INTRODUCTION

I. DIVINE OFFICE

Divine office is a daily official prayer of the Church and the celebration of our day-to-day Christian life. It is an extensive celebration of the history of salvation, centered around Christ event; in fact it is the Holy *qurbana*¹ spread out to the whole of the liturgical year.² The Church recites the prayers in different times in a day with the inspiration from New Testament ‘to pray constantly’ and it is differentiated from other liturgical services. The prayer book of the Church of the East is called: “ Hudra” ³ Jerusalem was the very first liturgical centre, and the liturgy of Jerusalem was the cradle of all other liturgies.⁴ A comparison of the East Syrian Calendar with the Jerusalem Calendar manifests the uniqueness kept among these two traditions.⁵

II. THE ORIGIN OF DIVINE OFFICE

Four main stages can be distinguished in the evolution of Christian prayer which led to the present structure of the divine office:⁶

1. Christian Prayers of Private Devotion: From the beginning up until the fourth century, Christians used to pray in private at the more significant moments

---

¹ Literally ‘offering’, the Eucharist, sometimes used also for the Eucharistic liturgy.
³ Means a circle, course, series, the book of proper anthems and other variable parts of the service for the festivals of the year; cf. J. Payne Smith A Compendious Syriac Dictionary (Oxford 1979), p.130. It refers to the liturgical book that contains the prayers and propria for all Sundays of the Liturgical year. It also includes the text of the three Anaphoras and in some manuscripts the baptismal office and other liturgical services.
Introduction

of the day, especially in the morning and evening.\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Didache}, an ancient document recommends that Christians recite the “Our Father” three times a day.\textsuperscript{8}

2. \textbf{The Egyptian Monastic Office:} At the beginning of the fourth century, we find two distinct movements in the evolution of Christian prayers. In the first place, Egyptian desert monks instituted a common liturgical celebration of prayer for the morning and evening: the Egyptian monastic office. The desert monks had only two offices or synaxes each day, one at the end of the day, the other beginning at cockcrow and lasting till dawn.\textsuperscript{9} It is a communal form of an ancient private Christian prayer. The length of these synaxes, which consists in the recitation of psalms,\textsuperscript{10} varied greatly according to the tastes and strength of the individuals participating in it.

3. \textbf{The Ecclesiastical / Cathedral offices:} At the beginning of the fourth century the non-monastic churches organized public offices for the morning and evening. The second movement concerned the non-monastic or secular Churches where the celebration of a morning and evening office was destined for the whole Christian people; hence the ecclesiastical offices. It had a definite spirit for the morning and evening community celebrations. The first document which presents this office is

\textsuperscript{7} Eusebius explains that the morning office is one of hope in the mercy of the Lord (praise and thanksgiving), while the evening prayer is penitential (a confession of faults). And for Tertullian, the morning and evening prayers are most important and obligatory because they are the legitimate orations, prayers prescribed by the Law. Cf. Juan Mateos, “The Origin of the Divine Office” \textit{Worship} 41 (1967), p. 479.

\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Didache}, 2-3. Cf. Juan Mateos, “The Origin …”, p. 478. Daniel observed the prayer three times in a day, and according to Tertullian we pray at least not less than three times in the day, because we are debtors to Three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

\textsuperscript{9} See Cassian, \textit{De Institutis Coenobiorum} II, 3,1 and III, 5 (ed. Petscheing, \textit{CSEL} XVIII, pp. 19, 40); here I quote the English from Juan Mateos, “The Origin …”, p.481.

\textsuperscript{10} How many psalms should be used for the synaxes? The tradition tells that to stop the controversy about it, at the evening prayer from the midst of the group one monk arose who recited eleven psalms, interspersing the customary prayers between them. Finally he intoned a twelfth psalm with “Alleluia”, Then he disappeared. The Fathers agreed that this was a divine intervention to put an end to their quarrel. Then onwards the monks used 12 psalms for evening and night (cf. Juan Mateos, “The Origin …”, p.481). So according to Cassian the norms of psalmody called the \textit{Rule of the Angel}. 


the Apostolic Constitutions. It is mentioned also in a document from Syria and Egeria.\textsuperscript{11}

4. Urban Monastic Tradition: Finally in the second half of the fourth century, urban monasticism arose. Monasteries like those of Saint Basil were founded in cities and towns. The urban monks are compiled their prayers by adopting fundamentally the ecclesiastical offices, while assimilating to some degree the practices of the Egyptian monks. They also instituted liturgical celebrations of other times of prayer which had begun as the private devotion of Christians. This mixture constituted the fourth stage: the urban monastic tradition.\textsuperscript{12} The urban monastic office is deeply rooted in the popular Christian tradition. This fact explains the unanimity of the monastic tradition outside Egypt: all the rites now practiced in the church follow the daily cycle of the urban monastic tradition, at least in some periods of the liturgical year.

III. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIVINE OFFICE OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST

The East Syrians have a complete and excellent divine office very remarkable and valuable as a source of real inspiration which explains the spiritual luminosity of the East Syriac Church. But very little is known about its early history. It is certain that the primitive Christians of the Orient used to sing Psalms and read the sacred scriptures on Sundays and other feast days. In the course of time other prayers, were also composed to recite in common. According to Robert Taft the East Syriac liturgy of the Hours has remained largely Cathedral in character.\textsuperscript{13} All other hours of Prayer, says J. Froger, “except the Nocturns and Vespers are of monastic origin”.\textsuperscript{14} The earliest known attempts of this Church to unify and

\textsuperscript{12} Juan Mateos, “The Origin…”, pp. 477-478.
\textsuperscript{13} Robert Taft, The Liturgy of Hours., p. 225.
\textsuperscript{14} J. Forger, “Les Origines de Prime” AL 2 (1952) 96-102.; here I used the ET of Sophy Rose Church As Mystery and Communion in the East Syriac Liturgical Year: An Ecclesiological Analysis, OIRSI 207 (Kottayam 1998), p.69.
articulate her liturgical customs are found in the Synod of Seleucia Ctesiphon or of Mar Isaac and Mar Marutha in 410. Canon 13 of this Synod decreed that all the faithful should follow the cathedral liturgy of Kokhe in Seleucia and suggested a renewal of the liturgy of the hours.\textsuperscript{15} Further the Canon 15 of the Synod of Darin in 676 held under Catholicos George I, ordered the faithful to come daily for the morning and evening prayers in the church, and stressed the communal recitation of these offices, because it was not enough to do prayers at homes or in private chapels.\textsuperscript{16} The East Syrian cathedral usage started at the Great Church of Kokhe, the cathedral church of the Chaldean Patriarchs / Catholicos at Seleucia-Ctesiphon\textsuperscript{17} and monastic tradition of the liturgy of the hours was followed in two monasteries of Mosul.\textsuperscript{18}

According to the tradition, the present East Syriac Liturgical \textit{Huḍra} and its calendar were compiled by the great liturgical reformer Išo‘yahb.\textsuperscript{19} There are three witnesses who say that Išo‘yahb III was responsible for the proper ordering and organization of the \textit{Huḍra} with its ‘\textit{Onyata} and hence of the Liturgical year. They are: Thomas of Marga of the eighth century, the Anonymous Author\textsuperscript{20} of the tenth century and \textit{Rabban Brikišo}\textsuperscript{21} of the fourteenth century. His purpose was

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} J.B Chabot, \textit{Synodicon Orientale ou recueil des synodes nestoriens} (Paris 1902), pp. 266-267.
\item \textsuperscript{16} J.B Chabot, \textit{Synodicon Orientale...}, p. 488.
\item \textsuperscript{17} J.B. Chabot (ed.), \textit{Synodicon Orientale...}, p. 264ff; W.F. Macomber, “The Vicissitudes of the Patriarchate of Seleucia Ctesiphon from the beginning to the Present day”, \textit{Diakonia} 9 (1968), p. 35. This was the ancient Patriarchal Metropolitan headquarters of Seleucia and Ctesiphon dioceses situated on the banks of the River Tigris about fifty kilometers south of Baghdad in present day Iraq (cf. Robert Taft, \textit{The Liturgy of Hours...}, p. 153). It was Timothy the Great (780-823) who transferred the Patriarchal See from Kokhe to Baghdad. Cf. John Moolan “The Evolution of the East Syrian Divine Office…”, p. 68.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Upper Monastery situated on the Upper (right) bank of the river Tigris at the north-west of Mosul (it is also called the convent of Mar Gabriel (d.738/9) and Mar Abraham (d.9\textsuperscript{th} century), and the Monastery of \textit{Beth Abhe} (the house of forest) situated on the forest mountain at the northeast of Mosul. The founder of the monastery of \textit{Beth Abhe} is considered to be Rabban Ya‘qob (d. 6\textsuperscript{th} century), a monk of the Mount \textit{Izla} Monastery. Cf. E.A.W Badge (ed), \textit{The Book of the Governors, The Historia Monastica of Thomas, Bishop of Marga A.D. 840} (London 1893), I: ix,xli,ix; and it is cited in Pauly Kannokadan, \textit{The East Syrian Lectionary: A Historical-Liturgical Study} (Rome 1991), p.64.
\item \textsuperscript{19} See E.A.W Badge, \textit{The Book of the Governors ...}. Chapter XI; W. Wright, \textit{A Short History of Syriac Literature} (London 1894), pp. 171-174.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Rabban Brikišo writes in his introduction to the \textit{Huḍra}: These \textit{šabo‘e} were not disposed in a hasty way and by chance, but with a perfect knowledge of the thing and according to a precise
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
to fix the liturgical customs and traditions. As a part of this endeavour, with the assistance of the monk Ḥananišo' of Hedhyabh, he compiled the Hudra in the year 650/651 A.D. and assigned norms for a distinctive and developed Lectionary usage.²²

The East Syrian office is the unified form of cathedral or ecclesiastical and monastic usage. The unification of the cathedral and the monastic usages into one system was the work of Išo'yahb III during his patriarchate (647-657/8). He collected all the then extant cathedral and monastic manuscripts known as Hudra (cycle- offices for Sundays, weekdays, feast days, etc.), Gazza (treasury- additional vigil prayers for the monastic usage), and Kaškol (collection- incipit of Sunday texts from Hudra for the ferial use). Then he rearranged the cathedral and monastic commemorations into one system removing all the significant differences found in the lectionary system for those commemorations,²³ and added certain proper parts for the use of the Eucharistic celebrations.²⁴ The explanation of Hudra by Rabban Brikišo (d.14th century), the abbot of the monastery of Beth Kokhe, gave credence to Išo'yahb III for compiling the East Syrian liturgy of the Hours in its present shape.²⁵ The Hudra of Išo'yahb III contains Ramśa,²⁶ Lelya,²⁷ Ṣapra,²⁸ the propers of the Holy Qurbana (‘Onita d-

---

²⁴ Such as ܥܘܢܝܬܐ ܕܩܢܟܐ (anthem at the chancel of the communion), ܥܘܢܝܬܐ ܕܐܪ ̈ ܙܐ (anthem of the Mysteries), ܥܘܢܝܬܐ ܕܒܝܡ (anthem before the communion). Scripture lessons are not part of the Office, except for solemnities.
²⁵ He explains the division of different liturgical seasons, and explicates the mind of Isho-Yahb III in arranging them such a way. See Juan Mateos, Lelya-Sapra, p. 27; cf. Robert Taft, The Liturgy of Hours..., p.227.
²⁶ ܪܡܫܐ literally ‘evening’, it refers to the vesperal office.
²⁷ ܠܠܝܐ literally ‘night’, it refers to the office of nocturnes.
²⁸ ܨܦܪܐ literally ‘morning’, ‘dawn’, it refers to the office of matins.
Introduction

