

Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

**TYPES AND SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH  
IN THE WRITINGS OF JACOB OF SARUG**

A DISSERTATION

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## ABSTRACT

### TYPES AND SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH IN THE WRITINGS OF JACOB OF SARUG

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This study deals with the life story of Jacob of Sarug (A.D. 451-521) and the various typologies of the Church scattered in his copious *mimre*. Jacob of Sarug is one of the most prolific, distinguished, and influential Syriac authors, yet a systematic examination of his symbolic language referring to the Church remains a desideratum. The following research satisfies this want which stems from the fact that the Church is next to Jesus Christ in importance, as her subject is prominent in Jacob's poetic works. The work presented herein complements and contributes to the scholarly works already published in the theological field of Syriac Ecclesiology. Moreover, it is a foundational study for further researchers and theologians wishing to investigate Jacob's comprehension of the Church.

This study shows that the question about the person of Jacob of Sarug shall remain unsatisfactorily answered, for his life stories discovered in extant manuscripts are hagiographical. Next, it reveals the Church as a building on Golgotha based on the actions of Melchizedek, Abraham, Jacob, and Moses. Then, it explains Jacob's depiction of the Church as a fisherman and life-giving fishnet. Next, it deals with the topic of the Church as the Garden of Eden on Earth in whose midst is the Tree of Life. Lastly, this study explicates the notion of the Church as the Virgin Bride of Christ.

The Church as such emerges as a permanent reality solidly founded on the cross, a sacramental and missionary Church, and sacrifice is central to her understanding. The Mysteries and the proclamation of the Good News are essential to the continuation of her Lord's mission. Moreover, she is a return to the Garden of Eden which anticipates God's promise of salvation in the afterlife.

Finally, Christ will always be united to her no matter what, for she is in effect his created body. Therefore, she remains with him wherever he is, and her actions mimic his deeds. She follows him to Sheol, breaks down its gates, frees Adam, resurrects with her Lord, is victorious over sin and death, and nothing overcomes her.

In memory of my parents, Badih and Laurence  
To my siblings, their spouses, children, and grandchildren

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ

They are one: wheresoever he is, behold she is with him.  
—Jacob of Sarug

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Biblical Text abbreviations follow those recommended in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertation: Chicago Style for students and researchers*, 8th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 340-342.

[ ]	<i>Text added by the author</i>
[...]	<i>Text left out by the author</i>
A.D.	<i>Anno Domini</i>
B.C.	<i>before Christ</i>
bzw.	<i>beziehungsweise</i>
ca.	<i>circa</i>
ed(s).	<i>editor(s)</i>
et al.	<i>et alii</i>
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i>
i.e.	<i>id est</i>
Lit.	<i>literally</i>
Mt.	<i>Mountain</i>
n. Chr.	<i>Nach Christus</i>
trans.	<i>translator</i>
u. a.	<i>unter anderem</i>
vgl.	<i>vergleiche</i>
z. B.	<i>zum Beispiel</i>
AB	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
AS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
ASPD	<i>Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes</i>
BED	<i>Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible</i>
BKV1	<i>Bibliothek der Kirchenväter: Auswahl der vorzüglichsten patristischen Werke in deutscher Übersetzung</i>
BKV2	<i>Bibliothek der Kirchenväter: Eine Auswahl patristischer Werke in deutscher Übersetzung</i>
BOCV	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana</i>
CSCO	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i>
CSD	<i>A Compendious Syriac Dictionary</i>
ECR	<i>Eastern Churches Review</i>
ED	<i>Euntes Docete</i>
ETL	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
FC	<i>Fontes Christiani</i>
GECS	<i>Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies</i>

GEDSH	<i>Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage</i>
HCO	<i>Het Christelijk Oosten</i>
HJS	<i>Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug</i>
HJSS	<i>Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies</i>
HS	<i>Heiligenkreuzer Studien</i>
HSJS	<i>Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
LM	<i>Le Muséon</i>
L'OrSyr	<i>L'Orient Syrien</i>
LVS	<i>La Vie Spirituelle</i>
ML'UniSJ	<i>Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph</i>
NAKG	<i>Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis</i>
NBD	<i>New Bible Dictionary</i>
NIDB	<i>The New Interpreters of the Bible</i>
OCA	<i>Orientalia Christiana Analecta</i>
OCP	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>
OLA	<i>Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta</i>
OS	<i>Ostkirchliche Studien</i>
OrChr	<i>Oriens Christianus</i>
Pdel'O	<i>Parole de L'Orient</i>
PO	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
PS	<i>Patrologia Syriaca</i>
RC	<i>Revue Catholique</i>
ROC	<i>Revue de L'Orient Chrétien</i>
REB	<i>Revue des Études Byzantines</i>
RSE	<i>Revue des Sciences Ecclésiastiques</i>
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>
SM	<i>S. Martyrii, Qui et Sahdona Quæ Supersunt Omnia</i>
SPL	<i>Scrinium Patristicum Lateranense</i>
SVTQ	<i>St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>
TCLA	<i>Texts from Christian Late Antiquity</i>
TH	<i>The Harp</i>
TTV	<i>The True Vine</i>
TS	<i>Thesaurus Syriacus</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
ZKG	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
ZKT	<i>Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie</i>

## INTRODUCTION

The Syriac Christian writers' love for typological depictions of their beloved Church<sup>1</sup> yielded the richest fields of symbolism in early Syriac literature.<sup>2</sup> Murray shows the extent of this preference for this kind of ecclesiological-theological expositions in *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*. The work presented herein unfolds such imageries scattered in the vast poetic writings of Jacob of Sarug (A.D. 451-521), one of the most prolific writers in the Syriac Christian corpus.

Of the Syriac Fathers who can be studied, the choice fell on Jacob of Sarug, for no modern scholar has yet studied extensively his symbolic language referring to the Church<sup>3</sup> albeit he has anchored his thoughts in the Syriac tradition and enjoys the reputation as one of the most important Syriac poets. In his *Symbole der Kirche: Die Ekklesiologie der Väter*, Rahner lays out thematically the Church's symbols as employed in Greek and Latin literature. However, Syriac authors, except for a brief adverts to Ephrem<sup>4</sup> and Jacob of Sarug,<sup>5</sup> are absent from his work. Studying Syriac typology, one cannot do without *Symbols of the Church and Kingdom*, which has become a reference

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1. Die Kirche Christi, seine Braut und sein Leib, ist durch Personen und Geschehnisse der alten wie der neuen Heilsgeschichte vorgebildet. Die Syrer lieben es, überall Typen der Kirche zu sehen, wieder ein Anzeichen dafür, wie viel ihnen die Kirche bedeutet. Die Erklärung solcher Typen gibt uns wiederum einigen Aufschluss über die Gedanken, die sich die Syrer über der Kirche machen. Wilhelm De Vries, *Der Kirchenbegriff der von Rom getrennten Syrer*, OCA, vol. 145 (Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1955), 184.
  2. See Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, 1st Gorgias Press ed. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004), 1.
  3. In contrast to Jacob of Sarug's images of the Church, his Mariological symbolism has been studied and published. See James Puthuparampil, *Mariological Thought of Mar Jacob of Serugh (451–521)*, Mōrān 'eth'ō, vol. 25 (Kottayam, India: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 2005).
  4. See Hugo Rahner, *Symbole Der Kirche: Die Ekklesiologie Der Väter* (Salzburg: Müller, 1964), 299, 519.
  5. *Ibid.*, 355.

