Vol.1, p.38.
\textsuperscript{300} Lk 1:28.
\textsuperscript{301} \textit{Hudra} Vol.1,433.
\textsuperscript{302} Mar Aprem, \textit{Nestorian Theology}, p. 115.
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the desire of her freewill. 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{303}

About Mary’s blameless character the poet Geevarghese Warda, thirteenth century East Syriac praises: “Her eyes looked not upon a man, neither did she listen to his words. Her lips did not utter words either to boy or girl”\textsuperscript{304} The same poem describes her as a modest and pure person. The hymns for the commemoration of the Virgin Mary illustrate Mary’s freedom from sin in a typological way:

It is dry on all ground and it wrung the whole fleece.\textsuperscript{305}

This is Mary and she is more excellent than it.

Like the fleece became dry (like were) so then Mary became pure.

And the desire did not weave for her and she wasn’t sacked by sin.\textsuperscript{306}

i. Relationship to the Roman Catholic Marian Dogma:
Catholic Dogma of Immaculate Conception declared by Pius IX in his Bull \textit{Ineffabilis Deus} of December 8, 1854:

…By the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the authority of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by Our own authority, We declare, pronounce and define: the doctrine that maintains that the most Blessed Virgin Mary in the first instant of her conception, by a unique grace and privilege of the omnipotent God in consideration of the merits of Christ Jesus the Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore must be firmly and constantly held by all the faithful. If, therefore, any shall obstinately maintain a contrary opinion to that which we have defined (God forbid

\textsuperscript{303} \textit{Hudra} Vol. I, pp. 594-595.
\textsuperscript{305} Jud 6:36ff.
\textsuperscript{306} \textit{Hudra} Vol. 1, p. 594.
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that they do so), let them fully realize that they stand condemned by their own judgement, that they have made ship-wreck of their faith, that they have departed from union with the Church (DS 2803-2804).307

Church Fathers often spoke in glowing and sweeping terms about Mary’s holiness, sinlessness, and grace. Bawai Soro in his presentation “Mary in the Catholic-Assyrian Dialogue: An Assyrian Perspective” which was read at the Orientals Lumen III Conference provided the Church of The East’s perspective on ‘original sin and Mary’s sinlessness’: However, it must honestly be said that the teaching of Immaculate Conception is problematic for the Church of the East, not for any reasons that could dispute the truth that Mary was preserved from sin, but exactly for the manner in which she was. This divergence in theology demands a corollary conversation concerning the meaning of “original sin”, and of its impact upon the teaching of the Immaculate Conception. For the Church of the East, the idea that Mary was free from sin, and that therefore her conception must have been preserved from the taint of Adam’s sin through the Immaculate Conception, is insignificant. Her (Church) Fathers did not believe that sin is inherent in, or a property of the nature of man.308 On the contrary, they stressed the goodness of man’s nature. For them, Mary’s holiness, sinlessness, and grace did not require an immaculate Conception, but only a recognition of God’s special preservative act. This argument finds its original formulation in Theodore of Mopsuestia and can be seen as so divergent from Augustine’s own concepts, which are the basis of the two Churches’ subsequent theological explanations of grace.309

308 The Synodicon Orientale, the compilation of canon law in the Church, records this condemnation: “… it was reported in our presence that there are some… who are doubtful in their mind concerning the true faith of orthodoxy… Sometimes they say that sin is implanted in nature, and some of them say that the nature of Adam was created immortal at first… Again, we…. Alienate from our fellowship all who hand down or say that sin is implanted in nature and the men do not sin by their own choice, and all who say that the nature of Adam was originally created immortal”. Synodicon Orientale, pp. 196, 198-199.
The sixth-century Church of the East Fathers treated the subject of “original sin” in a different way which is more dynamic and personal.  For the East Syrian Church Fathers, there was no imperative that the Virgin’s birth be “preserved” from Adam’s sin, though it is still possible that God would preserve the Virgin from willful sin during her entire lifetime. As we have seen from the liturgical texts of the Church of the East, they venerate Mary as a sign of sanctity and grace, peace and reconciliation. That God purposely preserved her and kept her from every sin to make her more pure than all humanity is an idea, again, which is not uncongenial to us. That she therefore was made ready for the King of kings and the Lord of all to dwell in her would not be a matter of dispute. Thus there is considerable evidence of the convergence of the truth taught by the Church of the East and by the Papal pronouncement of the Immaculate Conception. True there are distinct differences in philosophical and terminological constructs used to convey this theological and dogmatic truth. These differences can be ascribed to human limitations and perhaps they are not totally irreconcilable, especially since both traditions hold that the sinlessness and holiness of Mary are due to a unique preservative divine act.