*Bem,*  
*d-Raze*  
*d-Qanke*) and the Scripture lessons for the Holy *Qurbana.*  
Išo’yahb is also credited with celebrated liturgical refrains and *madrašē* (*ܡܕܪܬܐ* = doctrinal hymns).  
Finally, he established the norms for the liturgy of the Hours, setting the cathedral and monastic cycle that has been preserved up to the present.  
The last revision of *Hudra* took place at the Upper Monastery in 1250 though no extant evidence is available in this regard.  
The *Gazza* (treasures) also dated from the thirteenth century and filled out what was missing in the *Hudra* for night vigils and later included other feasts of the Lord not observed on Sunday and some commemorations of the Saints. After this period of composition and codification of liturgical texts, the East Syrian liturgy underwent further developments as it was influenced by schism, latinization, western missionary influence.  
In the mid-sixteenth century the corruption of the hereditary patriarchate led to a schism that divided the Church of the East: then the Chaldean Catholic Church was established under John Simon Sulaqa; after some years this line was joined with the non-Catholic group and years later one party from the non-Catholic group entered into communion with the Catholic Church. However, with the election in 1967 of the present Patriarch, Mar Dinkha IV, the Church of the East abandoned the hereditary succession.  
In the interim, a new uniate line under the influence of Capuchin Missionaries arose. In 1672, the bishop of Diyarbakir (Amida) became Catholic and was later recognized as Patriarch Joseph

---

29  *ܥܘܢܝܬܐ ܕܒܝܡ* the anthem of communion.  
30  *ܥܘܢӢܬܐ ܕܐܪܙܐ* the anthem of the mysteries, sung antiphonally during the procession of the gifts just before the offertory.  
31  *ܥܘܢӢܬܐ ܕܩܢܟܐ* the anthem of the chancel just preceding the procession from altar to the bema.  
33  See Arthur Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis,* CSCO 266 (Louvain 1965), p. 298.  
36  For further study see Richard Edward McCarron, *The Appropriation of the Theme of Christ’s Descent to Hell ...,* pp. 193-197.  
This unite line would continue and was eventually relocated as the Patriarchate of Babylon. Mar Raphael Bidawid, who died in 2001, had been Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church since 1989.

These back-and-forth shifts to unity with Rome impacted on the liturgical life of the Church of the East: the uniates simplified the ritual of their liturgy, while the original patriarchate lines kept a more elaborate ritual action, known as the Alqosh usage. The liturgical texts of the two Churches, though, remained the same, apart from some minor variants. A major development for the standardization of the liturgy came with the onslaught of missionaries in the eighteenth through the early twentieth century. Anglicans, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Baptists, Roman Catholic, and Russian Orthodox took a great interest in the Church of the East, building schools, welfare centers and hospitals as well as trying to reclaim the “Nestorians”. The Lazarist and Anglican Missionaries to the East also imported a few westernisms in the Alqosh liturgy. However, it was the efforts of these missionaries that led to the printing and publishing of the East Syrian liturgical texts. For the first time in its history, major manuscripts gave way to printed and bound books patterned after the Western breviary and Missal.

Today, there are nine editions of the missal that, despite the standardization of the printing press, still vary one from the other. Among the missals, the edition of

---

38 The rival patriarch entered open schism with Rome after this turn of events.
40 See the bibliography of known manuscripts and editions in Yousif, *Classified Bibliography*, 31-35 (Eucharist), pp. 81-88 (Hours). See the summary in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ane, 1931), s.v. “Nestorienne (L’Eglise) Textes Liturgiques”, by E. Tisserant. The title of these books belies the principle behind their composition. The western *missale plenum* compiled and arranged what was needed for the celebration of the Mass throughout the year from a number of originally separate books: the sacramentary, the lectionary, the *ordo*, the antiphonary, etc. Similarly, the western *breviary* compiled and abridged the texts needed to celebrate the office through the course of the year. Hence the editors of the East Syrian books compiled and abridged material from a number of books to create a “missal” and “breviary”. Thus, the so called breviary is a compilation of the *Hudra, the Gazza*, the Psalter, the *Qale* (“chant”), the *daqdam wadbatar* (book of hymns or psalms that comes before and after the fixed vesperal psalmody) the *Warda, Abu halim*, and the *Kaškol*. The missal contains for the most part the ordinary for the Eucharistic liturgy, but also elements form the ritual. Cf. Richard Edward McCarron, *The Appropriation of the Theme of Christ’s Descent to Hell* ..., p. 199.
Introduction

Joseph Kelayta is considered to be the most representative of the manuscript missal traditions. With regard to the *Hudra*, the Chaldean (Catholic) version reflects the desire of the editors to avoid expressions that could be construed as ‘Nestorian’. The *Hudra* of the Church of the East has most recently been edited by Mar Thoma Darmo.

Thus, the liturgical texts and actions of the East Syrian Liturgy are the result of a centuries-long process of redaction and compilation. While the tradition ascribes authorial voice to certain texts most certainly to bolster their authority and explain their introduction to celebration, tracing the history of the liturgy shows that in particular the euchology of the East Syrian Church juxtaposes texts of different origins, eras and genres. Even the compilations of the printed liturgical books of recent efforts have had to make a deliberate selection and rejection of the manuscript traditions.

**Structure of the East Syrian Church Building**

From the fourth century onwards the East Syrian Christians built churches of which the apses were filled with an altar, rather than the seats for clergy that are found in the rest of the East and West. In the middle of the nave is a large

---

42 J. Kelayta, *The liturgy of the Church of the East* (Mosul, 1928). This ‘missal’ (really a *Taksa*) contains the ordinary of the Eucharistic liturgy and several other rites. The propers are found in the *Hudra* or its supplement. This edition was reissued in 1959 by Archbishop Darmo. It was published again in 1971 by the Chaldeans who cleared away remaining Latinisms and set Alqosh rubrics as part of liturgical renewal inspired by Vatican II.


Introduction

walled in platform known as the *bema*\(^{46}\) that contains a throne used for the gospel book and cross and seats for the bishop and clergy.\(^{47}\) The ninth century *Expositio* is the last important East Syrian commentary we have, but the rite of ‘Adoration of the *Bema*’ in the Eucharistic Liturgy first appears in liturgical manuscripts of the fifteenth century, which would seem to indicate that the *bema* was still in use in some churches at that time.\(^{48}\) To understand the ancient ceremonial of the Chaldean offices one must recall that until the fourteenth century, East Syrian churches were equipped with a *bema*.\(^{49}\) The East Syrian liturgical commentators, especially Gabriel Qatraya (ca.615), Abraham bar Lipeh (seventh cent.) and Pseudo-George of Arbela (ninth cent.), have provided us with a sufficiently detailed description of the liturgy and office in order to give a fairly complete picture of the use of the *bema* in the Eastern Church.\(^{50}\)

IV. LITURGICAL BOOKS

The liturgy is the celebration of the faith of the Church.\(^{51}\) Liturgy is also a confession of the faith of the Church, not only through a specific text, e.g. the Creed; but, as a whole, it proclaims the faith of the Church.\(^{52}\) The whole theological doctrines are explicitly included in liturgical texts of the Church of the East. The liturgical books, especially the divine office of the Church of the East contain both its doctrine and characteristic terminology. This liturgy is centered mainly on the salvific work accomplished by the second Person of the Holy Trinity. The East Syriac tradition has its own speciality in arranging the ‘Divine

---


\(^{48}\) Robert Taft, ‘On the use of Bema…’ and he collected this information from W.F.Macomber.

\(^{49}\) See Robert Taft “Some Notes on the Bema …”, pp. 326-359; and also “on the Use of Bema …”, pp. 30-39.


\(^{51}\) See Johannes Maday, “East Syrian Liturgy as an Expression of Christology” *Pro Oriente* (Syriac Dialogue No.2, 1997), pp. 162-172

Introduction

Praises’. As for its structure and timings, this tradition is very much indebted to the Jewish heritage and synagogue prayer style.

There are three books in which the ancient manuscripts present the complete East Syrian Divine office, viz, Ḥudra, Gazza and Kaškol. The present three volumes of printed Ḥudra do not correspond as such to the ancient three volumes, Ḥudra, Gazza and Kaskul. Their liturgy of the hours is largely cathedral in character, though the minor hours retain some traces of monastic influence. Ramša, Qale dšahra and šapra have kept up their cathedral purity. The East Syrian hourly prayers are the result of an ardent attempt to perpetuate the spirit of the Eucharist throughout the day even if there is no Eucharistic celebration every day.

Contributors to the Liturgical books

The formation of the East Syrian prayer system is the result of the compositions attributed to the early Syriac Fathers and the ecclesiastical writers. Very little is known about the early shape of the East Syrian Divine office, though it still contains compositions attributed to early Syriac Fathers such as St. Ephrem (d. 373) and his contemporary Jacob, Bishop of Nisibis, CatholicoS Simeon bar Sabbas (d. 341), Marutha of Maipharkat (d. ca. 420), Narsai (d. 502), Babai the Great (d. 628) and so on. Narsai’s literary legacy includes a number of liturgical

\[\text{Contributors to the Liturgical books}\]

The formation of the East Syrian prayer system is the result of the compositions attributed to the early Syriac Fathers and the ecclesiastical writers. Very little is known about the early shape of the East Syrian Divine office, though it still contains compositions attributed to early Syriac Fathers such as St. Ephrem (d. 373) and his contemporary Jacob, Bishop of Nisibis, CatholicoS Simeon bar Sabbas (d. 341), Marutha of Maipharkat (d. ca. 420), Narsai (d. 502), Babai the Great (d. 628) and so on. Narsai’s literary legacy includes a number of liturgical

\[\text{Contributors to the Liturgical books}\]

The formation of the East Syrian prayer system is the result of the compositions attributed to the early Syriac Fathers and the ecclesiastical writers. Very little is known about the early shape of the East Syrian Divine office, though it still contains compositions attributed to early Syriac Fathers such as St. Ephrem (d. 373) and his contemporary Jacob, Bishop of Nisibis, CatholicoS Simeon bar Sabbas (d. 341), Marutha of Maipharkat (d. ca. 420), Narsai (d. 502), Babai the Great (d. 628) and so on. Narsai’s literary legacy includes a number of liturgical

53 Ḥudra (_CYCLE) the most ancient of the three, contains as its name indicates, offices for the whole: not only for Sundays and weekdays but also for feast days, both movable and immovable.

54 Gazza (= treasury) is a later collection. It contains additional pieces for vigils which are not found in Ḥudra: hence Gazza is a complementary volume of Ḥudra for monastic use.

55 Kaškol ( contain all) is a collection based on a practical need. In Kaškol the whole text is given, saving the reciter in the trouble of every time referring back. Thus Kaškol contains the complete text of offices for week-days of the year.

56 Each volume of Ḥudra contained 3 parts, 1) common part for every day, 2) Proper part for different occasions, and 3) the Psalter.