book in the field since its first publication in 1975. In this work Murray laid down the foundation for such studies. He consciously limited his extensive research to the period before the fifth-century schism, since De Vries had already published *Der Kirchenbegriff der von Rom getrennten Syrer*, which covers the subsequent period<sup>6</sup> (only the last chapter of De Vries's book corresponds in scope to Murray's research and the study presented herein).<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, De Vries's primary interest lay in surveying only Syriac authors he considered separated from the Church of Rome<sup>8</sup>—i.e, non-Chalcedonians. Accordingly, Murray's research ends before the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), while De Vries's study covers the post-conciliar period. These two works supplement each other and together examine the impressive and extensive corpus of Syriac literature. The two scholars, however, do not take into account the theological thought of Jacob of Sarug, an important Syriac author functioning and writing at the height of the Chalcedonian controversy. Neither Murray nor De Vries makes use of his compositions. The former rightly does not avail himself of Jacob's poetic fecundity, since he did not compose within the time span of the Syriac literary works investigated and presented in *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*. The latter mainly chooses not to include Jacob's oeuvres because his research interest lay in Syriac writers who rejected the Council of 451. By accepting Peeter's arguments<sup>9</sup> that placed Jacob in the Chalcedonian camp,<sup>10</sup> De Vries rarely quoted this Syriac wordsmith.

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6. See Murray, "*Symbols*," 1.

7. See De Vries, "*Kirchenbegriff*," 154-190.

8. See also Wilhelm De Vries, "La Conception de l'Église chez les Syriens Séparés de Rome," *L'OrSyr.*, 2, (1957): 111-124.

9. See Paul Peeters, "Jacques de Saroug appartient-il à la secte monophysite?," *AB*, 66, (1948): 134-198.

10. Es ist aber zweifelhaft, ob das Zeugnis des Jakob von Sarug den syrischen Monophysiten zugeschrieben werden darf. Paul Peeters zog neuerdings die übliche These vom Monophysitismus des Jakob von Sarug stark in Zweifel und brachte gute Gründe für dessen Orthodoxie bei. De Vries, "*Kirchenbegriff*," 23-24.

Owing to his interest in exploring Jacob of Sarug's doctrinal stances, Abbeloos does not include, in his treatise on Jacob, any of his typological imagery of the Church.<sup>11</sup> Bou Mansour, who published two volumes on the theology of Jacob of Sarug,<sup>12</sup> recognizes in his chapter on the Church Jacob's interpretive method but elects not to expound on it. He wrote, "I certainly do not have the intention to study at this juncture all the ecclesiological typology that Jacob discerns in the people and events of the Old Testament."<sup>13</sup> Engberding, studying the liturgy of the Church of the East, explores the theme of the Church as the Bride of Christ.<sup>14</sup> Once again Jacob of Sarug's writings on the subject do not come into the picture. Jacob's influence on East Syriac theology is minimal, in view of the fact that they do not consider him one of their Church Fathers. Following in Engberding's footsteps, Overstraeten centers her research on the nuptial liturgies of the different Syriac Churches and explores the subject of the Church as the Bride of Christ<sup>15</sup> but without availing herself of Jacob's oeuvres. Graffin writes on the same theme and only translates a few texts of Jacob of Sarug related to the subject.<sup>16</sup> Besides Graffin, Harvey investigates biblical women as images of the Church in Jacob's works.<sup>17</sup> As important as the studies of Graffin and Harvey are, they remain limited, for they present two types of Jacob's symbolic language of the

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11. See Joannes Baptista Abbeloos, "De vita et scriptis Sancti Jacobi, Batnarum Sarugi in Mesopotamia episcopi, cum ejusdem syriacis carminibus duobus integris, necnon Georgii eius discipuli" (Vanlinthout, 1867).
  12. See Tanios Bou Mansour, *La Théologie de Jacques de Saroug: Création, Anthropologie, Ecclésiologie et Sacrements*, vol. I (Kaslik, Liban: Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik, 1993).
  13. Nous n'avons certainement pas l'intention d'étudier ici toute la typologie ecclésiale que Jacques discerne dans les personnes et les événements de l'Ancien Testament. *Ibid.*, 149.
  14. See Hieronymus Engberding, "Die Kirche als Braut in der ostsyrischen Liturgie," *OCP*, III, (1937): 5-48.
  15. See Jeanne-Ghislaine Van Overstraeten, "Les Liturgies Nuptiales des Églises de Langue Syriacque et le Mystère de l'Église-Épouse," *Pdel'O*, 8, (1977-1978): 235-310.
  16. See François Graffin, "Recherches sur le Thème de l'Église - Épouse dans les Liturgies et la Littérature Patristique de la Langue Syriacque," *L'OrSyr*, III, (1958): 317-336.
  17. See Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "Bride of Blood, Bride of Light: Biblical Women as Images of Church in Jacob of Serug," in *Malphono W-Rabo D-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. George Anton Kiraz, GECS 3, (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2008).

Church. Consequently, the lack of an overarching presentation of Jacob of Sarug's typologies referring to the Church is the catalyst for this undertaking. *The present study supplements the works of the aforementioned authors and fills in a gap in the research of Syriac studies, especially in the overall theological worldview of Jacob of Sarug.*

Jacob the poet and biblical interpreter was no systematic theologian in the modern sense of the term. His Semitic thought process fits well the style followed by his intellectual ancestors such as Aphrahat and Ephrem. Their repetitive spiral-like expositions draw their audience into a deeper understanding of the mystery of God.<sup>18</sup> Notwithstanding the fact that Jacob of Sarug's writings follow a particular order that fulfilled the intent for which he tirelessly composed them, he did not arrange them in conformity with specific dogmatic themes, e.g., Christology, Ecclesiology. Therefore, the student of Jacob's theological concepts on the Church has to ferret out the rich nuggets sprinkled throughout his impressive corpus and be satisfied with what they could find knowing in advance that finding all of them could be a life long pursuit. Hence, the findings presented herein are in no way exhaustive but should provide the reader an insight into Jacob's concept of the Church. One must cautiously proceed in this endeavor bearing in mind Murray's warning of the danger of unfaithful interpretation when modern presuppositions supersede the thought of the texts under consideration. Furthermore, one has to take into account Murray's emphasis on 'listening.' He stresses that "the interpreters of early Syriac Fathers, as of the New Testament, must 'listen to them' to discover their theological idioms; their purposes were not necessarily the same as ours, and we will fail in our purpose if we impose a pattern alien to their thought."<sup>19</sup> Brock echoes Murray's emphasis on listening concerning the writings of Jacob of Sarug, "... I should stress at the outset that it is essential to read Jacob on his own terms, and not to approach him with our

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18. See Murray, "Symbols," 2.