Mary’s sinlessness was expressed in terms of the privilege accorded to her of being exempted from the pains of the child-birth. This privilege was recorded early, before A.D. 100 in some Apocryphal writings. For example, the author of The Ascension of Isaiah writes that ‘the report concerning the child was noised abroad in Bethlehem. Some said, “The Virgin Mary has given birth before she was married two months” and many said, “She has not given birth; the midwife has not gone up to her, and we heard no cries of pain”’. Furthermore, the writer of the Odes of Solomon, a collection of ancient Christian hymnody, remarks: “So the Virgin became a mother with great mercies. And she laboured and bore the Son, but without pain, because it did not occur without purpose. And she did not seek a midwife, because He caused her to give life”. According to Aphrahat,

310 Bawai Soro, “Mary in the Catholic-Assyrian Dialogue: …”.
311 Ascension of Isaiah, 11; cf. Paul Haffner, The mystery of Mary, p.76.
because of Mary’s humility, she received him (Christ). Ephrem is frequently cited as the first Church Father to teach the Immaculate Conception. In his *Nisibene Hymn* 27:8: “You [Christ] alone and your mother are good [or beautiful] in every way; for there is no blemish in you, my Lord, and no stain in your mother.” Ephrem also writes that Christ regenerated His mother through Baptism. In the *Homily concerning the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, Mary*: Jacob of *Serug* explains why God the Father chose Mary as the mother of his only begotten Son. She alone is humble, pure, limpid and without blemish and no one can compare with her in this world. Narsai says from the mouth of Mary in his homily on *Our Lord’s Birth from the Holy Virgin* (Nativity) that “Because of Mary’s humility God has willed to exalt the dust of Adam.

### 2. Mary’s Motherhood (The Divine Maternity)

“And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Lk 1:43). “Lord” is used here in the same sense as “Yahweh” which refers to God in the Old Testament. Mary is the mother of God the Son. Mary has been exalted by grace above all angels and men to a place second only to her Son, as the most holy Mother of Son of God. It is due to her motherhood that she remains ever-virgin. With the grace of God and his love he keeps Mary as pure from her childhood. All people are going to incline to the sin which is their nature, but with the privilege that Mary got from God she has no stains in her life. So at the time of conception Gabriel saluted her as “Full of Grace”, “Lord is with you”. This is

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313 *Dem* 9:5.


315 *HNat* 16:10; For I am (Your) sister from the house of David,/ who is the 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. Cf. Kathleen E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian Hymns*, p.150.

316 “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 most fair one, / He descended from his place and dwelt within the glorious one among women, / because of her there was not a companion comparable to her in the world, / She alone is humble, pure, limpid and without blemish, / so that she was deemed worthy to be his mother and not another” (cf. Mary Hansbury, *Jacob of Serug On the Mother...*, p. 23).

317 A hymn of confession she offered as a requital for her new conception, (saying): “Blessed is He Who chose a dwelling place for His love within my limbs! Worthy of praise from all mouths is the Fashioner of the universe, because of humility He has willed to exalt the dust of Adam”! (cf. PO 41, p.49.)
proof of the divine maternity of Mary. In the *madraše* for the commemoration of the Virgin Mary we recite:

May I call her the married woman but her virginity troubled me; and I will call her the virgin, then her child astonishes me. She gave birth to the wonder and her history (generation) is not finished.\(^{318}\)

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.\(^{319}\) She is depicted as the mother of Christ, the Medicine of Life. And one antiphon prayer points to the mystery that it is Mary who contained in her the divinity: “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”.\(^{320}\) Mary’s divine motherhood is symbolically presented in expressions like New Heaven, Castle of King and Temple of God.\(^{321}\)