57 The prayers for Annunciation to the entrance of Great Lent are in volume 1; for Great Lent to Pentecost are in 2nd volume and Pentecost to the Dedication of Church are in 3rd volume. It is written as the same order of Dayara ‘Ellaita (of Mar Abraham and Mar Gabriel).


compositions. In addition to the genres already considered, the historiography makes mention of shorter pieces of liturgical material: *buyaye*, consolatory discourse (probably a type of oration), *turgame*⁶⁰ used to name expository anthems before the Epistle and Gospel; *tešbohta*⁶¹ - refrains attached to a psalm or independent songs of praise; *Karozuta*⁶² - diaconal litanies or biddings.⁶³

Simeon bar *Sabbā’e*,⁶⁴ who arranged the division of the choir into two groups,⁶⁵ was the first East Syrian liturgical reformer.⁶⁶ He divided the twelve ferial propers⁶⁷ of the East Syrian Divine Office into two weeks or choirs accordingly as the first or second choir begins the service. According to the *Hudra* rubrics⁶⁸ this change takes place on alternate Sundays. The second stage of the reformation on

---

⁶⁰ *ܬܘܪܓܡܐ* literally ‘interpretation’, it refers to the verses sung before the Epistle and Gospel reading; the homily.

⁶¹ *ܬܫܒܘܚܬܐ* ‘praise’, it refers to the hymn sung antiphonally after the morning *qanona* and during the communion of the faithful at the Eucharist liturgy. It also refers to the poetic composition following every psalm with refrain in the divine office during nocturn and matins; it is alternated in choir.

⁶² *ܟܪܘܙܘܬܐ* meaning ‘proclamation’, it refers to the deacon’s litany during the liturgy and divine office. The first part is called the ‘*ba’uha*’ (lit. rogation) and the second part is the ‘*karozutha*’ proper, during which the people genuflect. The third part is the *Angelus pacis*, which is of Byzantine origin. Cf. David Royal, The Lenten Liturgy of the Hours in the Assyrian Church of the East: A Historico-Liturgical Study (Excerptae Dissertatiae ad Doctoratum, Rome 2007), p. x.

⁶³ See Arthur Vööbus, History of the School of Nisibis, pp. 86-87 for manuscript witnesses for Narsai’s compositions. Elisha Bar Qzbaye (+510), a successor of Narsai (whether immediately after or not is a matter of rival traditions), is reported to have composed *ܩܘܒܠܛܝܒܘܬܐ*, literally a “gracious acceptance” or “thanksgiving”. When they were used is not clear. Vööbus, History of the School of Nisibis, p. 128. The information comes from ‘Abdišo’.

⁶⁴ Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon became martyr in 341 under the persecution of Sapor II in Persia.

⁶⁵ Two choirs known as the high choir (ܓܘܕܐ ܥܠܝܬܐ), the congregation on the right side of the nave, and the under choir (ܓܘܕܐ ܬܚܬܝܬܐ), the congregation on the left side of the nave, are to alternate the privilege of intoning or opening the service (Cf. George P. Badger, The Nestorians and Their Rituals, vol.2, p. 23).


⁶⁸ *Hudra* p. 2 in all volumes; Every Sunday the rubrics direct whether the service of the following week of *ܕܩܕܡܝܐ* (before) or *ܕܒܬܪ* (after/later); and the book containing this office is called *ܟܬܒܐ ܕܩܕܡ ܘܒܬܪ* (the book of before and after). If it is of ‘before’ the high choir intones the office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays of uneven weeks; and of ‘after’ the under choir intones on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays of even weeks (See. Arthur J. Maclean, East Syrian Daily Offices, pp. 1-84.)
Introduction

Hudra was made in the Synod of Mar Isaac and Marutha\textsuperscript{69} in 410 at Seleucia-Ctesiphon,\textsuperscript{70} where the Council Fathers decided to make normative the use of patriarchal church of Kokhe in Seleucia. He was the one who executed the liturgical renewal of the liturgy of the hours suggested by the Synod of Seleucia Ctesiphon in 410. In this regard he composed many liturgical hymns for the reformation of the divine office.

The compositions of St. Ephrem are the main source of Hudra. His poems are the real treasures of the Liturgy of the Hours. Whereas the Syrian Orthodox Fenqitho (ܦܢܩܝܬܐ) incorporated a large number of madrasha, mostly attributed to Ephrem,\textsuperscript{71} the Hudra has much more limited selection, and these were always just restricted to 3 stanzas.\textsuperscript{72} The works of his contemporary, Jacob of Nisibis, and of Narsai were also incorporated in the liturgical books. Narsai was an illustrious teacher at the school of Nisibis, who contributed many Christological and soteriological hymns to the divine office. The hymns of the famous West Syrian poet, Mar Jacob of Serugh, were also incorporated in the divine office.\textsuperscript{73} Catholicos Mar Awa I (540-552) brought two anaphoras\textsuperscript{74} to the East Syrian liturgy and also is credited with introducing other liturgical features in the form of the Trisagion and the ‘Angel of Peace’ litany.\textsuperscript{75} He was also reputed to have composed many memre (ܡܐܡܪܐ = metrical homily), turgame and antiphonal qanona.\textsuperscript{76} The tešbhaba of

\textsuperscript{69} Bishop of Maypharkat was present in the councils against Chrysostom held at Constantinople in 403, and in the Synod of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 410.
\textsuperscript{70} J.B Chabot (ed), Synodicon Orientale ou ..., pp. 26-27.
\textsuperscript{71} He is known as a harp of the Holy Spirit
\textsuperscript{72} Sebastian Brock, “Excerpts from Ephrem’s Madrase in Hudra”, in JAAS 18/1 (2004), p.44.
\textsuperscript{74} He translated the Anaphora of Mar Theodore and Nestorius from Greek into Syriac and introduced to the East Syrian Liturgy. See Jacob Vadakkel, The East Syrian Anaphora of Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia: critical edition, English translation and study OIRSI 129 (Kottayam 1989).
\textsuperscript{75} The Byzantine Trisagion, originally an entrance antiphon with psalm, is now chanted in the Byzantine liturgy after the little entrance. The ‘Angel of Peace’ litany, which concludes with the prayer of inclination, is part of the pre-anaphoral rites in the Byzantine liturgy and at the conclusion of Byzantine morning and evening prayer. The East Syrian liturgy inserted the Trisagion before the scripture proclamation and introduced both a Byzantine synapte litany (the ba’ta) and aiteseis at the end of its liturgy of the word.
\textsuperscript{76} The loan-word from Greek betrays its inspiration. It is a poetic refrain for psalmody. The term is also used for a group of psalms and their refrains, as well as the equivalent of an ekphronesis. Vööbus discusses Mar Awa I’s literary legacy, pp. 166-168. for a musicological account of the
Introduction

the famous seventh century East Syrian Theologian Babai the Great were also included in it and he gave shape to many Christological prayers in the divine office. Patriarch Elia I (ninth century) composed the prayers for the rite of genuflection after the sancta sanctis (Holy Qurbana for the holy people) in the Pentecostal Eucharistic celebration. Patriarch Elia III alias Abu Halim (d.1190)\textsuperscript{77} composed a large number of prayers for night and morning (ܡܠܐ ܐܬܘܡܒܐ ܕܠܠܝܐ) of all Sundays, festivals of our Lord and three-day fast of the Rogation of the Ninevites. His liturgical composition known under his pen-name Abu Halim, contains also the prayers attributed to Paul of Anbar (d.740-741) and Šallitha of Reshayna.\textsuperscript{78} George of Warda (d. before 1300)\textsuperscript{79} contributed many hymns to the festivals and other particular occasions, most of them are intended as ‘alam (ܐܠܡ = for ever) strophes in night hymns (ܥܘܢܝ̈ܬܐܕܡܘܬܒܐ ܕܠܠܝܐ), and some of them are meant for the post Gospel lesson hymns and the communion service hymns. This liturgical text known in his name Warda (ܘܪܕܐ = Rose) contains also other compositions attributed to Šlemon the Metropolitan of Basra (Ŝlemon de Basra), his contemporary and Catholicos Yahballaha II (1190-1222). Abdišo’ bar Brika (d. 1338), contrary to the biblical and simple style of the early compositions, introduced a few prayers of a philosophical nature in metrical style.

V. DIVISION OF THE LITURGICAL CYCLE

The structuring and organization of the East Syrian liturgical year, which begins on first October,\textsuperscript{80} is intimately associated with the liturgical reforms of Patriarch


\textsuperscript{78} E.g., \textit{Hudra} Vol. I, p. 602.


\textsuperscript{80} Išo’yahb has determined that the liturgical year should begin in October– “which as we have said is the start of winter when seeds are sown in the soil and rain begins to fall and before which all the produce of the ending year are Moses, that is the four governments from Moses up to Christ, of the desert, of the Judges, of the kings and priests and of the Maccabees...”. Cf. \textit{Expositio}, pp. 28-36. For further study see also in Antony Vallavanthrara, \textit{The Liturgical Year of the St. Thomas Christians ...}, pp. 481-485; See also the prayer for ‘the Blessings of Months’ start
Introduction

Išo’yahb who rearranged the liturgical cycles and the season and fixed their length. According to Išo’yahb the period of Moses (ܡܘܫܐ) and Dedication of the Church (ܩܘܕܫ ܥܕܬܐ) are an apt explanation of the whole salvation history which starts with the beginning of the civil year in October (with the period of Moses) and ends with the month of September which signifies the coming of the son of perdition and the revelation of the Lord and the final consummation and thus the liturgical year depicts the whole salvation history.

The East Syrian liturgical cycle is designated as a series of Şabo’ē81 (ܫܒܘܥܐ = weeks). The seasons are as follows: Annunciation (4 weeks), Epiphany (7 weeks), Fast (7 weeks), Resurrection (7 weeks), Apostles (7 weeks), Summer (7 weeks), Elia-Cross (7 weeks), Moses (7 weeks) and Dedication of the Church (4 weeks). However, due to the date of Pascha and Nativity / Epiphany, the seasons are often shortened.82 The mystery of Divine providence according to the true Church Fathers was arranged for the whole Christian year. It shows us the history of salvation from the beginning of the world to its end, the second coming of Christ.83 East Syrian divine office is quite ancient and beautiful, arranged in chronological order that is from the period of Annunciation to the period of Dedication of the Church. It is done with a perfect knowledge and true and

---

81 The root ܫܒܥܐ means “seven”. It reveals the origin of this system of reckoning as a pentecostade, made up of pentecoste, a fifty-day period of seven weeks plus one day. This is a common pentecoste and a week, giving a lunar year of 357 days. Additional days are intercalated to conform to a solar year. For a short history and relevant texts, see Ephrem Carr, “The Liturgical Year in the Syrian Churches: Adaptation to Different Ecclesial-Liturgical Ambients”, in L’Adattamento Culturale della Liturgia: Metodi e Modelli, ed., Ildebrando Scicolone, Analecta Liturgica 19 (Studia Anselmiana 113 Rome: Sant’s Anselmo, 1993), pp. 47-59. It denoting a liturgical season, or ‘week’, is a strong indication of the pentecontad system. For further study see David Royal, The Lenten Liturgy of the Hours..., pp. 25-26.

82 In particular, the season of Moses is rarely more than four weeks, and often just one Sunday. Summer is markedly penitential, and the finding of cross is commemorated in the season of Elias. See Juan Mateos, Lelya-Sapra, pp. 14-16.