19. *Ibid.*, 1-2.



own western European presuppositions, if we are to appreciate his true originality and profundity.”<sup>20</sup>

The scope of this work is limited to the Jacob of Sarug’s body of work, as published in Bedjan’s *Homiliae selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis* (Vol. I-V) and *S. Martyrii, Qui et Sahdona Quæ Supersunt Omnia*. Still, this undertaking remains an extensive survey of Jacob’s extant literary output. Besides, this study avoids entering into the Christological debate of the time, which Jacob shunned in his poems, for the most part, owing to the fact that the research is mainly bound to Church imagery. For this reason, the controversial letters ascribed to Jacob of Sarug, in which their author openly denounces the Council of Chalcedon,<sup>21</sup> are not considered. The plan adopted for this work is, one the whole, based on the homilies in Bedjan’s editions. This research systematically presents the amassed types and symbols of the Church in Jacob’s poetry following Murray’s arrangement, in an order determined with reference to the Bible. For fear of making this work too large, this study limits itself only to Jacob’s writings. Still, the reader will not fail to see herein an attempt at connecting some of Jacob’s themes with topics addressed by his intellectual ancestors by leaning on Murray’s work.

This dissertation comprises five chapters, a conclusion, and an appendix. The first chapter presents a sketch of the life of Jacob of Sarug based on the available bibliographical sources, his writings, and the audience he addressed. Moreover, it contains a description in broad terms of the theological and political contexts in which he functioned and wrote and his theological positions concerning the Christological issue of the time. The second Chapter explains Jacob of Sarug’s depiction of the Church as a building on Golgotha based on the actions of Melchizedek, Abraham, Jacob, and Moses. The third chapter explores how the Lord calls human beings to

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20. Sebastian P. Brock, “Baptismal Themes in the Writings of Jacob of Serugh,” *OCA*, 205, (1978): 325-347.

21. See *Iacobi Sarugensis Epistulae quotquot supersunt*, ed. Gunnar Olinder, CSCO, vol. 110, *Scriptores Syri* 57 (Louvain: Parisiis E Typographeo Reipublicae, 1937).

him. This call to salvation becomes the mission of the Church. In this capacity, Jacob of Sarug symbolizes her as a fisher and life-giving fishnet. As a fishnet, the Church is Jesus's instrument of redemption, and as a fisher, she is responsible for continuing her Lord mission by proclaiming the Kingdom of God and calling human beings to him. The fourth chapter explains the notion of the Church as the Garden of Eden on Earth and Jesus Christ, the Tree of Life, is ever present in her. The Son of God is the source of the life of the Church, and she is the expected eschatological salvation, the return of Adam to the Garden of Eden. The last chapter expounds on the Church as the Bride of Christ and unfolds the inseparability between the Bride and her Bridegroom. This study ends with a conclusion followed by an appendix. The conclusion summarizes the findings of the dissertation and suggests further research on the subject. Finally, the appendix makes available for the first time an English translation of Jacob of Sarug's *mimro* 134 entitled *On Inquiry and Sanctity of the Church*. It relates to the Ecclesiological theme of this work, insofar as the Church is the *mimro*'s main protagonist, and some of her symbols found in this *mimro* are the main topic of discussion in this work.





concludes that it is the oldest introduction to a *mimro* about the life and work of Jacob of Sarug.<sup>9</sup> It is entitled *A mimro on Saint Mar Jacob, the Greatest of the Teachers, Composed by an Unknown in the Year 1455 of the Greeks, in Latter Tishrin* (November, A.D. 1143/1144) (ܠܐܘܬ ܡܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܡܝܡܪܐ ܕܡܪ ܝܥܩܒ ܕܫܪܘܓ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܬܝܫܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܡܝܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܬܝܫܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܡܝܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܬܝܫܪܝܢ). Krüger published a transliteration of the Syriac text along with a German translation.<sup>10</sup>

Matagne provides a Latin translation of a third and brief work containing minimal details about the life of Jacob of Sarug.<sup>11</sup> Abbeloos translated it into Latin and reproduced the Syriac original. It is entitled *Another Narrative About the Holy, Chosen and God-Clad Mar Jacob, the Divine Doctor and Bishop of Batnan in Sarug* (ܠܐܘܬ ܡܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܡܝܡܪܐ ܕܡܪ ܝܥܩܒ ܕܫܪܘܓ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܬܝܫܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܡܝܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܬܝܫܪܝܢ).<sup>12</sup> Krüger published a German translation of this text.<sup>13</sup> One can find the fourth of such bibliographical writings in an Armenian manuscript.<sup>14</sup> Lastly, Assemani<sup>15</sup> published in Syriac with a Latin translation the fifth document, ascribed to Jacob of Edessa,<sup>16</sup> concerning Jacob of Sarug, and Abbeloos<sup>17</sup> rendered it into Latin.

Martin recognizes the possibility that extant Syriac manuscripts could be preserving unknown works containing details about the life of Jacob of Sarug could be preserved in. He states, "...[W]e have access to five different texts regarding [Jacob of Sarug], and it is probable that many others exist in

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9. See Paul Krüger, "Die sogenannte Philoxenosvita und die Kurzvita des Jacob von Serugh," *OS*, 21, (1972), 39-40.
  10. *Ibid.*, 40-43.
  11. See Matagne, "Episcopo Sarugensi," 929.
  12. See Abbeloos, "Vita et Scriptis," 311-314.
  13. See Krüger, "sogenannte Philoxenosvita," 43-45.
  14. See Martin, "Évêque-Poète," 313 and footnote no. 4 on the same page. For the Armenian text with a French translation, see G. Bayan, *Le Synaxaire Arménien de Ter Israel: VII Mois de Méhéki*, PO, vol. 20 (1) (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1930), 534.
  15. See Assemani, "BOCV I," 286-289.
  16. See Martin, "Évêque-Poète," 313-314. Assemani and Abbeloos had recourse to manuscripts that did not identify the author of this text.
  17. See Abbeloos, "Vita et Scriptis," 89-90.



sketch of Jacob of Sarug's life,<sup>25</sup> reconstructed based on these preserved writings.

### 1.1.2 A Sketch of Jacob's Life

Jacob was born to pious Christian parents<sup>26</sup> in Kurtam (ܟܘܪܬܡ), the birthplace of his father (ܐܒܝ ܝܥܩܒ ܡܢ ܟܘܪܬܡ ܕܥܝܪܗܝ),<sup>27</sup> a town probably located in the district of Sarug (ܣܪܘܥ)<sup>28</sup> on the Euphrates.<sup>29</sup> Krüger argues against Kurtam as Jacob's birthplace and suggests Hawra (ܚܘܪܐ) in Sarug<sup>30</sup> instead, where Jacob grew up (ܐܒܝ ܝܥܩܒ ܡܢ ܚܘܪܐ ܕܣܪܘܥ).<sup>31</sup> Sony presents another possibility, stating that Jacob's family probably left Kurtam, Jacob's homeland, to settle in Hawra.<sup>32</sup> His mother's birthplace is unknown.

Jacob's father was perchance a priest, and Jacob's mother was perhaps sterile (ܐܡܐ ܥܝܪܐ ܕܝܥܩܒ ܡܢ ܟܘܪܬܡ ܕܥܝܪܗܝ).<sup>33</sup> The state of his parents is oddly similar to that of John the Baptist's parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth: he was a priest, and she was barren (see Lk 1:5-7). Given his mother's sterility (ܐܡܐ ܥܝܪܐ ܕܝܥܩܒ),<sup>34</sup> Jacob's conception was considered miraculous and occurred due to divine intervention by the intercession of a holy monk according to Vööbus<sup>35</sup>

25. See Severin Matthias Grill, *Jacob von Sarug. Die Forschung und das Heiligtum der Kirche*, HS, vol. 13b (Horn: Berger, 1970), 5.