The Third Ecumenical council debated whether she should be referred to as *Theotokos* or *Christotokos*. Theotokos means “God-bearer” or “Mother of God”; its use implies that Jesus, to whom Mary gave birth, is God. Nestorius preferred *Christotokos*, meaning “Christ-bearer” or “Mother of the Messiah” not because they denied Jesus’ divinity, but because they believed that God the Son or *Logos* existed before time and before Mary, and that Jesus took divinity from God the Father and humanity from his mother, so calling her ”Mother of God” was confusing and potentially heretical. The Church of the East also took the position

\(^{318}\) Tcr 27, p. 87; This is the 3rd stanza of 4th *Madraša*- This stanza is not found in *HMary* 2 T.J. Lamy, pp. 523&525.

\(^{319}\) James Puthuparmpl, *Mariological thought ...*, p.121.


\(^{321}\) 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. / 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 ( Tcr 27, p.83; cf. Narsai, *Nativity*, 215-216). / “Peace unto you, O Temple Full of grace” (ܡܕܢܚܐ ܡܕܝܢܚܐ) the watcher said to the blessed woman; Peace be with you because Christ the sun of righteousness rose from you (Tcr. 27, p. 85.). And Peace to you because you are worthy to carry solemnly the temple of God, the Word (ܐܡܠܐ ܗܝܟܠܗܐܕܐܠܗܐ) Tcr. 27, p.89.
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of Nestorius when they, after several years, happened to hear about the Nestorian controversy.\textsuperscript{322} In the Anaphora, Liturgy of Hours or any sacraments the expression ܐܡܗܕܡܫܝܚܐ is often repeated while ܐܡܗܕܐܠܗܐ is never mentioned. The Church of the East does not call Mary “Mother of God”—God without qualification as Elias of Jerusalem\textsuperscript{323} (and Damascus) of the ninth century says.

3. Mary's Perpetual Virginity

In the scriptures we read that "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man”\textsuperscript{324} and it is a foremost evidence for her virginity. The Syriac words repeatedly used in the divine office in reference to her conception are ܐܐܕܠܐܙܘܘܓܐ, ܕܠܐܓܒܪܐ and ܐܕܠܐܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ which mean that she conceived without sexual union. The words ܐܐ and ܟܘܫܐܢܘܗܹ refer to marital union.\textsuperscript{325} In the commemoration of the Virgin Mary we recite: Chaste Mary, the seals of your virginity are pleasant, and sublime and lofty is the hidden power which dwells in you.\textsuperscript{326} You descended into the pure womb of the ever virgin body; from her he exalted from the nature, the conception that did not corrupt the virgin seals that she bears.\textsuperscript{327} Truly, the Son

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\textsuperscript{322} It is very important to know that the Church of the East was not founded by Nestorius. As a matter of fact he was the bishop of Constantinople which had nothing to do with Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the then head quarters of the Church of the East. It was after both Ephesus (A.D. 431) and Chalcedon (A.D. 451) that the Church of the East heard about this controversy. Since ܓܒܪܐ is biblical they kept it and refused to make the innovation of Ephesus.

\textsuperscript{323} “That the Nestorians deny Mary ought to be called “Mother of God” is not denying the Divinity of Christ, nor the descent of the Divine Word who is the same as the King of ages, into the holy Mother of Christ. The Nestorians refuse Mary to be called Mother of God, because the exalted and the glorious name ‘God’ signifies the Trinity of Persons, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the name ‘Christ’ properly connotes the Son only, not the Father, nor the Holy Spirit. Hence, if we call Mary Mother of God we may appear as attributing generation and birth to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. If on the other hand we call Mary Mother of Christ who is God of ages, we affirm the Son alone to have been born of her: to affirm this is not of course to deny Christ is God” (cf. Placid J. Podipara, \textit{Mariology of the East}, OIRSI 91 (Kottayam 1980), p.21).

\textsuperscript{324} Lk 1:34.