83 Tr. 27. Sebastian Brock noted that the contents of this manuscript and the manuscript of the Athens National library seem the same; cf. Sebastian Brock, “The Syriac Manuscripts in the National Library of Athens”, Le Muséon 79 (1966), pp.165-185.
accurate understanding.\textsuperscript{84} This division of the liturgical year into different periods is attributed to Catholicos Išo‘yahb.\textsuperscript{85}

1. Annunciation\textsuperscript{86} (ܣܘܒܪܐ)

The liturgical year of the Church of the East begins with the period of Annunciation. It presents the mystery of incarnation and the Church instructs us to fast in this period. Through the twenty-five days fasting we have to empty ourselves in order to bear Christ in our hearts. Because the Saviour who emptied Himself and came down from heaven\textsuperscript{87} for our sake in order to raise us to heaven. The period of Annunciation (ܣܘܒܪܐ) is divided into four weeks, they are 1\textsuperscript{st} Sunday of Subara is from the first generation of the house of Adam till the righteous Noah; 2\textsuperscript{nd} Sunday is from the generation of Noah to the faithful Abraham; 3\textsuperscript{rd} Sunday is from the generation of all the houses of Abraham to the blessed David and 4\textsuperscript{th} Sunday is from David to the revelation of Jesus.\textsuperscript{88} For there is born to you today the Saviour, who is the Lord Jesus, born to you in the city of His Father David. Annunciation was in the month of Nisan ܢܝܣܢ (April) but the Fathers ordered it in the month of first Kanon ܟܢܘܢ ܩܕܝܡ (December), in winter full of woes and it depicts for us the type of this world that is full of wretchedness; but then the angel of God announced to us this gladness in Nisan which is a sign of the world to come, in summer, full of joys and Christ, the Sun of righteousness, was born. In the fullness of time he came from the lowest and he ascended with the steps to make us enter from the low state of worship of idols.\textsuperscript{89}

The East Syrians begin the period of Annunciation-Nativity by praising Mary for her motherhood of Christ, the Saviour. The arrival of the Saviour on the earth is seen as the fulfillment of the prophecies.

\textsuperscript{84} Tcr. 29.
\textsuperscript{85} Cf. The introduction to the Tcr. 29; also Introduction to the Mss. Cambridge Add 1981, see Juan Mateos, Lelya-Sapra,, Appendix V.
\textsuperscript{86} If December 1\textsuperscript{st} falls on any of these days such as Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday then the previous Sunday will be the 1\textsuperscript{st} Sunday of Annunciation. And if December first falls on Friday or Saturday then the next Sunday will be the 1\textsuperscript{st} Sunday of Annunciation (cf. Tcr. 29, f.4b).
\textsuperscript{87} Jn 1:18; Phil 2:6-11.
\textsuperscript{88} Tcr. 27, p.2.
\textsuperscript{89} Tcr. 27, pp.3-4.
Introduction

The period brings the good news about the beginning of the realization of the dispensation in Christ. We recall the coming of our Redeemer\textsuperscript{90} and praise Mary, the Mother of our Lord in an exalted way through the prayers of this period. In this period the Church praises Mary through the Liturgy of Hours because God chose her in order to give birth to His only begotten Son.\textsuperscript{91}

2. Nativity\textsuperscript{92} (ܐܠܕܐ) And Epiphany\textsuperscript{93} (ܕܢܚܐ)

There are twelve days between Nativity of Christ and his Epiphany which are like those years when he was going around in the world and came as Sun; the creatures did not know his glory until his baptism. At the time of Ephrem, the Nativity and Epiphany were celebrated jointly on January sixth.\textsuperscript{94} On the first Sunday after the Nativity the Church sings as “(in heaven) above, you are from the Father without a mother. And on the earth, you are without a father, from the mother”\textsuperscript{95}. The killing of the innocent children and the visit of the Magi are also commemorated at this time.\textsuperscript{96} The virginity of Mary is highlighted through the types from the Old Testament on the second Sunday of Nativity.\textsuperscript{97} And if there are two Fridays between Nativity and the Epiphany, the second Friday is celebrated as the Commemoration of Virgin Mary and if there is only one Friday (between them) then that is celebrated without any doubt.\textsuperscript{98} Mary gave birth to Christ for the salvation of the whole world. Thus Mary’s importance next to Jesus and first among the Saints is duly stressed on this Friday. Now Christ is regenerating through our hearts, so we are also called the bearer of Christ and the

\textsuperscript{90} The subtitle of this period is ‘the coming of the Redeemer’; cf. Antony Vallavanthara, \textit{The Liturgical Year of the St. Thomas Christians...}, p.69.
\textsuperscript{91} See \textit{Hudra} Vol. I, pp. 113-161.
\textsuperscript{92} Nativity of our Lord is celebrated on 25\textsuperscript{th} December (Cf. Tcr. 27, p.36; Tcr. 29, p. 22a).
\textsuperscript{93} Feast of Epiphany of our Lord is on 6\textsuperscript{th} January (Cf. Tcr. 27, p.98; Tcr. 29, p.49a).
\textsuperscript{94} The Canon 6 of the Doctrine of Apostles orders the celebration of the Epiphany on January 6.
\textsuperscript{95} There was only one feast of the \textit{Denha}, which was the Nativity of the Eastern Church. For further study see Antony Vallavanthara, \textit{The Liturgical Year of the St. Thomas Christians...}, p.468; also in Edmund Beck, \textit{Des heiligen Ephrem des Syrers Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphania)}, CSCO 186, Syr.82 (1959), pp. v-vi.
\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Hudra} Vol. I, pp.161-162.
\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Hudra} Vol. I, pp.168, 172.
\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Hudra} Vol. I, p. 585.
Introduction

givers of Christ through our words and deeds. Only after the commemoration of Virgin Mary, the Epiphany of our Lord is celebrated and then afterwards the commemoration and other feasts are going to be started.

There are seven weeks in the period of *Denha* (דֶּנְחָא = Epiphany). The period of Epiphany representing three years and months which is the period after Christ’s Epiphany until his ministry was perfected in the adorable gospel. On the first Sunday of this period we are obliged to remember and celebrate the killing of the innocent children. And on the second Sunday we remember the Presentation of our Lord in the temple, and as the prophet said, Simon the Elder took the child in his hands; and the Fathers of the Church also said to remember the growth of the child that is the period of thirty years before the baptism of our Saviour. He was fighting against Satan from his baptism onwards. With regard to the week after the baptism of Jesus they ordered anthem, qanona, hymns which were arranged in a suitable manner for the three years after his baptism. This period celebrates the mystery of revelation of the Holy Trinity through the public life of Jesus that started with His baptism in Jordan. The week of baptism shows our renewal in Christ and redemption through Him.

This *šabo’a* has the beginning of the commemoration of Saints in the liturgical cycle. On 6th January the Church celebrates Epiphany of our Lord. All Fridays of this period are provided for the commemorations of those who revealed Christ to this world through their life and deeds. If there are 9 Fridays in the period of Epiphany then the Church commemorates:

1) On the 1st Friday the commemoration of St. John the Baptist
2) On the 2nd Friday the commemoration of Sts. Peter and Paul
3) On the 3rd Friday the commemoration of the Evangelists
4) On the 4th Friday the commemoration of St. Stephen.
5) On the 5th Friday the commemoration of the Greek Doctors.

---

99 Tcr. 27
100 Tcr. 29
6) On the 6th Friday the commemoration of the Syrian Doctors.

7) On the 7th Friday the commemoration of the one particular saint.

8) On the 8th Friday the commemoration of the Forty Martyrs.

9) On the 9th Friday the commemoration of the Dead.

3. Great Fast (ܦܫܡܐ ܪܒܐ)

It celebrates the mystery of the passion and death of Christ. Just as our Saviour fasted forty days that is seven weeks, so in the period of Fast ܦܫܡܐ ܪܒܐ we fast, in imitation of our Saviour; since He gave us the type for Lent. At the end of the public life of Christ, he came to the passion and Cross where he gave up His spirit to the mortals on behalf of the race of human beings. His passion, death and resurrection are a mystery.103 Through His fasting He fought against Satan, who is the adversary of uprightness and overcame death. By the anthems and the entire rituals for this period the Church participates in His Passover, passion, death, burial and resurrection.104 This is the season of purification of life through the prayers, fast, penance and repentance as an intensive participation in the saving acts of the suffering and the death of Christ by doing good deeds.

In the fast commemorating the very fast of Christ himself, the Church embarks upon an intensely spiritual pilgrimage. According to David Royal, it is a period not only of abstinence, but of penitential anticipation of the joyous feast of Resurrection.105

4. Resurrection (ܩܝܡܬܐ) and Ascension106 (ܣܘܠܩܐ)

103 Tcr. 27
104 Tcr. 29
105 David Royal, The Lenten Liturgy of the Hours ..., p.1.
106 The commemoration of Mar Gevarghese is on 24th April in every year; if this day falls on great Saturday or on the feast of Resurrection it must be postponed to the Monday/ Tuesday after these days. Or it is laid down on the Friday of Confessors it must be postponed to Saturday and if it is on New Sunday then to Monday without any change (cf. Tcr. 29, p. 458a). The commemoration of Mar Gevarghese is on 24th April in every year even if it falls on Friday of Confessors or Sunday (cf. Tcr. 27, p.758).
Introduction

It commemorates the mystery of the resurrection as the foretaste of our own participation in the risen glory of Christ in heaven. There are seven weeks from Palm Sunday till the Ascension. There are forty days between the Resurrection and Ascension. In those days the Disciples of Christ saw Him and He assured them of the blessed Resurrection that was sought by all the children of Adam. He showed in His ascension to heaven, likewise on the day of resurrection, that all the righteous and just would be entering into it. Concerning the period, He ascended into heaven forty days after his resurrection, the ascension, and the ten days after his ascension, the Fathers of the Church ordered hymns and responses and everything that is suitable for the 50th day of resurrection.

The Lord’s Day (Sunday) is equally important for the division of the East Syrian liturgical seasons during the course of the year. Furthermore, Sunday is the ‘Eucharistic day par excellence’ because it is the “sacramental day of the Resurrection”. The week of Resurrection and ascension is the resurrection of Christ and, at the same time, our anticipation in the resurrection and heavenly life.

5. Apostles

It celebrates the mystery of the power of the Holy Spirit worked upon the Apostles at the Pentecost. “During the period of Apostles, the apostles and their disciples were going around teaching all people and establishing the Church in the entire universe”. On the 50th day of his resurrection we acknowledge his promise of the Spirit, the Paraclete, who descended upon the apostles and they preached in all the regions. “It concerns

---

107 Tcr. 27
108 Tcr. 29
109 cf. David Royal, The Lenten Liturgy of the Hours ..., p. 27.
110 Expositio, pp. 28-36.
111 The first Sunday of the Apostles is the feast of Pentecost, and the 7th Sunday after Pentecost which is called ‘Nusardel’ is the last of the period of Apostles, and at the same time the first of the period of Summer. Cf. Tcr. 27, p.806; Tcr. 29, p. 546b. The Lent of Apostles starts (Hidra Vol. 3, p.121).
112 Tcr. 27
Introduction

the afflictions and tortures and killing which they bore and endured from the persecutors; and the conversion of the gentiles to the true faith, repentance before God at their hand”. 114

The explanatory title given to this period is “the beginning of the Church” or the ‘inauguration of the Church’115 because with the Pentecost and the preaching of the Apostles the “period of the Church” is inaugurated. The period of the Apostles is our release from the worship of idols and our approach to the Lord and our renewal through the Holy Spirit.116

6. Summer117 (مياض)

The period of Summer ܪܫܒܘܥܐܕܩܝܛܐ, consists of 7 weeks and are known as Hallelin(y). In this time through the teaching of the apostles the people were purified by repentance. It celebrates the mystery of the growth of the Church through the works of the Apostles and the martyrs. During that period we stand until the arrival of the son of perdition as declared on the first ‘onita ܪܒܘܢܐ of šaḇoaḏ ܐܠܝܐ that tell of his evil oppression.118 The apostles went to the four quarters of the world and they preached, taught, made disciples and baptized those who believed in Christ. They uprooted all the sacrifices in the temple of idols and brought back the place of true worship; they broke the images and graven images and restored purity. These things that were polluted by sin and satanic filth had been wiped clean and cleansed the Church. All the believers, the sons of the Church, cried out before God to deliver them from the hands of their enemy. And they said as follows: ‘Purify one through tears, etc.,’. 119

The week of summer which begins with the commemoration of the Apostles shows that the Church received from the apostles the gift of direction to our

114 Tcr. 29
116 Expositio, pp. 28-36.
117 1\textsuperscript{st} Sunday of Summer is called ‘Nusardel’ and the commemoration of twelve Apostles. This is the first Sunday of the Persian New Year or it can also signify the first fruits of the New Year.
118 Tcr. 27
119 Tcr. 29.
Introduction

goal. The name Qaitā is not self explanatory; this is the period of the growing of the Church. In this period Church commemorates all her children, who spread out the Gospel and shed their blood for the sake of her (Church) and her bridegroom, Christ. The call for repentance is also found in these prayers. The Commemorations of St. Thomas, Mar Jacob of Nisibis, Mar Mari the Apostle, Šmuni and her children, Mar Simeon bar Sābba ‘e, Mar Qardagh the Martyr, are included in this period. In this prayer we humble ourselves and pray “Lord God of my salvation, I am your servant and son of your handmaid. I have sinned in heaven before you and I am not worthy to be called your son”. The Church calls the martyrs famous valiant men and she sings: “O Martyrs of the Holy Church and fortresses and strong walls; she takes shelter in you, for she saw the hidden power in you by whose help you took up sufferings and diverse deaths. The Church as well, gathered up and collected your bones and built glorious churches in your honour. Behold, they let flow all kinds of help, to your honour and to the glory of Jesus who crowned you”.