26. Assemani, "BOCV I," 286.

ܐܒܝ ܝܥܩܒ ܡܢ ܟܘܪܬܡ ܕܥܝܪܗܝ

A son of vows of believing and sterile parents

27. Abbeloos, "Vita et Scriptis," 311.

28. See Martin, "Évêque-Poète," 315. Sarug is known today as Suruç, a rural district in modern-day Turkey, several miles southwest of Urhoi (ܐܘܪܗܝ) (also known as Edessa or Urfa, Turkey). See Thomas Kollamparampil, *Jacob of Serugh: Select Festal Homilies*, trans. Thomas Kollamparampil (Rome: Center for Indian and Inter-Religious Studies, 1997), 3.

29. See Assemani, "BOCV I," 286.

ܐܒܝ ܝܥܩܒ ܡܢ ܟܘܪܬܡ ܕܥܝܪܗܝ

He (Jacob) is from Kurtam, a town on the Euphrates.

30. See Krüger, "sogenannte Philoxenosvita," 43-44.

31. Abbeloos, "Vita et Scriptis," 312.

32. See Behnam M. Boulous Sony, "La Doctrine de Jacques de Saroug sur la Création et l'Anthropologie" (Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1989), 47.

33. Abbeloos, "Vita et Scriptis," 32:74.

34. *Ibid.*, 311.

35. See Vööbus, "unbekannte Biographie," 401.

A fictitious<sup>38</sup> text narrates an unusual event which occurred when Jacob, a three-year-old child, was with his parents at a packed church on the feast of the Epiphany or another dominical feast. At the invocation of the Holy Spirit or *epiclesis*, the Holy Spirit bestirred Jacob to leave his mother, cut

- ٥٨٨ مَحْصَدُ حَكْمَةٍ كَلَّا مِنْهُ وَجَّ سَلَامًا. ٥٨٩ نَحْنُ لَمْ نَمُتْ. ٥٩٠ اَلْاَسْمَاءُ حَتَّىٰ نَحْمِلَ فِيْهَا وَنُكَلِّمَ اَصْحٰهٖ: ٥٩١ وَنَحْمِلَ حٰلًا وَنُكَلِّمَ اَصْحٰهٖ: ٥٩٢  
 quam cum vir ejus duxisset *ad dominum Barhadatum*, fusis ibi precibus, ex Dei  
 voluntate cognovit. Peperit porro filium miraculi fructum. *Ibid.*, 312-313.

Her husband brought her to *the revitalizing Lord* (هُدًى مُبْرِئَةً). They prayed there. He knew her according to God's will, and she bore a son of wonder.

[illegible]

in the fear of God, the beginning of all wisdom.

- 12



39. See Abbeloos, "Vita et Scriptis," 34:87-36:109.

When the child reached the age of three years,  
his mother took him on the feast of the Epiphany of the Only-Begotten  
and went to the holy church, along with many.  
While the bishop was in the inner sanctuary  
at the banquet table upon which the Son of God is sacrificed,  
[and] while he was bent down, and was petitioning God in sorrow and tears  
for the Holy Spirit to come down, rest upon and overshadow his offering,  
and perfect the mystery, which are pardons all who partake of it  
and they become heirs in heaven on high with the holy ones,  
whom baptism bore in holiness,  
Divine Goodness bestirred the Child.  
He went down from his mother's arms  
and cut through the crowd while all who gathered were watching him.  
He entered the inner sanctuary rejoicing.  
He immediately approached the life-giving banquet, lowered his head  
three times, and bowed himself before it as in the [service of the] mystery.  
Just as one who thirsts for water to drink and greatly rejoices  
when water is found to quench his thirst,  
so the pure one (Jacob) stretched forth his hands before the banquet table (فُتِلِّحَ) <sup>(١)</sup>  
and drank three times three handfuls (sips?).  
[Lacuna]  
Here and now, the Spirit began to reveal and explain to him  
all the hidden [mysteries] in the divine books.  
[Lacuna]

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِيَ مَنْ يُنَاصِرْهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ













The dates and locations of Jacob's priestly ordination and elevation to the Order of *Periodeutes* are unknown. However, it must have happened some time before 502/503,<sup>58</sup> since he was already fulfilling his role as a *periodeutes*<sup>59</sup>

Then [Jacob] rose to high honor in the eyes of all.  
The bishops greatly embraced him and his teaching.  
Since they recognized by the divine verses  
that his teaching was sweet, for it contains wisdom,  
and that the chosen one spoke indubitably by [the power] of the Holy Spirit,  
no one thought superfluously about him.  
They (the bishops) commanded him not to disregard the talent  
bestowed on the good servant by God,  
but rather to commit his teaching to writing,  
that the Church, along with all her children, might delight in his hymns.  
Up until the bishop came to the chosen one,  
he had not committed [any of] his teachings to writing.  
He had composed but had not written anything that he recited  
because of the beauty of his humility and reverence.  
Up until the Lord sent the bishops to him,  
the treasure, which they revealed, was concealed from many.  
Behold! Henceforth, his teaching gushed out like a sea.  
They drank from it all who thirsted and were delighted.

Then they commanded him to commit his teaching to writing in the church. He began to compose mimre and homilies in the church when he was twenty-two-years-old.

He grew up in Hawra in Sarug, where he became a periodeutes and composed many mimre.

59. A *peripodentes* (ܩܕܝܫܐܢܐܢܐ in Syriac) was a priest commissioned by a patriarch, metropolitan or bishop to perambulate and visit parishes. His responsibilities included rebuilding churches and monasteries that had fallen into disrepair, collecting the revenues of his hierarchy and repairing bridges and streets. He was also a public official





highlights the atrocities that Amid saw at the hands of the Persians and point to a role that the *periodeutes* Jacob played during the horrible events that swept the city.

Jacob's writings betray a deep monastic spirituality, detailed knowledge of the monastic life and a relationship to monks and monasteries. According to Sony, all of this coupled with the fact that the student at the school of Edessa had to follow a monastic mode of life could reveal that Jacob was a monk.<sup>63</sup> Before Sony, Krüger had reached the same conclusion.<sup>64</sup> Nonetheless, Kollampampil casts doubt on the issue.<sup>65</sup> Jacob's biography that Vööbus found describes Jacob observing stereotypically rigid monastical practices: dried bread and water were his only nourishments. He spent long hours in prayers, vigil, and wailing.<sup>66</sup> That Jacob was a monk is perhaps more of an attribution than a reality. Griffith says it best,

And just as it is easy to suppose that Mar Ephraem was in his lifetime an *ihîdōyô*, and a so-called "son of the covenant," so those who have written of Mar Jacob have not hesitated to speak of him as "having lived as a monk, in an ascetic life-style characteristic of Syriac monasticism," as Wolfgang Hage<sup>67</sup> has put it.<sup>68</sup>

Toward the end of his life, bishops, priests and the laity imposed on Jacob the episcopal office.<sup>69</sup> He was already sixty-seven and a half years old in

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63. See Sony, "La Doctrine de Jacques," 48-49.