\textsuperscript{325} Gabriel the great and the head of the angels announced to the virgin about His glorious birth that you shall conceive him from the Holy Spirit without man, intercourse and the seed of a man (ܓܒܪܐܕܡܢܪܘܚܐܕܩܘܕܫܐܬܒܛܢܝܢ), Tcr. 27, p.77; Without intercourse the Virgin gave birth to Emmanuel, more elevated than the Sun, who became the Lord of all creatures (ܠܥܠܡܢܹܫܡܹܫܐܒܬܘܠܬܹܐܝܠܕܬܹܕܠܹܙܘܘܓܹܠܥܡܢܘܹܐܝܹܠܕܟܠܒܪܹܝܬܹܐ). And Mary gave birth to the one who is declared (to be) God and man; and this is Christ, and not as the heretics have spoken impiously Tcr.27, p.84.

\textsuperscript{326} Ms. Tcr. 27, p.85.

\textsuperscript{327} Prayer for Commemoration on May 15\textsuperscript{th} \textit{Hudra} Vol. I, p. 605.
of the virgin, the Light is full of wonder; since she gave birth to him without man and called his name (as) the wonder.\textsuperscript{328}

Various images are used for describing the virginity of Mary in this prayer for the commemoration. First of all she is a virgin like the earth,\textsuperscript{329} unploughed land\textsuperscript{330} and her virginity is compared with light which enters into the eyes.\textsuperscript{331} Paul Haffner explains the virginity of Mary in his book on \textit{The Mystery 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}, \textit{in partu}, and \textit{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 the membranes or damage to Our Lady’s body, and without pain. This description of the \textit{virginitas in partu} involves a miraculous Birth, during which Christ passes from His Mother’s womb, as He later passed from the closed sepulchre. At the same time, it was a true Birth. The teaching concerning \textit{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{332}
\end{quote}

The famous East Syrian poet Geevarghese Warda declares in unequivocal terms the ever virginity of Mary. “Blessed are thou, O Virgin, who went affianced but never married, and never known of man. Blessed art thou, O Woman, who hadst a

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{328} Qānonā d-’apēnā Tcr 27, p. 88; cf. Is. 9:6.
\textsuperscript{329} 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 (ܐܬܘܠܝܗܒܬܘܠܝܗܒܡܦܩܗ̇ܐܢܦܩܡܪܝܡ܆ܘܠܐ̇ܒܬܘܠܝܗ̇ܒܡܡܥܠܗ̇ܪܓܫܬ) Tcr. 27, p. 81and in Narsai, \textit{Nativity}, 455-6.
\textsuperscript{330} She is the field that has never known a ploughman (ܠܐܚܩܕܠܐܡܡܬܘܡܝܥܬܠܐܟܪܐ,) yet from her has shot up a Sheaf full of blessings: without any seed, she has provided fruit for creation (Tcr. 27, p.87).
\textsuperscript{331} 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 by his entering, he did not corrupt her virginity by his going forth (Tcr.27, p.84).
\textsuperscript{332} Paul Haffner, \textit{The Mystery of Mary}, p.136.
\end{flushright}
Son and yet whose virginity was never loosed by man. Blessed art thou, mother….Blessed age without losing thy virginity. Blessed art thou, O Child bearing virgin, who didst bring forth without being unclosed or corrupted”.\textsuperscript{333} It also must be stated that the word \textit{ܒܬܘܠܬܐ} in Syriac means maiden as well as virgin.\textsuperscript{334} Among the Eastern Churches, however, despite the ambiguity of the meaning of the Syriac word \textit{ܒܬܘܠܬܐ}, it has always been taken to mean ‘virgin’. Warda, the poet sang “Blessed art thou, since Isaiah praised thee, calling thee a virgin, and thy Son, God”.\textsuperscript{335} The other statements about \textit{Mart Mariam} have made it clear beyond doubt that she is virgin and ever-virgin.

Ephrem says: “In You, O Lord, there is no blemish, and there are no stains in Your Mother”.\textsuperscript{336} And on another hymn Ephrem said there are two births of Mary: one is from her mother and one is when the Word entered her womb; at that time she got the baptism that is the second birth. In \textit{HNat} 1:15b-17 Ephrem uses Old Testament types for describing the virginity of Mary.\textsuperscript{337} Through the ear of Mary the Word of God entered in the womb of Mary\textsuperscript{338} without undoing/removing the seal of her virginity\textsuperscript{339} and the Life came forth from her.