7. Elia- Šiliva The period of Elia and the Finding of the adorable Cross give us a hint concerning the arrival of Elia from paradise and the power of the holy Cross. We do not know how many weeks into the šabo’a of the finding of the Cross occurs, just as we do not know how long the son of perdition will reign; and then Elia will appear; or how long the time of Elia will be before

120 Expositio, pp. 28-36.
121 Ḥudra Vol. 3, 640.
122 First Friday of Summer see Ḥudra Vol. 3, p.280.
123 Second Friday of Summer see Ḥudra Vol. 3, p.291.
124 Fifth Friday of summer see Ḥudra Vol. 3, p.327.
125 Sixth Friday of Summer see Ḥudra Vol. 3, p.370.
126 Seventh Friday of Summer see Ḥudra Vol. 3, p.401.
128 The first three Sundays of this period are known as that of Elia. From the 4th Sunday onwards they are intercalated with that of the Cross and thus form the 4th till the 7th, these Sundays are called that of Elia and of the Cross. The finding of the Cross of our Lord is celebrated on 13th September in every year (cf. Tcr. 27, p.973). This is the standard time for the East Syrian but the Syro-Malabar and other West Syrians celebrated this feast on September 14 as an ‘Exaltation of Cross’.
the coming of Christ. This period reminds us of the power of the Cross at the Second coming of Christ with Elia and Moses as it has been prefigured by His transfiguration on the Mount Tabor. Why did the Fathers of the Church put the name of Mar Elia? This is the reason: “after the whole economy of our Saviour and after the conversion of the gentiles through the hands of the apostles after a period of years, and months,… whatever it may be, even though it is hidden from us yet they are clear to the knower of all things. Then zealous Elia will be sent at the end of time. At his anger and zeal he will put to an end all the schemes and devices of him whose surname is called ‘the son of perdition’. He will put to shame, consume and destroy him by the fire of his zeal. In this period he arranged the Commemoration of the Cross, because Elia took the Cross of our Saviour in his hands to struggle and fight. And with it he will conquer the son of perdition. He will return everyone to worship of the cross”. Elia will come before the second coming of Christ. The week of Elia points to the coming of the son of perdition and of the manifestation of our Saviour.

The period of the Finding of the Cross denotes the symbol of the revelation of our Saviour. This is the last week which has neither time nor place. To the disciples who asked him about the coming of Elia, our Lord said “Elia is to come first to fulfill all things”. After the arrival of Elia it will be the end of everything and the revelation of the Cross which will happen in the middle of this period, that is the coming of our Saviour is in the middle of the night to instantly do away with everything established. The period also shows judgment and the attainment of bliss by the just and punishment of the wicked.

8. Moses

Sundays after the šabo’a of Elia are called Sundays of Mar Moses. Moses and Elia appeared to Jesus on Mount Tabor in the

---

129 Tcr. 27
130 Lk 9:30-31.
131 Tcr. 29
132 Mt 17:11.
133 Expositio, pp. 28-36.
134 Moses has seven weeks is only seen in theory but practically this period never surpasses, more than four Sundays, before the period of Dedication of the Church.
day of His revelation as a type of His resurrection.\textsuperscript{135} Those Sundays after the period of Elia\textsuperscript{136} are sometimes one, sometimes two and sometimes three before the Dedication of Church \textsuperscript{137}: this is a matter of which earthly ones have no knowledge at all when our Lord comes, as he himself said: “That day and the hour nobody knows except the Father, not even the angels of heaven”, \textsuperscript{137} and the rest of the section spoken by that holy mouth. Like the period of Elia – Cross, this period also celebrates the mystery of the anticipation of the second coming of Christ.

9. Dedication of the Church \textsuperscript{135}

There are four Sundays in the Dedication of the Church that carry the mystery of the end of this world. On these Sundays of the Dedication of the Church we praise him and declare the glory and honour with which Christ, the true bridegroom, clothes his bride, the Church. Interpreter calls Christ the bridegroom and the Church the bride: likewise this was understood as the group of righteous and of holy men.\textsuperscript{138} In the introduction of ms Tcr 27 one can find out the explanation of the four weeks of this period as: First Sunday of the Dedication of the Church: First horn, which is in the Church that calls powers of the heights that, will be given grace to the Second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Second Sunday of the Dedication of the Church: Second horn, the chief angel Gabriel proclaimed and trembling and terror fell upon the spiritual and earthly beings. Third Sunday of the Dedication of the Church: Revelation of Christ, resurrection from the dead and the end of the son of perdition. Fourth Sunday of the Dedication of the Church: Time of entering of the Church with her children to the heavenly dwelling places with her Lord Jesus for the delight of the life forever. Our Lord makes us worthy of the heavenly rest in His grace and mercies forever. Amen.\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{135} Tcr. 27.
\textsuperscript{136} It is interesting to note that Brikišo does not give the name Moses.
\textsuperscript{137} Mk 13:32.
\textsuperscript{138} Tcr. 27.
\textsuperscript{139} Tcr. 27, pp.1-5. Introduction given by the copyist.
Introduction

It represents the final eschatological victory of the Church and the entry into the heavenly Jerusalem. It is a glorification of the Church also. The salvation history begins from the annunciation and ends with the glorious entry of the Church into the heavenly bridal chamber, heaven and her glorification. So the East Syrians have arranged their cycle of worship in a very systematic way by celebrating the whole salvific works of Christ in the span of a year. The cycle begins with the period of Annunciation, the preparation for the Nativity and ends with the period of the Dedication of the Church, the eschatological fulfillment of the history of salvation.\(^{140}\) The periods from Annunciation to the Pentecost fulfilling the salvation in Christ and the period of the Apostles and Summer as the beginning and the growth of the Church which culminates in the eschatological revelation of the second coming of the Lord and the entry into the heavenly Jerusalem seem to be the theology of the liturgical cycle. Pierre Youssef, who studied the liturgical hours on the basis of Christology,\(^{141}\) states that the prayers on various seasons do not exclude God the Father and Holy Spirit but the Christian liturgy focuses on the historical action of divine redemption of Christ, the historical actor and mediator; that is why He is also the mediator and the goal of our worship.

Our liturgy celebrates in the Annunciation-Nativity the accomplishment of the prophecies in Christ, his coming and the beginning of the new Era; the Epiphany period recalls the divine manifestation of Christ and our rebirth in the Spirit. The period of Lent proclaims Christ as the revealed Word of God and revealing Him as the giver of Life through his Passion. The Resurrection period contemplates the glorification of Christ and the beginning of the Messianic community and the life of the Kingdom; the Periods of Apostles and Summer indicate the universal call to discipleship of the community guided by the Spirit; the periods of Elia-S·liva-Moses meditate on the establishment of this Kingdom in the Church which, in the period of Dedication is contemplated as received by her Bridegroom the Son of

\(^{140}\) For the West Syrian, the liturgical year begins with Dedication of the Church, passes through Annunciation, Epiphany, period before Lend, Lent, Resurrection, Pentecost, and ends with the exaltation of the Cross; Cf. The Calendar of West Syrians.

God in her final realization.\textsuperscript{142} The liturgical seasons are arranged systematically, from Christ’s arrival on the earth until our arrival to Christ in heaven. Through the mystery of Incarnation, He begins a new era by fulfilling our hope of salvation and establishes a new heaven in the world.

\section*{VI. LITURGICAL HOURS}

Time and seasons are the precious gifts of God to man in order to grow and enjoy his life in this world. In every religion ‘prayer’ is an important feature among them. It is a fundamental part of their life. God’s salvific call is extended to man through time and seasons. The Church of the East has a magnificent arrangement of the Liturgy of Hours according to the paschal mystery of salvation,\textsuperscript{143} so that we could draw easily into an ecstatic experience of the divine dispensation which is centred around / on the Christ-event.\textsuperscript{144} The Acts of the Apostles\textsuperscript{145} give us sufficient information about the prayer life of the Apostles and the first Christian community. Emphasis should be given to the form \textit{tais proseukhais}, “the prayers”, the plural noun with a definite article in Greek always points to a set of determined prayers at specific times. So we come to the conclusion that the first Christian community used to come together for certain prayers at fixed times.\textsuperscript{146}

We have evidence for prayer at the third hour (Acts 2:1-15), sixth hour (Acts 10:9f), ninth hour (Acts 3:1f), mid-night (Acts 16:25f) and so on. St. James exhorts us to pray when we are suffering, cheerful, sick and sinful (James 5:13f) and St. Paul asks us “to sing in Jesus Christ psalms and hymns and spiritual songs

\textsuperscript{142} When we see this, we do not exclude the role of the Father and the Holy Spirit, but the Christian liturgy focuses on the historical action of divine redemption of which Christ is the historical actor and mediator, that is why He is also the mediator and the goal of our worship.


\textsuperscript{145} Acts 2:42

Introduction

with thankfulness in our hearts to God” (Col. 3:16). Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is our foremost model, constantly inducing every Christian to pray without ceasing.\(^{147}\)

Prayer at the beginning and the end of the day is common to almost all religions. With the continuation of Jewish tradition,\(^ {148}\) all Christian Churches developed their own pattern of liturgical prayers in the course of time. Though the Liturgy of Hours has its roots in the Jewish culture\(^ {149}\) from where the disciples came in the beginning, its format is original and it is from the order of our Lord to ‘pray continuously’.\(^ {150}\) The Didache\(^ {151}\) (ca. 140 A.D.) gives one of the earliest pieces of evidence of the cyclic prayers of the Christians.\(^ {152}\) According to Robert Taft the morning and evening prayers are emphasizing the Passover from death to life,\(^ {153}\) and the domestic piety inherent in lamp-lighting\(^ {154}\) ceremonies in the evening.\(^ {155}\) The second and third century theologians like Origen,\(^ {156}\) Tertullian, Hippolytus

---

\(^{147}\) Mt. 14:23, 26:36-44; Lk 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 11:1; Jn 17:9-12; etc. *The Divine Offices*, The Liturgy of the Hours according to the Roman Rite (Dublin 1974), pp. xx-xxii.