64. See Krüger, "kirchliche Zugehörigkeit," 28.

65. See Kollampampil, "Festal Homilies," 3.

66. See Vööbus, "unbekannte Biographie," 403.

67. See Gerhard Müller, ed., *Jakob Von Sarug (Ca. 450–520/21)*, Theologische Realenzyklopädie, (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), 471.

68. Sidney Harrison Griffith, "Mar Jacob of Serugh on Monks and Monasticism: Readings in His Metrical Homilies on the Singles," in *Jacob of Serugh and His Times: Studies in Sixth-Century Syriac Christianity*, ed. George Anton Kiraz, GECS 8, (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010), 73.

69. See Vööbus, "unbekannte Biographie," 403.



that his death occurred in 521 are the currently accepted dates.<sup>78</sup> Jacob lived a total of 70 years.<sup>79</sup> Accordingly, he could have been born in A.D. 451. It was happenstance that Jacob came to life the year the controversial Council of Chalcedon took place!

## 1.2 Works

Just the sheer number of *mimre* Jacob of Sarug wrote bears witness to the fact that he was a prolific writer.<sup>80</sup> Bar Hebraeus tells of seventy amanuenses who accompanied the bishop of Batnan and wrote down the *mimre* he composed, which numbered 760, and his other works which include biblical commentaries, letters, odes, and canticles.<sup>81</sup> The third document containing insights into Jacob's life and mentioned above also attests that Jacob of Sarug authored 763 *mimre*,<sup>82</sup> theological tracts, interpretations, hagiographies, and canticles.<sup>83</sup> The significance of his writings - not just the

78. See "GEDSH," 433.

79. See Assemani, "BOCV I," 289.

[illegible]

(Jacob's) total lifespan was 70 years. 67 and a half years before he became a bishop, and two and a half years while he was a bishop.

80. To have just a slight idea of how prolific Jacob of Sarug was, one has only to thumb through the four volumes in which Vööbus published the literary output of the Bishop of Batnan. See *“Handschriftliche Überlieferung I”; Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Ja’qōb von Serūg - II - Sammlungen: der Bestand*, ed. Arthur Vööbus, CSCO, vol. 345, Subsidia 40 (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1973); *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Ja’qōb von Serūg - III - die Zerstreuten Mēmrē: die Handschriften*, ed. Arthur Vööbus, CSCO, vol. 421, Subsidia 60 (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1980); *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Ja’qōb von Serūg - IV - die Zerstreuten Mēmrē: der Bestand*, ed. Arthur Vööbus, CSCO, vol. 422, Subsidia 61 (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1980).

81. See Assemani, "BOCV II," 322.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ جَعَلَ لِنَفْسِهِ إِلَٰهًا غَيْرَ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ۚ  
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ جَعَلَ لِنَفْسِهِ إِلَٰهًا غَيْرَ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ۚ

(Jacob of Sarug) had with him seventy scribes who wrote down the *mimre* he recited. They [numbered] 760 [*mimre*], excluding [biblical?] commentaries (ܡܚܠܬܐ), letters (ܬܘܒܬܐ), odes (ܬܚܢܐ), and canticles (ܬܡܝܚܐ). The last *mimro* he recited [was] *On Mary and Golgotha*, which he did not finish.

82. Martin speaks of 800 *mimre*. See Martin, "Évêque-Poète," 317.

83. See Abbeloos, "Vita et Scriptis," 312.

[illegible]

*Mimre* (sing. *mimro*) is the literary genre for which the bishop of Batnan is famous. Vööbus explains that this genre of a composition is not meant to be sung, but rather to be recited, as its name implies, in a way unique to the ears of the hearers. He describes it as a religious epic set to a poetic meter.<sup>85</sup> Jacob's beloved meter was dodecasyllabic, which, as stated above, he pioneered. Indeed, the majority of his extant *mimre* were composed using this twelve-syllable meter, which was conducive to the quality of his writings.<sup>86</sup> The subjects with which Jacob dealt in his *mimre* are numerous. They cover the whole gamut of religious life, hagiographies, and do not lack on interpretations of biblical texts out of the Old and New Testaments. Jacob's main source of inspiration is unquestionably the Holy Scriptures.<sup>87</sup> Unfortunately, a significant number of Jacob's *mimre* are still unearthed hidden in manuscripts or have not reached modern times. Still, more than 300 are still extant,<sup>88</sup> of which Bedjan<sup>89</sup> have published 212 texts.<sup>90</sup> Along with

[Jacob of Sarug] committed to writing [theological?] tracts (قُطُوبًا), interpretations (تَفْصِيلًا), hagiographies (أَقْبَالًا), canticles (هَمَجًا), and excellent and unerring teaching. He pleased his Lord and rejoiced in him. We discovered that the size of his teaching [equals] fifty times the [number of the] books of the Prophets. [His] *mimre* [numbered] 763, and the last *mimro* he composed but did not finish was on Mary and Golgotha.

90. See Kollamparampil, "Festal Homilies," 15.

*mimre*, the bishop of Batnan wrote seven other poetic genres.<sup>91</sup> Jacob's literary fecundity also extends to prosaic works, which includes six festal homilies on the liturgical feasts of the Lord, biographies of hermits, a baptismal rite and three anaphoras attributed to him, and letters.<sup>92</sup> No wonder that Jacob of Edessa referred to Jacob of Sarug, the Doctor, as "The Flute of the Holy Spirit and the Harp of the believing Church" (أَحَدُهَا وَهَيْسَا وَمَعَهَا هَيْسَا وَحَبْلُهَا مَعَهَا).<sup>93</sup> These titles are appropriate, for Jacob of Sarug sees himself as a musical instrument played by the Holy Spirit or by the Son of God and emitting beautiful and rich sounds. He refers to himself as a wind instrument, "Spirit, who is of an essence that could not be inquired into, blow into me that I should richly flute a *mimro* of your praise,"<sup>94</sup> and particularly a flute, "I am your flute. Blow into me, and I will beautifully flute sounds of praise distinctly by the faculties of the soul."<sup>95</sup>

Jacob also describes himself as a ten-stringed instrument, particularly a cithara (مَلْأُهَا بِحَبْلٍ هَيْسَا) or a harp (هَيْسَا بِحَبْلٍ هَيْسَا),

I am a ten-stringed cithara you have constructed.  
 Play me that I may chant your praise for your sake.  
 Sweep your finger and strum my still strings  
 that, through me, sweet music may sound in a blaring tune.  
 [Just as] a string does not emit a tune without a player,  
 so the mouth does not [utter] a word without your gift.  
 The cithara could not sound by itself,  
 for unless the one holding it plays it, it is mute and silent.  
 The player on the cithara sweeps their finger by their skills  
 and gives rise to a tune in the string that was still.  
 Play me, my Master, since you hold me, and I am gazing at you  
 that glory should richly produce through me your revelation.  
 The string is still, and the sound that it is producing does not belong to it.  
 It is looking for the player to awake a tune in it.

91. See "Handschriftliche Überlieferung I," 22-27.

92. See *Ibid.*, 28-34; Kollamparampil, "Festal Homilies," 16.

93. Assemani, "BOCV I," 286.

94. Paul Bedjan, ed., *Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*, V (Paris and Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1910), 394:3-4.

هَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا :  
 هَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا وَهَيْسَا :

95. Paul Bedjan, ed., *Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*, II (Paris and Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1906), 375:14-15.