4. Mary’s Assumption into Heaven

“There the Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you”.\textsuperscript{340} This is the first of the verses that depict Mary as the Ark of the Covenant. In Revelation 11 and 12, the Ark is shown in Heaven and is identified with the woman clothed with the sun who is Mary. “All generations

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{333} Badger, \textit{Nestorians and their Rituals}, Vol. II, p.56.
\item \textsuperscript{334} J. Payne Smith, \textit{A compendious Syriac Dictionary}, p.57.
\item \textsuperscript{335} Badger, \textit{Nestorians and their Rituals}, Vol. II, p.65.
\item \textsuperscript{336} Ephrem the Syrian, \textit{CNisi}, 27: 44-48.
\item \textsuperscript{337} How worthy of faith is the daughter of Eve, / Who without man bore a child! / The virgin earth gave birth to that Adam, head of the earth; / The virgin today gave birth to [the second] Adam, head of heaven. / The staff of Aaron sprouted, and the dry wood brought forth; / His symbol has been explained today. / It is the virgin womb that gave birth.
\item \textsuperscript{338} Narsai, \textit{Hom. on Mary}, Vat. Syr. 588, p.15; also in \textit{Nativity}, 189-190; see PO 41, p.49.
\item \textsuperscript{339} He entered by the ear/ and resided in the womb in hidden fashion; / He then left the womb/ without undoing her virginity’s seal./ Likewise too when He left the tomb/ He did so without undoing its seal (\textit{HMary} no.11:6). Cf. Sebastian Brock, \textit{The Bride of Light}, p.57
\item \textsuperscript{340} Lk 1:35
\end{itemize}
shall call me blessed”.\footnote{Lk 1:48} This verse can be seen as a pre-figuring of Mary’s Assumption.\footnote{For further study see Donald G. Dawe, ”The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin in Ecumenical Perspective.” The Way, Summer 1982, p.45.}

The feast of ܢܘܘܐ (transitus, death) of the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated on August 15. In preparation for this feast we kept “the fast of 15 days” beginning from the August 1. On the commemoration of this feast we proclaim in the \textit{Karozuta} prayer as follows:

Christ, who made his mother the harbour of life to those who are in sadness, and a wonderful refuge to those who are afflicted and the helper to all those who are taking refuge in her prayers. Christ who, at the end of the contest [life] of blessed Lady, sent the watcher to declare the perfection of her desire and said to her: “[you] Go and leave Jerusalem”. When Christ brought his twelve apostles together in order to celebrate the departure of his Holy Mother, every one came from their lands through the bright cloud. Christ, who for the honour of the respose of the Virgin Mary, sent watchers from on high, and they came to meet her in great dignity, which was appropriate for the holy body of his mother. Christ who honoured the departure of his Blessed Mother in heaven and on earth.\footnote{\textit{Karozuta for Commemoration of Mary in August}, Hudra Vol. I, p.608.}

In the Tcr 27 manuscript we do not find this prayer but in the manuscript dated 1681 A.D we can see this prayer and also in the printed \textit{Hudra} text. There is no special prayer for this day, so the same prayer, which was used in the commemoration on the second Friday after the Nativity, is used for the commemoration of the Virgin in August. But the Chaldean Catholic Church has special prayers for this feast.\footnote{On the day of the departure of her soul from her pure body,/ the angels of heaven came for her honour with appropriate solemnity./ She was borne upon the clouds and carried by spiritual beings/ And among the orders of heavenly beings she is ever extolled (\textit{Breviary}, Vol. 1, p. 364). And Angels from on high descended to honour her as they were commanded./ The thrones recited her glory; seraphim deemed her body blessed. / Cherubim sang praise with their hymns when they saw that she entered among their ranks. /Through her prayer there came help for all the sick at the}
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i. Relationship to the Roman Catholic Dogma:

Using the prayers of the Hours that the Fathers of the Church of the East wrote for the feast of the “Departure”, which offer liturgical proclamations, we can examine the relationship with the teaching of the heavenly Assumption, as the dogma proclaimed by Pius XII in the basilica of St. Peter’s in Rome on the first of November 1950. The Apostolic Constitution Munificentissimus Deus (‘The Most munificent God’) proclaimed the dogma in the following words:

…By the authority of Our Lord Christ, of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by Our own, we proclaim and define it to be a dogma revealed by God that the immaculate Mother of God, Mary ever Virgin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven. Wherefore, if anyone, which God forbid, should willfully dare to deny or call in doubt what we have defined, let him know that he has certainly abandoned divine and Catholic faith (DS 3903-3904).