\(^{148}\) The morning and evening prayer were the foundation of Christian daily prayer and were derived from the practice of the synagogue; cf. C.W. Dugmore, *The influence of the synagogue upon the Divine Office*, pp. 10, 47, 70. And according to Stewart-Sykes, Dugmore assumes, rather than argues, that this pattern of prayer derived from Judaism, Alistair Stewart-Sykes, “Prayer Five Times in the Day and at Midnight: Two Apostolic Customs” SL 33 (2003), p. 1. See also Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (London 1992), who sums up much of modern Jewish and Christian scholarship on the subject, esp., pp. 186-7 and 24.


\(^{150}\) Cf. Lk 18:1; Rom 12:12; Col. 4:2.


\(^{154}\) Graham Woolfenden gives us some themes on the Lightening :(a) the theme of light overcoming darkness is a ‘hope’ at nights, and an eschatological promise in the mornings; (b) the light is that of the risen Christ; (c) the evening light ceremony may be associated with a common meal; (d) the order in which prayers are described is often evident, then morning; ‘Vespers’ begins the new day; (e) psalms and canticles might include psalms 62 and 140. cf. Graham Woolfenden, “Daily Prayer: Its origin in its Function” in E.A. Livingstone (Ed) *SP* 30 (Leuven 1997), p. 368.

\(^{155}\) Ibid., p.37.

\(^{156}\) He wrote about the three times prayer in a day such as morning, noon and evening prayers. Origen, *De oratione* 12.2. I adopted the ET from Stewart-Sykes “Prayer five time…”
and Cyprian\textsuperscript{157} bore witness to the different times for prayer in earlier time. Apostolic Constitutions VIII, 34, 1-7 Hours of Prayer:

1. Offer your prayers in the morning, at the third hour, at the sixth, at the ninth, in the evening, and at cockcrow. 2. In the morning, giving thanks that the Lord has sent you light, chasing away the night, and bringing on the day. 3. At the third hour because at that [hour] the Lord received the sentence [of condemnation] from Pontius Pilate. 4. At the sixth, because at that [hour] he was crucified. 5. At the ninth, because all the things were shaken at the crucifixion of the Lord, horrified at the temerity of the impious Jews, unable to bear the injury offered to the Lord. 6. In the evening, giving thanks that he has given you the night to rest from the labours of the day. 7. At the cockcrow, because that hour brings the good news of the coming of the day, for the performance of the works of light.\textsuperscript{158}

By the fourth century we can see the emergence of a format for the Liturgy of Hours both in the East\textsuperscript{159} and West. In the second half of the fourth century, we have the teaching of St. John Chrysostom who exhorted us to prayer for forgiveness of sins at night, so as to move to thanksgiving and praise in the morning.\textsuperscript{160} Theodoret of Cyr (ca. 393-466) mentions night vigils, morning service at cockcrow, and the offering of incense and light at Vespers.\textsuperscript{161} According to Jacob of Serugh, God ordered the morning and evening as the

\textsuperscript{157} From the time of Tertullian a fivefold order of prayer has come into existence and these three theologians bear witness to prayer at the third and ninth hours, in addition to the times to which Origen refers.


\textsuperscript{159} Two important witnesses for the Liturgy of Hours in the East are the Syrian Document Apostolic Constitutions and Egeria’s Travels.

\textsuperscript{160} Robert Taft, \textit{The Liturgy of Hours...}, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{161} For further information, see Robert Taft, \textit{The Liturgy of Hours...}, pp. 47-48.
ministers of the whole world\textsuperscript{162} and the watchmen can sleep and others are to rise up\textsuperscript{163}. And he described the evening and morning as:

The morning goes forth as ambassador for the day,

and gets the world up to give glory at the arrival of the light.

The evening enters, whereat all creation becomes tumultuous,

as it removes its hands from labour to chant hymns of praise.

The morning and the evening endure unchanging, like luminous signs,

and from them, the world learns to give glory.\textsuperscript{164}

Two important forms of the Liturgy of the Hours were that of Cathedral office in which the bishop, priest, people and sometimes the king also participated and the Monastic divine office which was celebrated by the monks in the monasteries carrying the importance of praying continuously in the church. The Liturgy of the Hours is not a mere ritual practice prescribed by the Church as a religious organization but it has a sacramental character because it is the expression of the union of the Church with Christ to continue the work of salvation.\textsuperscript{165} As all the liturgical celebrations in the Church, the liturgy of Hours also takes its meaning from the paschal mystery\textsuperscript{166} of salvation in Christ Jesus. In the East Syrian tradition the Liturgy of Hours remained as means of sanctification for all the faithful.

In General norms of the liturgy the Catholic Church gave the spiritual meaning and explanation of each Hour:


\textsuperscript{163} Jacob of Serugh, \textit{Giving praise for the Morning and Evening}, lines 13-14.

\textsuperscript{164} Jacob of Serugh, \textit{Giving praise for the Morning and Evening}, lines 73-78.


\textsuperscript{166} Every day Christians recall His birth, public life, passion, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and second coming through the liturgical hours as same in the liturgical seasons of a year.
Vespers as the remembrance of the work of redemption, especially in Jesus’ giving of himself upon the cross and correspondingly in the Lord’s Supper (no.39); Lauds as a memorial of the resurrection (no.38); and Terce, Sext and None as hours which are a “commemoration of the events of our Lord’s Passion” (no.75). All of this is regarded as a “sacrifice of lips” which praise God’s name, as a sign of giving one’s life in the following of Jesus, and as participation in his interceding with God for the salvation of the world, as is given notable expression especially in the intercessions at Vespers.  

As with all other Orientals, for the East Syrians the day begins immediately after sunset, and the service appointed for that hour is called ܕܪܡܫܐ d-Ramša or Vespers. After this the congregation dispersed and returned to the church about dusk for the ܣܘܒܥܐ Suba’a or Compline. This service has altogether ceased and is only used during the Lent, the three days of Rogation of Ninevites, and on the eve of certain festivals, when it is joined to the Vespers and it forms with that one service. The next in order is the ܨܠܘܬܐ ܕܠܠ Sîlotâ d-Leleya, or Nocturns, in which the particular prayers called ܐܡܘܬܒ Mowtbe are recited. After this the ܠܐܩܕܫܗܪܐ Sahra, or Lauds, are supposed to begin with day-break; and after these the ܨܠܘܬܐ ܕܨܦܪܐ Sîlotâ d-Sapra or prime. For the study of the East Syrian liturgy of the Hours we can take some extracts from the Sinhados or Canons collected by Mar Abdišo’ in 1298 A.D:

The first service is that of the Lauds, which is offered up by laymen on behalf of their different worldly callings, and in order that they may be delivered from and strengthened against those hostile spirits, who roam about at noonday seeking to ensnare men into sin. And because labour precedes rest, the labourer should pray that he may obtain rest. The angels, likewise, at the beginning

---

167 General norms for the Liturgical Hours in Documents on the Liturgy, 3784; cf. Irmgard Pahl, “The Paschal Mystery ….”, p. 34.
Introduction

of time sang praises as soon as the light was created. For these reasons the Lauds prayers rank first.

The second service is that of Vespers, and its proper season is just before sunset. Herein thanks are offered to God for our preservation during the day, as also for the coming night ordained for our repose. We implore also the mercy of God for those errors, short-comings and follies of which we have been guilty during the past day and that we may be preserved from ‘the pestilence that walked in darkness’.

The third service is called Suba’ā, from the practice of those holy men who fasted all their days, (and who ate only at night) but by laymen it is styled ‘the prayer before sleep’. At this time it is proper for us to recall to mind all the sins which we have committed, and to supplicate pardon from the merciful Lord; and moreover to think of death and to resolve, before God, that if spared we will, to the best of our frail nature, endeavour to sin no more. We should also, at this time, consider the coming judgment of God, that whilst buried in sleep our dreams may not be of those vain acts which we have committed during the day.

The fourth service is that of the Nocturns, and during this time every believer will fix according as he is zealously affected in this holy exercise. Some pray at first, others at the second, and others again at the third cook-crowing; but the common hour now observed is when the entire congregation assembles in the church for Divine worship.\(^\text{168}\)

On account of the necessary worldly occupations of laymen the Canons have permitted that they should observe these services voluntarily, but the Lauds and Vespers as ordered by the Canon without intermission. In expressing the Jewish liturgical sense of Jesus, the whole Christendom at present has adopted the Jewish

way of seven times of prayer a day (Ps 118:164). And according to the East Syriac tradition, the following are the seven times of prayer:

1. ሪምሽܐ Evening prayer, celebrated at 6.00 p.m and 3 O’clock according to ወሮ’yahb.  

2. ሪܣܘܒܥܐ Prayer after supper (Compline) at 9.00 p.m.

3. ሪܠܠܝܐ Night Prayer, at 12.00 mid night

4. ሪܠܐܩܕܫܗܪܐ Vigil, at 3.00 a.m.

5. ሪܨܦܪܐ Morning, at 6.00 a.m.

6. ሪܩܘܛܥܐ Prayer of Third Hour (terce), at 9 clock morning.

7. ሪܥܕܢܐ “Noon prayer” (sext), at 12.00 mid-day.

The Bishops and monks used to celebrate all these seven hours of prayer as far as possible in community; the clergy in parishes and ordinary faithful were celebrating only the ሪምሽܐ in the evening and the ሪܠܠܝܐ $\&$ ሪܨܦܪܐ together in the morning. The terce and sext are given only for the period of Great Fast; and the compline is given only for three-day fast of the Rogation of Ninevites, for the period of Great Fast and for the some commemoration and feasts. These minor hours had already disappeared by the time of the ninth century anonymous Commentary on the Ecclesiastical Offices attributed to George of Arbela. We, Christians, are living with our Lord Jesus Christ always through these liturgical prayers of hours and experience the death and resurrection and are waiting for the second coming also. Through these prayers people can get a good discipline; peace and harmony are included in their way of life.

---

169 The evening prayer must be finished earlier because the faithful must return their home carefully before night.


171 Literally ‘time’. It refers to the office of sext (observed only in Lent). It may also refer to the time of prayer in general.

172 Sylverster Poduchery, Ramsa..., pp. 172-178.

VII. FEAST AND COMMEMORATION

The word ‘Feast’ ܥܐܕܐ is usually confined by the East Syrians to the Feasts of our Lord on account of the economy of salvation brought by Christ Himself, whereas the days of Saints are called ‘Commemorations’ or ‘Memorials’ܕܘܟܪܢܐ. There are many days set apart for the commemoration of Virgin Mary. We could not find any reference to the celebration of these memorials from the historical documents. But the varying prayers for the memorials, seen in the divine offices, serve as the basis for such information. Between the fifth and the eighth centuries veneration of the Mother of Christ increased in the Eastern Church and was reflected in the growing number of special feasts in her honour. At the Second Council of Nicaea (787) clear distinctions were made: latr(e)ia (worship) is for God alone; d(o)ul(e)ia (reverence) for the Saints; and hyperdouleia (more than reverence) for Mary.