أَحَدُهَا وَهَيْسَا وَمَعَهَا هَيْسَا وَحَبْلُهَا مَعَهَا :  
 أَحَدُهَا وَهَيْسَا وَمَعَهَا هَيْسَا وَحَبْلُهَا مَعَهَا :

The soul is the string. Behold! It is silent from your praise.  
Strum it that it should play sounds of praise with great astonishment.<sup>96</sup>

Jacob of Sarug likens the five strings of the ten-stringed harp to the five physical senses, i.e., smell (هَمَلَا), touch (سَمَلَا), taste (لَمَلَا), hearing (سَمَعَا), and sight (بَصَرَا). The other five strings refer to the five faculties of the mind: comprehension (مَبْهَمَا), thought (هَمَلَا), discernment (فَهْمَا), reason (لَوْه), and intelligence (مَبْجَا).

Arise my harp and sound distinctly praise  
to the Son with sounds abundantly filled with love.  
Rouse yourself, O spiritual harp,  
to make a joyful sound to the one who richly plays you.  
Arise and sound eloquent [tunes] with the ten strings  
Goodness interwove in you by to glorify [God].  
O eloquent harp, established by the One who established all,  
arise by yourself and sound glory with new tunes.  
With the five physical senses glorify [God] openly  
and also with the five spiritual [faculties] glorify [God] secretly.  
With [the senses of] smell, touch, taste, hearing, and sight,  
with all these five senses glorify [God] physically.  
And also with comprehension, thought, discernment,  
reason, and intelligence, with the hidden faculties of the soul, confess [him].  
Through these, play, [O] ten-stringed harp,  
and without ceasing, sound praise distinctly.<sup>97</sup>

96. *Ibid.*, 184:12-185:12.

<p>         مَعْمَا كَا اَرَا: اَسْ وَجَمْعَا حَسْرَ مَعْلَا          وَتَلَا كَا اَرَا سَحْلَا حَقْلَا وَتَلَا          اُفْ لَا فَعْلَا اَسْ كَا تَلَا وَلَا تَعْلَا          وَتَلَا بَعْلَا كَا وَتَلَا حَقْلَا كَا وَتَلَا          وَتَلَا مَحْلَا كَا وَتَلَا حَقْلَا وَتَلَا          وَتَلَا كَا مَعْلَا كَا وَتَلَا حَقْلَا          وَتَلَا حَقْلَا وَتَلَا سَحْلَا وَتَلَا          مَعْلَا كَا اَرَا: مَكْتَا مَعْلَا حَقْلَا وَتَلَا       </p>	<p>         مَعْلَا اِنَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          اَسْ وَتَلَا: اَسْ وَتَلَا          لَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          كَا مَعْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          مَعْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          اَرَا: وَتَلَا: اَسْ وَتَلَا          مَعْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          مَعْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا       </p>
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97. *Ibid.*, 77:3-18.

<p>         كَا حَقْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          كَا حَقْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا       </p>	<p>         اَلْمَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          اَلْمَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          اَلْمَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          اَلْمَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          اَلْمَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          اَلْمَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          اَلْمَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا          اَلْمَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا: مَعْلَا وَتَلَا       </p>
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This harp should continually praise the Son of God, lest death come, take it apart, thus silencing it. In the stillness of Sheol, there are neither choristers nor speakers. Therefore, one could attribute the prolificness of Jacob of Sarug to his attitude toward his call in life, which consists of praising the Lord and teaching.

Bestir yourself, my harp, to the praise the Only-Begotten,  
lest death loose your sounding strings.  
Offer praise to the Son of God with a loud tune.  
He for designed you to praise him. Why did you cease to praise [him]?  
Play for God while you exist, for it is easier for you.  
[The day will come when] you will be silent. Play now, for it befits you.  
Bestir yourself, play [tunes] about the greatness of the Lord, your Lord,  
lest the sleep of death and stillness of Sheol silence you.  
In Sheol's pit, there are neither choristers nor speakers.  
Until that time give forth the sound of praise richly.<sup>98</sup>

Moreover, "As long as this present life still exists [for you], plant teaching in a land that offers the fruits of praise richly."<sup>99</sup> The bishop of Batnan is also known as the "Channel of the Holy Spirit," "loyal Zither of the Church," "Teacher of Truth," "Spiritual Pillar," or just "Doctor."<sup>100</sup> Jacob was translated early on into Coptic, Arabic, Ethiopian,<sup>101</sup> Armenian,<sup>102</sup> and Georgian.<sup>103</sup>

98. "SM," 808:8-17.

<p>✦ ܕܒܠܐ ܬܥܠܐ ܕܗܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ</p>	<p>ܐܡܠܝܢ ܩܢܝܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ</p>
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99. "HSJS II," 78:10-11.

<p>ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ</p>	<p>ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܝܕ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ</p>
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100. See Martin, "Évêque-Poète," 316.

101. See Siegbert Uhlig, "Därsan des Ya'qob von Särug für den vierten Sonntag im Monat Taḥśās," *Aethiopica* 2, (1999), 12-16.

102. See Levon Ter-Petrossian, "Jacob of Serugh's 'Life of Mar Daniel of Galash,'" *Ējmiadzin* 36:3, (1979): 22-40.

103. See Tamara Pataridze, "La version géorgienne d'une homélie de Jaques de Saroug Sur la Nativité. Étude et traduction," *LM*, 121:3-4, (2008): 373-402.



### 1.3 Jacob's Audience

The question of Jacob's audience pertains to the members of the congregations who were present as he recited his *mimre*. The bishop of Batnan spent most of his life (approximately forty-eight years out of the seventy he lived) delivering his compositions to diverse audiences.

A few of Jacob's *mimre* betray a monastic audience, while others a church community. He directed his exhortations at monastic communities. He warned the monks against boredom, lethargy, distractions, anxious thoughts, desires, and uncertainties. Moreover, he exalted poverty and fasting and enjoined the monks to remain focused, attentive, and engaged in their struggle.<sup>104</sup>

Jacob also preached to the lay person whose life's exigencies and attraction to the distractions of the world competed with the ever multiplying and time-consuming liturgical celebrations and the Gospel's message. Busy with the hustle and bustle of their daily lives, Christians seemed to have been too occupied to attend the services offered by the clergy. When they did participate, they fidgeted in Church, were impatient with long homilies and liturgical celebrations, or allowed their mind to wander. Some were so eager to leave the Church that they would exit in the middle of the service when the doors were opened to allow the catechumens to leave. At this time, the late arrivers would sneak in. If this were not enough, Christians who were attracted by what the theater had to offer, exposed themselves to messages that competed with the Gospel's tidings.<sup>105</sup>

However, the majority of Jacob's *mimre*, especially the biblical ones, are timeless, for they transcend time and rarely hint at the historical context in which he wrote them. He addressed them to Christian congregations without

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104. See Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "To Whom Did Jacob Preach?," in *Jacob of Serugh and His Times: Studies in Sixth-Century Syriac Christianity*, ed. George Anton Kiraz, GECS 8, (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010), 124.