If liturgy has an important role in the development of Church teachings, then, the Church of the East Fathers are very clear in the exercise of that role. Due to Mary’s obedience, unique status and role within the life, ministry, passion and glorification of her Son, she is portrayed in this text as having a unique ending of her earthly life, namely, at the time of her death. Their description of her repose (assumption, passing, or dormition) is one of glorification by the angels and of exaltation, namely, being taken up, into heaven.

The thirteenth century Father of the Church of the East, Šlimon of al-Basra, writes about this subject in his work “The Book of the Bee”, where he seems to be speaking of teachings that were already known and accepted by the Church of his times.

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345 I quote this Dogma form J.P.M. Van Der Ploeg, Our Faith ..., pp.132-133.
346 For definite references, see “The Book of the Bee” chapter 39, by Solomon of al-Basra, edited by E.A.W Budge (Oxford 1885). This author was born near Lake Van (in South East Turkey) at the end of the 12th century and died in the year 1240. he was made the Archbishop of al-Basra during the first quarter of the 13th century. “The Book of the Bee” includes both theological and historical treatises written specifically for Solomon’s friend, Narsai, the Bishop of Koni-shapour.
The giving of Mary by our Lord to John the son of Zebedee. He said to her, Woman, behold, your son, and he said to John, Behold, your mother. From that hour he took her away with him and took care of her, and following the ascension of our Lord she lived twelve years. The total years, that she lived in the world was fifty eight years, though others have said sixty-one years. She was not buried in the earth, but angels transported her to Paradise and angels bore away her bier. All the Apostles were gathered together on the day of her death and they bowed to her and were blessed by her. But Thomas was in India, so an angel carried him and brought him and he discovered the angel bearing her bier in the air. Then they brought her bier to Thomas and he bowed down and was also blessed by her.347

It seems the Church traditions affirm that an explicit mention of the assumption provides clear emphasis on the idea that the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has made resurrection available for the rest of us, not as a possibility but as an actuality that subsists. And all the more here, since Mary herself was preserved from sin, the fruits of the redemption achieved by her Son on the cross were applied to her immediately without having to wait for the judgment and second coming of her Son, Jesus Christ. In the mind of the Church Fathers, the mystery of the Blessed Mother should be situated in relation both to Christ and to us, the Church.

Jacob of Serug wrote that when the time came for Mary ‘to walk the way of all generations’, that is the way of death, ‘the group of the Twelve Apostles’ gathered to bury ‘the virginal body of the blessed one’.348 In the Panarion, Epiphanius of Salamis (+403) formulates some hypotheses that may correspond to convictions some early Christians held about the end of Mary’s earthly life.349 According to him the bodily enjoyment of heavenly glory will be a future reward for Mary, just as it will be for all the redeemed. In the West, Gregory of Tours (+594) is the first

347 Book of the Bee, pp. 110-111; cf. Bawai Soro’ Article on “Mary in the Catholic-Assyrian Dialogue…”.
348 Jacob of Serugh, Discourse on the Burial of the Holy Mother of God,87-99; Mary Hansbury, Jacob of Serug On the Mother ..., pp.89-100; cf. Paul Haffner, The Mystery of Mary, p.212.
349 “How will holy Mary not possess the kingdom of heaven with her flesh, since she was not unchaste, nor dissolute, nor did she ever commit adultery, and since she never did anything wrong as far as fleshly actions are concerned, but remained stainless?” Cf. Luigi Gambero, Mary and the Fathers ..., p.125.
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writer to witness to the mystery of Mary’s Assumption into heaven.\(^{350}\) In her assumption into heaven, Mary is as it were clothed by the whole reality of the communion of Saints, and her very union with the Son in glory is wholly oriented towards the definitive fullness of the kingdom, when ‘God will be all in all’ (1 Cor 15:28).