First day of the week is the day of our Lord because he rose from death on that day and his second coming will be made on that day also, so the Church of the East treats this day as the ‘day of the Lord’. According to Gabriel Qatraya there are three important reasons for celebrating commemorations on Friday, the ‘eve of preparation’ that is why this day is separated from the rest of the week days: (1) The creation of our first Father (Adam), who was called by God “image and likeness of himself” (Gen 1:26) and placed in Paradise of pleasure with great honour. (2) The Passion of our Saviour Messiah, the Second Adam, who by his death untied the judgment of death, and uprooted sin from our race, and caused the power of Satan to cease from us. (3) The healing of the paralytic, who

174 The word feast is generally used in western theology today either for the feasts of the Lord or for the feasts of the saints. Cf. Antony Vallavanthara, The Liturgical Year of the St. Thomas Christians ..., p. 412.
175 Church of the East celebrates three commemorations on Mary in a year; and the prayers of annunciation period are also included with the praising of Mary; every day in a Liturgy of Hours and in a Holy Mysteries we praise and commemorate her in an exalted way. But Chaldean and Syro-Malabar Church commemorate many times in the liturgical cycle on the basis of doctrines made by Pope in various season.
176 See Iudra and Breviary.
Introduction

received the healing from Simon Peter and John in the name of Lord Jesus Christ. From the commemoration of Mary on second Sunday after Nativity the Church starts to celebrate the commemoration of other Saints and Fathers of the Church.

The attitude of the Syriac Churches towards Mary is biblical in nature and liturgical in devotion. The Syriac Churches have a loving affection and great devotion towards Mary as the mother of the Son of God and as their own mother. The apocryphal writings, the writings of the Fathers and the liturgical texts which date back to the early centuries of Christianity bring out well their esteem, appreciation and devotion to Mary. The Church of the East did not make any doctrine, portray any image, or develop any theological analysis on Mary in the past, which is why the other Churches have considered her as a ‘Church which like the Protestant Church does not give any veneration to Mary’. The Syriac liturgical texts (especially the East Syrian) and the Syriac patristic writings will enable us to bring out the Mariological understanding of the Church of the East. The Mariology of the Churches of Syriac tradition is more an attitude of faith; it is wonder and experience than a systematic treatise of logical arguments and dogmatic formulae. The Syriac authors expressed their views on Mary mainly through poetic language in which they employed a lot of symbolism, imagery, paradox and types.

Sundays are reserved as days of the Lord; Fridays, the day of the passion of the Lord, are dedicated to commemorate saints, probably because the first saints were martyrs who had participated in the passion of Christ by the sacrifice of their lives. In all the oriental Churches Wednesday is dedicated to commemorate Mary, the mother of Christ. There is only one feast during the period of Nativity and Epiphany, that is, first or second Friday after Nativity which is dedicated to the commemoration of blessed Mart Mariam. This Friday is the first

182 See reference of all Wednesdays in Hurdra.
sanctoral commemoration in the cycle of the year. It is dedicated to congratulate Mary, the Mother of the Son of God, for her wonderful place in salvation history for her giving birth to the Saviour of the world.

Patristic Period

Ephrem’s collection of the Hymns of Nativity (Epiphany) includes 28 hymns with the title of Nativity, 13 hymns on Epiphany and sogyata for the commemoration of Mart Mariam. The themes of the sogyata are related to the mysteries commemorated after the Nativity, like presentation of the Lord commemorated on the second Sunday after the Nativity and the commemoration of Mart Maryam on the second Friday. By the fifth century onwards the Church started to celebrate the commemoration of Virgin Mary. According to the anonymous liturgical commentary, the following is the reason for describing the commemoration of Mart Mariam after Nativity:

Of the Blessed Lady Mary; because she is mentioned in the prophet and the beginning of our Lord’s origin from her and his birth in the flesh was from her, He separated her for this by the plan of God and she was honoured beforehand by the angel with (the greeting) “Peace”. This word (šlêm) was not said by the spiritual being before the prophets; but to her. “Peace” was added above all others and the word of peace and teaching- in that peace she was crowned with honours. Commemoration is rightly made of her in the series of Hudra, because the gospel in dealing with the Lord recalls her (Mary) and it was impossible to omit mentioning (commemorating) Mary from the beginning of the gospel up to his (of Christ) baptism. The Gospel proceeds with his birth, growth and education, Mary

---

183 For ET see Sebastian Brock, *Bride of Light: Hymns on Mary from the Syriac Churches*, ME 6 (Kottayam 1994).
185 Marutha of Maipherkat (before 410 A.D) quotes the Doctrine of the Apostles and tells us that there was a Eucharist celebration on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday. Among the feasts it mentions the Nativity on December 25, the Epiphany on January 6, the 40 days Fast, then the Passover and the Resurrection, Ascension, 40 days after the Resurrection and something (the text is not quite clear) ten days later; and in addition to the commemoration of martyrs there is a mention of ‘Our Lady Mary’. Cf. Antony Vallavanthara, *The Liturgical Year of the St. Thomas Christians ..., p.474.*
Introduction

has an important role. Not only this, but when she came to speak with him then he replied “whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, is my brother, my sister, and my mother”,\(^1\) not that he rejected his mother, but what he owed his mother had been accomplished and he now included her in the general category of humans. Because of this he said: I come so as to be born of a woman and put on visible humanity so as to convert those in doubt who are unable to see my divinity in its essence because it is invisible. Now everyone who sees and believes in my Father who is in heaven- that just as I am in a dishonorable way on earth, He remains in heaven in his invisibility, they will believe in him as invisible and believe in me that I am from him, because the works that I do, which are according to his commands and respond to his works. Women in old age are considered as my mothers in the flesh; girls as virgins and my sisters. Males those who believe in me, I call my brothers.

He did not call men as fathers. He had a mother on earth; and he called his disciples ‘brothers’ in certain places; virgins he called sisters. But the ‘Father’ he said was in heaven. He not only said that the Father was in heaven but forbade us who have fathers in the flesh to call anyone our father. He taught us that ‘we will not call anyone as father on earth’.\(^2\) Rightly did he not mention ‘father’ among those he listed, that is, mother, brothers and sisters. Because blessed Mary had completed her part in the divine economy and growth of our Lord in the flesh it was fitting that her role be set at rest in a harbour of peace.

When Išo’yabh has dealt with the birth and growth of the Lord, that is circumcision, the sacrifices and offerings of the Magi and other such things, he let blessed Mary rest in peace through the commemoration he arranged for her in the Church, so that when we make her commemoration we become aware that she has completed her task and nothing further is required. Further, that her commemoration is on the Friday is because it was on a Friday that Eve her mother, who sinned, was created. Mary’s commemoration on the Friday rightly proclaims the extent of her greatness. When the shame and fall of (first) Eve

\(^{1}\) Mt 12:49-50.

\(^{2}\) Mt 23:9.
Introduction

which happened on the sixth day is recounted to us it is fittingly that we recite the glorious honours of the daughter of Eve who was victorious and passed from the world with glorious honours on a Friday. Let us forget the agony of the first sin by remembering the great honour of her who has arisen. As we recall that Eve was the cause of the fall of Adam as he himself proclaimed – she deceived me\(^{188}\) - so now Mary is the cause of the raising up of Adam. As Eve pointed out to him the tree of death and gave him the fruit and he ate, so also Mary showed him the tree of life, sprung from her, and offered him its fruits and revived him. Rightly is the commemoration made of Mary on a Friday on which Eve sinned. By this commemoration of her we forget the sin of Eve and praise very much our Lady Mary.\(^{189}\)

The Cause of the Commemoration of the Blessed Lady Mary, the Bearer of Christ, which was composed ‘by one of the brothers Badoqe of the school of Nisibis’\(^{190}\) also gave us the importance of the commemoration of Mary on First or second Friday after Nativity. This cause appears as second item in the manuscript tradition containing the collection of Causes of the Feasts. Its place between Thomas of Edessa’s Cause of the Nativity and the Cause of the Epiphany composed by the same author is undoubtedly determined by the place of the celebration of the commemoration of Mary in the East Syrian ecclesiastical year: after Nativity and before Epiphany.\(^{191}\) Chapter five on the commemoration of Mary bears the following title: ‘That the blessed Mary until the day of her death in every respect led a life of virtuousness and holiness, and that she is virgin for ever’.\(^{192}\) The fourth chapter of the commemoration of Mary dealt with the

---

\(^{188}\) Cf. Gen 3:12.  
\(^{189}\) Expositio, p.127  
\(^{190}\) Unpublished treatises; Mingana Syr. 195: Fol. 25r. For a description of this manuscript, written in 1928 in Akqosh, by A. Mingana, see Catalogue, Vol. 1, cols. 424-428; on its position in the stemma, see W.F. Macomber, Six Explanations of the Liturgical feasts by Cyrus of Edessa, an East Syrian theologian of the Mid sixth century, CSCO 356, (Louvian 1974), p. xxiii.  
\(^{191}\) In chapter 1 (fol.26v-27v) the author of the Cause of the Commemoration of Mary himself gives an explanation of the celebration of this commemoration, in the second place (tenyanut) in the order of the ecclesiastical year. Baumstark, ‘Die nestorianischen Schriften,’ p. 337, misinterpreted the Syriac tenyanut by translating it with ‘zweimal’, and, therefore wonders ‘welches das zweite Marienfest gewesen ist.’ However, tenyanut should not be translated here with ‘twice’, but with ‘in the second place.’  
\(^{192}\) Fol. 34r-39r: the polemical parts of the commemoration of Mary, which addresses to the simple-minded interpretation of ‘wife’ in Matthew 1:24. For further study see G. J. Reinink, “The
Christological observation of the Church of the East. The title of this part is: ‘How it is proper for us to call the Blessed Mary according to the words of the Divine Scriptures’.  

VIII. COMMEMORATION OF MARY IN VARIOUS CHURCHES

1. East Syrian Tradition

i. Church of the East

The Church of the East celebrates the commemoration of Blessed Virgin Mary three times in the liturgical year. The first and most important commemoration is on the first or second Friday after the Nativity of Our Lord; the second is on May 15 and the third is on August 15. The practice of having three feasts for commemorating Virgin Mary in a year can be seen in the anonymous writing “In the History of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the History of the Likeness of Christ which the Jews of Tiberias made to mock at”:

193 Fol. 31r-34r.

194 Syriac Literature has two sets of texts about the Dormition of the Virgin. W. Wright published the first series in the year 1865 under the title “Contribution to the Apocryphal Literature of the New Testament”, and he also printed the second set the same year in the JSL with the title “The departure of my Lady Mary from this world”. Only the second text vehemently insists on the origin of three festivals of the virgin, which were directly inaugurated by the apostles. See W. Wright, Contribution to the apocryphal Literature of the New Testament collected and edited from the Syriac Manuscript in the British Museum, London 1865. The published Syriac excerpts from different manuscripts fill 65 pages. Id., The Departure of my Lady Mary from this world, in JSL 6 (1865), pp.2-32 and 7 (1865), pp.33-51 with English translation pp.129-160 [=Departure]. In that text, the first thesis is clearly the claim, that the apostles founded three festivals in honour of the virgin, one in December or January, another in August and the third one in May. F. Nau gathered a series of old Syriac calendars that confirms that the foundation mentioned in the Syriac Book of the Departure of Mary successfully developed in various churches. (F. Nau, Un Martyrologe et douze menologes Syriques, in PO 10 (Paris 1912), pp.5-26. Here I adopt the ET of Michael Van Esbroeck.) A detailed study of the traditions (including Syriac) concerning the departure of Mary is given by S.J. Shoemaker, Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary’s Dormition and Assumption (Oxford 2002).