105. *Ibid.*, 117-123.

due regard to the profession, age, gender or social status of the hearers.<sup>106</sup> The communities to which Jacob preached were most often a mixture of clergymen, monastics, and laity. Laity would have attended services held at monasteries, and monks and nuns, including solitaries, would also have participated in liturgical celebrations held at different parishes. Jacob's genius in preaching made his *mimre* accessible to all present at the various rites of the Church.<sup>107</sup> The bishop of Batnan did not differentiate between the clergy, monastics, and laity as far as their Christian obligations are concerned. Harvey explains,

Jacob does not, in fact, understand the devotional obligations to be different for the laity, monastics, or clergy in their essential discipline. Love of God, compassion for the poor, sick, and needy; service of the church; distance from worldly desires: such self-discipline in Jacob's view was required of every Christian, of every station in life, regardless of age or gender.<sup>108</sup>

The Bishop of Batnan infused his *mimre* with his theological viewpoint and comprehension of the Christian message. Overwhelmingly Christological, they offer theologians a lot to ponder over and discuss. However, they provide historians few contextual crumbs,<sup>109</sup> which leave the student of history disappointed and frustrated.

To whom did Jacob preach? Harvey thus answers the question concerning Jacob's audience,

Jacob spent most of his career traveling throughout the district of Serugh preaching at vigils, serving daily offices and celebrating liturgies. In his homilies we glimpse his congregation amidst its every-day world; for in his exasperated criticism and his delighted praise, Jacob also shows us who they were by the lives they lived. The reverse to his complaints of their behavior looked like this: his parishioners were hardworking, beleaguered, and harried men and women struggling to provide for their families, seeking respite from the pressures of their burdens. They were newlyweds longing for children, frightened of the dangers even as they craved the wonders of new life. They were the widowed and bereaved, worn, exhausted, and lonely. They were monks and nuns who struggled in all sincerity to work with

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106. *Ibid.*, 116.

107. *Ibid.*, 116-117.

108. *Ibid.*, 125.

109. *Ibid.*, 116-117.

unflagging commitment at the daily grind of self-sufficiency, while earnestly striving for illumination of the heart. They were ordinary villagers and townspeople who at the same time served their churches faithfully as deacons and deaconesses, chanters and readers, choir members, pastors, and teachers. And now and then, they all managed to sing together, in tune, in harmony, at the right time, and in the right place.<sup>110</sup>

Just as Jacob's *mimre* would have enriched their hearers back then, they could expand the mind of their reader today and the many generations to come. Although Jacob wrote to a specific Christian audience toward the end of the fifth century and the beginning of the sixth, the timelessness of his rich theological message witnesses to the fact that his preaching could reach other generations beyond those who heard him deliver his compositions. In fact, his preaching and teaching are a treasure for the whole Church. Could the bishop of Batnan have been aware of this? "Your word is vigilant, and the silence of Sheol could not compel it to sleep. Let it be uttered through me that future generations may utter it too."<sup>111</sup>

#### 1.4 Theological and Political Contexts

Jacob of Sarug lived at a time during which bitterly divisive controversies plagued the Church. They came to a head after the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), and whose effects on the Church's unity still reverberates today. The contentious Christological symbol of faith promulgated by the Council was at the heart of the debate. It could be summarized as follows: Jesus Christ; one person, one *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις) in two natures.<sup>112</sup>

Consequently, three main competing Christological formulations emerged over a period and could be identified mostly by the church communities that represented them. Each claimed to possess the correct

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110. *Ibid.*, 130.

111. "SM," 809:3-4.

حَسْبُكَ مَا لَا تَدْرِي كَيْفَ تَدْرِي : لَأَتَكَلَّمَ كَمَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ قَوْلًا وَاحِدًا ❖

112. See Alois Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche: Das Konzil von Chalcedon (451) - Rezeption und Widerspruch (451-518)*, vol. 2/1 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2004), 3.

formulation of how divinity and humanity co-exist in Jesus Christ. How one is to express and correctly explain the incarnation of the Word of God. The opposing factions exchanged anathemas and excommunications. That facilitated subsequently the emergence of independent ecclesial entities<sup>113</sup> which took shape and consolidated with the Islamic conquests.<sup>114</sup> The theological disagreements between rival Christian factions coupled with antagonisms between patriarchal sees and topping it with political meddling and cultural differences led not only to breaking up the one Church of Christ but also atrocities committed by Christians against Christians such as the mutual slaughter between rival groups that took place in Constantinople in the early part of the sixth century.<sup>115</sup>

The following sub-sections are, therefore, meant to highlight major theological debates leading to the Council of Chalcedon and those that took place during the life of Jacob of Sarug. They paint with a broad brush the political and ecclesial circumstances surrounding the Council of Chalcedon and its consequences. The goal of this endeavor is not to be exhaustive but rather to present the reader with a modest summary of the ever so complex ecclesial and political context in which Jacob grew and functioned.

#### **1.4.1 The Precursors of the Council of Chalcedon**

Calling a council to address challenges bedeviling the Church is not an invention of post-biblical ecclesiastical hierarchy. It finds its roots already in the New Testament. The Apostles were the first to convene in Jerusalem to address the pastoral concern of whether non-Jews must abide by the Mosaic law as a condition to coming into the Church (see Acts 15; Gal 2). Since that time, the so-called “Council of Jerusalem” became the model for future

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113. See Sidney Harrison Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 129-155.

114. *Ibid.*, 129.

115. See Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, *Chronicle (Known Also as the Chronicle of Zuqnin) Part III: Translated with Notes and Introduction*, trans. Witold Witakowski, *Translated Texts for Historians*, vol. 22 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), 7.

councils and the preferred way by which the gathered Church confronts difficult theological and other issues facing her.

Jesus's question to his disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" was not put to rest when Peter answered, "You are Christ, the Son of the living God" (see Mt 16:15; Mk 8:28; Lk 9:20). Around A.D. 318, Arius, a Libyan priest living and teaching in Alexandria, attempted to answer for himself Jesus's question. Endeavoring to preserve the unicity of God, Arius ended up denying the divinity and eternity of the Son of God by asserting that he was a creature, albeit the first and most noble of all creatures, and that there was when he, i.e., the Son, was not. Sonship, in the eyes of Arius, is not intrinsic to the Son of God, but he earned it and God granted it to him, for he willed it so.<sup>116</sup> Arius's rejection of the ontological relationship between God and his Son greatly troubled the Church.

The stability and unity of the state, which depended on that of the Church, led Emperor Constantine to convene a council.<sup>117</sup> The Church convened in Nicaea in A.D. 325. The Council Fathers promulgated a Christological symbol by which they rejected the teachings of Arius and his followers. Also, they maintained the divinity and eternity of the Son of God, and declared their faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ. This Lord is from the substance of the Father (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς), true God from true God (θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ), begotten not made (γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα), and consubstantial with the Father (ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί).<sup>118</sup> Unfortunately, the Council of Nicaea triggered other sets of theological problems which revolved mainly around the Greek word *homoousias*

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116. See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines (Revised Edition)* (San Francisco: Harper, 1978), 226-231; Alois Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche: Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)*, vol. 1 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2004), 360-373.

117. See J. Stevenson and W. H. C. Frend, *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337* (London: SPCK, 1999), 338.