5. Her Mediation (The direct and indirect Intercessor)
The Church of East asks the intercession of Virgin Mary. This is in the general context of the intercession of the saints. The blessed Virgin is given a place just above other saints and martyrs. When we examine the prayers and anthems we come across the prominent place occupied by the blessed Virgin.

In the ܫܒܚ of the ‘\(\text{’onita da-qdam}\) the Church takes refuge under the wings of Mary and her prayer: “O Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus our Saviour, beseech and supplicate mercy to the Child who rose from your womb so that through His grace He may remove from us the times that are full of griefs and implant peace and tranquillity upon us. And through your prayers may the Church and her children be preserved from the Evil One. On glorious day on which his majesty will be revealed; may we be worthy to rejoice with you in the bridal chamber of light”.\(^{351}\) And in the ܫܒܚ of the ‘\(\text{’onita d-batar}\) the Church calls her a great refuge to the faithful who request her prayers: “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”.\(^{352}\) And in the ܫܒܚ of the ‘\(\text{’onita d-basliqe}\) through the intercession of Mary the Church and her children will be protected and the Church invites us to take refuge under Mary’s wings: “O Honourable Mary, through your supplication tranquillity will 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

\(^{350}\) For the further study see Luigi Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers* ..., p.353.
\(^{351}\) ܫܒܚ of ‘\(\text{’onita da-qdam}\), Tcr. 27, p. 75.
\(^{352}\) ܫܒ횇 of ‘\(\text{’onita d-batar}\), Tcr. 27, p. 76.
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forgiveness”. In the suba ‘a prayers we sing: “Holy Virgin, supplicate and beseech for the world, which takes refuge in the power of your prayer. And may the Church be confirmed and may her children be preserved in it and become one in love and harmony; Our Lord, may the prayer of Mary, your Mother, become for us a strong fortress and a deliverer from damages and obstacles in this world and in that (world) to come let it stand for our sake at judgment”. From the above anthems it is clear that the Church of the East takes refuge in the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are asking her to intercede for the congregation to Christ and never to grant the requests of the people. The phrase “beseech with us” is important. It is bringing Mary more down to human level of beseeching with the worshippers rather than beseeching for the worshippers. But it must be emphasized that the Church of the East does request the prayers of the blessed Virgin. The Church of the East pays great respect and reverence to Mary. They do not use any statues or even pictures of the Blessed mother. This does not mean that they do not give her the proper place of honour due to the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. The anthem of the commemoration of the Virgin Mary reads: “May the commemoration of the Virgin Mary the mother of Christ be upon the Holy altar”. This anthem is also used in every Holy Qurbana. 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. The ancient liturgical texts of the East as well as of the West are all syntheses of living theological reflections. It is a matter of emphasis rather than of difference when we speak of the theological themes of one liturgical tradition in comparison with another. As all the liturgical celebrations, the Liturgy of the Hours also takes its meaning form the paschal mystery of salvation in Christ Jesus.

353 ܐܘܢܝܬܐ ܕܒܕܠܝܩܝ, Tcr. 27, p. 76.
354 ܡܕܒܚܐ ܐܡܐ, Tcr. 27, p.80.
356 Tcr. 27, p.90.
357 This is the first anthem the celebrant sings after the chalice and paten are brought and placed in the centre of the altar during the middle of the Holy Qurbana. And the same anthem in Syriac has been inscribed on the arch of ܡܕܒܚܐ of Mart Maryam Big Church Trichur in estrangelo character.
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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 the 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 the harbour. The prayers indeed illustrate many other attributes of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is presented as the hope of humanity, the symbol of Jerusalem the city of God, the mother of Second Adam the cause of our life and the ship of treasures. These prayers very well explain the East Syrian understanding of Mary’s position in the Church. Thus it becomes evident that the commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the liturgy should be considered a remarkable source of East Syrian Mariology. As theological reflection deepened, Mary was envisaged as a model member, in a Trinitarian perspective. For by her complete adherence to the Father’s will, to His Son’s redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church’s model of faith and charity.