...And they wrote down the triumphs of the Virgin in books among themselves, and sent them into the four quarters of the earth, and they ordered that the believers should celebrate the commemoration of the blessed woman three times in the year. The first was to take place in the month Kanun, on the eve of the Sabat which came after the Nativity, for the day of her departure from this world was the day of the birth of our Lord; on the day on which she gave Him birth did she depart from this world. And the doctors of the Church have ordered that the first commemoration of the virgin should take place after the festival of the birth of our Lord. And this commemoration is celebrated for the sake of the first-fruits of the crops, so that rain may come upon the early and the later crops, and they may increase at the will of their owners. And the second commemoration they celebrated in the month of Iyar, in the middle of the month, on the fifteenth day, and this commemoration was placed at the time for the sake of the filling out of the ears of corn, so that they might come to perfection and might be reaped in peace. And the third commemoration they celebrated in the month of Ab, and this also was to take place in the middle of the month, on the fifteenth day thereof; and this commemoration was arranged on behalf of the vines and the vineyards, and all the lands which had to be irrigated.

ii. Syro-Malabar Church And Chaldean Catholic Church

---

The fixed feasts of Mary for the Malabar Church are: her Nativity on September 8, Annunciation on March 25, Assumption (transmigration) on August 15, Immaculate Conception on December 8 (Latin feast of the dogma that Mary was free from original sin from the very beginning of her life, that is, from her conception, declared by Pius IX on December 8, 1854), Mary the Protector of seeds on May 15, and Mary of Mount Carmel on July 16.

In Paul Bedjan Breviarium iuxta Ritum Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaorum, 3 Vols., we can see 6 feasts for the Virgin Mary. They are as follows:

1. The Feast of the Congratulations to Mary the Mother of God - on first or second Friday of Nativity (Vol. I, pp. 353-372).

2. West Syrian Tradition

Many days are set apart in the calendar for the commemoration of the Holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. The glorification of the Virgin falls on the day after

---

200 For all fixed feasts and their proper in Mass, see Supplementum Mysteriorum pp. 169-262.
201 These are of Syro-Malabar Church, see John Moolan, The period of Annunciation – Nativity ... , p.54.
Introduction

Nativity of our Lord. The 15\textsuperscript{th} of January is dedicated to the intercession of the Mother of God for the seeds and 15\textsuperscript{th} of May for the blessing of crops. The birth of Virgin Mary is celebrated on September 8\textsuperscript{th} and annunciation to Virgin Mary on March 25\textsuperscript{th} as well as on the fifth Sunday before Nativity.

\textbf{i. Orthodox Church}

In the \textit{Penqitho} which was published from Pampakuda we can see six feasts of the Virgin Mary:

1. The Praises of the Mother of God – December 26
2. Feast of the Mother of God on Seeds – January 15
3. Annunciation of the Mother of God – March 25
4. For the Corn – May 15
5. - Assumption of the Mother of God – August 15
6. - Nativity of the Mother of God – September 8

But in the Breviary which was published from Mosul\textsuperscript{202} we can see one more feast of Mary that is the entrance of Mary on November 21, while the other feasts are the same as in the Pampakuda text.

\textbf{ii. Syro-Malankara Catholic Church}

the following are the main feasts of the Virgin Mother in the Malankara Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{203}

1. Presentation of the Mother of God in the Temple – November 21

\textsuperscript{202} Breviarium Juxta Ritum Ecclesie Syrorum Vols. 1-3, (Mausili 1886).
\textsuperscript{203} See Malankara Syrian Catholic Church Vishudha Vedavyana Kurip (Lectionary in Malayalam) (Trivandrum 2006-2007).
Introduction

2. ܩܘܠܣܝ ̈ ܗ ̇ ܕܝܠܕܬ ܐܠܗܐ  Praises of the Mother of God – December 26

3. ܐܘܥܐ ܕܝܠܕܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܠ ܙܪ ̈ ܥܐ  Feast of the Mother of God on Seeds – January 15

4. ܣܘܒܪܗ ̇ ܕܝܠܕܬ ܐܠܗܐ  Annunciation of the Mother of God – March 25

5. ܕܝܠܕܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܠ ܫܒ ̈ ܠܐ  For the Corn – May 15

6. ܣܘܒܪܗ ̇ ܕܝܠܕܬ ܐܠܗܐ  - on the commemoration for the first church dedicated in the name of the Mother of God – June 15

7. ܫܘܢܝܗ ̇ ܕܝܠܕܬ ܐܠܗܐ  - Assumption of the Mother of God – August 15

8. ܣܘܒܪܗ ̇ ܕܝܠܕܬ ܐܠܗܐ  - Nativity of the Mother of God – September 8

iii. Maronite Church

There are eight feasts dedicated to St. Mary in the Maronite Church.\(^{204}\) With the other Oriental churches they venerate Mary as the Mother of God and one special feast that is the commemoration of our Lady of Lebanon which is celebrated on first Sunday of May. The following are the feasts:

1. Presentation of the Mother of God in the Temple – November 21

2. Immaculate Conception – December 8

3. Praises of the Mother of God – December 26

4. Annunciation of the Virgin – March 25

5. Our Lady of Seeds – May 15

6. Assumption – August 15

7. Birth of the Virgin – September 8

3. Byzantine Church

\(^{204}\) Boutros Gemayel (Ed), *The Prayer of the Faithful According to the Maronite Liturgical Year*, Vols. 1&2 (Brooklyn: New York 1982).
Introduction

1. Nativity of the Theotokos – September 8
2. Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple – November 21
4. Annunciation of the Theotokos – March 25
5. Koimesis (Falling Asleep) of the Theotokos– August 15

4. Latin Church

Mariology is a study of doctrines concerning Mary, the mother of Jesus, or the content of those doctrines. The New Testament contains little information about Mary, though the tradition that she remained a virgin despite giving birth to Jesus was accepted in the early Church. Various feast days in her honour were established in both the Eastern and Western liturgical traditions, and she became an especially important figure in Roman Catholicism. On ordinary Saturdays through the year on which optional Memorias are allowed, an optional Memoria of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be celebrated. Piux IX proclaimed the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in 1854. Mary is seen as the spiritual mother and heavenly intercessor of every Catholic and as a partner with Jesus in the redemption of human beings. In 1950 Pius XII proclaimed the doctrine that at her death Mary was bodily assumed into heaven. The following are the most prominent Marian feast days in the Roman Catholic Calendar:

1. Mary, the Mother of God - January 1
2. Our Lady of Prompt Succor - January 8
3. Purification of the Virgin - February 2
4. Our Lady of Lourdes - February 11
5. Annunciation by Archangel Gabriel (it may be either moved to the day before Palm Sunday should this date be in Holy Week; or to the Monday after

205 The Divine Office: …Roman., p. 252.
the second Sunday of Easter if this date falls on either Friday or Saturday of Holy week or during Easter week\(^{207}\) - March 25

6. Our Lady of Good Counsel - April 26

7. Queen of Heaven - May 1

8. Our Lady of Fatima - May 13

9. Mary Help of Christians - May 24

10. Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces - May 31

11. Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary - May 31

12. Our Lady of Perpetual Help – June 27

13. Assumption into Heaven – August 15

14. Our Lady of Knock – August 21

15. Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary – August 22

16. Nativity (birth) of the Blessed Virgin Mary – September 8

17. Our Lady of Sorrows – September 15

18. Feast of the Most Holy Rosary - October 7

19. Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary – November 21

20. Feast of the Immaculate Conception – December 8


IX. MEANING OF THE NAME ‘MARY’

According to St. Ephrem, Mary received \(\pi\) from Jesus’ name \(\text{Mšiḥa} \) \(\text{Messiah}\).\(^{208}\)

The first letter of \(\text{Messiah}\) is carrying the name of Mary and from \(\text{Mary}\) to Joseph

---

\(^{207}\) But for the Orthodox Church this feast is celebrated on the same date even if it falls on Good Friday.

\(^{208}\) \textit{HNat} 27: 6-8; “Messiah,” too, in its compassion,/ gave the first of its letters to Mary’s name./ Behold! Their names depend on His names/ even as their bodies, with all creation, depended on His power./ For Mary, that [woman] who bore Him/ in the womb and on her lap—Him, the Messiah--/the first letter of [her] name was Messiah./ She bore His name as His power bore her
because their names are unable to carry themselves. Thus ‘yod’ gave the real meaning and power to their names. Most probably Ephrem has in mind the ‘yod’ of the name ܐܪܡܝܐ, which also has ࣖ, and ܡ, and thus pointing to the mystery of incarnation.

At the end of Patristic period Isidore of Seville (ca.560-636) attributes three meanings to the name of Mary In his book *Etymologies*:

Mary signifies Light-giver or Star of the Sea; for she gave birth to the Light of the world, in the Syriac tongue, however, Mary means ‘Lady’, and beautifully so, since she gave birth to the Lord.

This triple interpretation had a remarkable and lasting influence; it was a source of inspiration for centuries, especially in homiletic and devotional literature. According to Islamic tradition the following is the reason for naming her: ‘Mary’:

Because Mary’s mother, according to Koran 3:36, gave the name although this was a task specifically reserved to the father at that time. Islamic tradition concludes that the father died during the Mother’s pregnancy, and the name Mary itself is interpreted as ‘handmaid’ (‘abida). By bestowing this name the mother wanted to declare her wish that this girl, even though she was not a son, would live as the servant of God. This is said to be the origin of the name Mary.

Mariam is the Hebrew and Aramaic form of the name, as the Peshitta recognizes when representing the Greek form Maria (also Mariam is found). The shift from

---

209 Ex. 15:2; Hymn on Faith 44:4.
211 He was born around 560 in a Spanish-Roman family. He was elected bishop of Seville and, as such, presided in 619 at the second regional council held in that city. In 633, he presided at the Fourth Council of Toledo. In his writings, he gives a considerable amount of space to Marian Doctrine.
213 Ludwig Hagemann, “‘Mary, Allah has chosen you’ [Koran 3:42]: The Islamic Conception of Mary” *The Many Faces of Mary* CONCLiUM (London 2008/4), p.70.
Introduction

Miriam / Mariam to Maria “Mary” is a consequence of the move from Hebrew / Aramaic to Greek (and then to Latin). 214 During the first centuries, the Fathers and other Christian writers rarely speak of Mary apart from Christ. Allusion to the Virgin usually arose out of a Christological and Biblical context. The discussion of the incarnate Word became clear and concrete when Mary and her role as mother were brought into it. 215 In the Eastern and in the Latin traditions, she is venerated or honoured, but not worshipped. 216 We ask her to be our ‘intercessor’, or to pray for us so that ‘your Son may have pity on us’. This petition stems from a continued meditation that the person whom Mary brought forth was truly God. 217 In Eastern Christian spirituality, Mary is a model for saintly life, absolute trust and hope in God, in spite of the ‘sword that pierces through the soul’. 218 She is the unique example of simplicity, poverty and crucified life and the life which is resurrected in Christ. 219

Controversy over how much Mary should be venerated was initiated by the Patriarch Nestorius in the early 5th century and culminated in the Council of Ephesus in 431. This represented the first real theological debate over the importance of Mary’s role as Christ’s mother. Nestorious had questioned the use of the term ‘Theotokos’ and whether this represented a correct manner of designating the Virgin. He probably felt that by exalting Mary too much Christians would be in danger of forgetting the true humanity of Christ. His famous homily on the Virgin Mary is thought to have been read out two days before Christmas in 428. 220 It is precisely the paradox of Mary’s virginity that represents the ultimate proof of Christ’s two natures, the divine and the human.

215 Luigi Gambero, Mary and the Fathers of the Church…, p.19.
217 Bede Griffiths, Introduction to Shehimo, p. ix.
218 Lk 2: 35.
219 Baby Varghese, West Syrian Liturgical Theology…, p.98.