118. See Kelly, "ECD," 231-237; Grillmeier, "Jesus der Christus 1," 405-412.

(ὁμοούσιος) or consubstantial, a philosophical term with gnostic overtones,<sup>119</sup> and led to splintering the Church into several factions.<sup>120</sup> The ruling emperor sided with one Christian group against another. His support gave the imperial party the power to enforce their teaching.<sup>121</sup>

In the second half of the fourth century, the Cappadocian Fathers ironed out the Trinitarian dispute between the theological schools at that time. One Christian faction emphasized that the Godhead comprised three things (πράγματα) or persons (πρόσωπα). For the other Christian group it was indispensable to protect the unity of God. Thus, it championed the teaching of the one *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις), which was usually taken to be a synonym of substance (οὐσία). These two schools could neither agree nor reconcile, for they did not speak the same language literally and figuratively.<sup>122</sup> The Cappadocians provided a solution to this complicated theological quagmire. They modified the original meaning of *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις) by making it also mean *person*. Accordingly, the Godhead comprises three *hypostases* or three Persons. This theological term was supposed to explain what is unique to each Person of the Trinity: the Father is the *Unbegotten* (ἀγεννησία), the Son the *Begotten* (γέννησις), and the Holy Spirit the One *Proceeding* (ἐκπόρευσις). The Cappadocians kept *ousia* (οὐσία) to mean substance, a term that explains the commonality between the three Persons of the Trinity.<sup>123</sup>

The Council of Constantinople, held in A.D. 381, confirmed the divinity of the Holy Spirit and his consubstantiality with the Father and the Son against the teachings of some theologians. The Council's Fathers toiled to avoid and succeeded in steering clear of philosophically laden expressions,

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119. See Grillmeier, "*Jesus der Christus 1*," 409.

120. See Kelly, "*ECD*," 247-251.

121. *Ibid.*, 237.

122. See Johannes Hofmann, *Zentrale Aspekte der alten Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Jürgen Bärsch and others, Theologische Lehr- und Lernbücher, vol. 4, 1 (Würzburg: Echter, 2013), 160.

123. On the Cappadocian Christology, see Kelly, "*ECD*," 263-269; Grillmeier, "*Jesus der Christus 1*," 535-547.

especially the term *homoousios* (ὁμοούσιος), that had proven to be controversial. Instead, they had recourse to the Bible for confessing that the Holy Spirit is Lord (2 Cor 3:17f), giver of life (Rom 8:2; Jn 6:63; 2 Cor 3:6), has spoken through the prophets (2 Pet 1:21), proceeds from the Father (Jn 15:26; 1 Cor 2:12), and is adored and glorified with the Father and the Son. The last expression finds its source, not in the Bible but the Church's prayer tradition.<sup>124</sup> Unfortunately, each council contributed to the further splintering of the Church and left behind it shrapnels of discord. Already the Council of Constantinople recognized and condemned seven dissident Christian factions, including the Apollinarians.<sup>125</sup>

The Apollinarians veered away from the Trinitarian debate and ventured to explain how divinity and humanity co-existed in Jesus Christ. In this question lies the seed that eventually led to the Council of Chalcedon. Apollinarianism finds its roots in the Platonic trichotomy, i.e., the tripartite view of a human being as spirit, soul, and body. Applying it to Jesus Christ while maintaining his divinity, the Apollinarists ended up denying him having a human mind (νοῦς), which, they claim, the Word of God replaced. In other words, in contrast to a normal person comprised of a spirit, mind, and body, Jesus Christ comprehends the Word of God, a soul, and body. Accordingly, Jesus Christ, lacking a mind, is no longer a whole human being.<sup>126</sup> Although the Fathers of the Council of Constantinople rejected Apollinarianism, they did not provide an alternate explanation. The problem festered consequently, and two theological schools butted heads, namely, the theological Schools of Alexandria and Antioch.

While the latter, in its emphatic rejection of Apollinarianism, stressed the separation between the divinity and humanity in Jesus, the former strived to maintain the unity between the Word (λόγος) and flesh (σὰρξ) in the

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124. See Hofmann, "Zentrale Aspekte," 165-171.

125. See J. Stevenson and W. H. C. Frend, *Creeds, Councils and Controversies: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church, AD 337-461* (London: SPCK, 1989), 116.

126. See Kelly, "ECD," 289-295; Grillmeier, "Jesus der Christus 1," 480-497.

person of Christ. To express this unity, the School of Alexandria employed a formulation that goes back apparently to the Apollinarians' teachings: one *physis* (φύσις) of the incarnate Word (μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη). The crux of the matter is the meaning of *physis* (φύσις). The Alexandrian School had used it to refer to the one person (φύσις) of the Incarnate Word God and to mean nature (φύσις) as in the two natures (φύσεις) — divine and human — as regards to Jesus Christ. The reading of *physis* (φύσις) to mean nature leads to the following Christological formulation: one *nature* (φύσις) of the incarnate Word. The ambiguous formulation of *one physis* (μία φύσις) drove some to postulate that there was truly a divine nature and a human nature before the Incarnation of the Word, but one nature afterward. As a result, either the divine nature engulfed and eliminated the human nature - this could be comparable to a droplet of water in an ocean - or the divine nature was mixed with the human nature to produce a new nature in Jesus Christ.<sup>127</sup>

The Antiochene School faced difficulties in explaining adequately how the two distinct natures unite in Jesus Christ. The divine nature and the human nature remain two separate and independent entities after the Incarnation, whereat the Word of God lives in the man Jesus as a person residing in a house. What brings the two natures together is admittedly Jesus Christ, the person (πρόσωπον). Nonetheless, the unity existing between the two natures is neither substantial nor ontological but is a relative and moral relationship, i.e., a unity of the wills.<sup>128</sup> The Antiochene School sounded as though it was dividing Christ into two persons, and, by extension, introducing a new person into the Godhead, thus transforming the Trinity into a quaternity.<sup>129</sup>

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127. See Kelly, "ECD," 317-323; Grillmeier, "Jesus der Christus 1," 673-686.

128. See Grillmeier, "Jesus der Christus 1," 614-634.

129. See Grillmeier, "Jesus der Christus 2/1," 288-289.



The Council of Ephesus took place in A.D. 431. At the heart of the debate was the title appropriate for Mary: 1. *Anthropotokos* (ἄνθρωποτόκος) or the one who bore the man [Jesus]; 2. *Christotokos* (χριστοτόκος) or the one who bore Christ; 3. *Theotokos* (θεοτόκος) or the one who bore God, i.e., the Mother of God. The city of Ephesus saw two rival councils convening one after the other and whose participants strongly condemned each other.<sup>130</sup> On the one hand, the Alexandrian led council adopted *Theotokos* as the title for Mary due to the concept of *communicatio idiomatum*<sup>131</sup> “(ἀντίδοσις ἰδιωμάτων), i.e. that in view of the unity of Christ’s person, His human and divine attributes, experiences, etc. might properly be interchanged.”<sup>132</sup> On the other hand, the Antiochene side professed one Christ, one Son, One Lord, in whom two natures are united without being mixed. Now based on this unity, they accepted the title *Theotokos*.<sup>133</sup> It is certain that Mary did not give birth to God *qua* God, but to Jesus, who is God and man and in whom - in this one person - are united both the divine nature and the human nature without being mixed. Because of this unity between the two natures, one can crisscross the idioms, i.e., natural properties or attributes, that refer to God and man. In another term, what one declares about the Son of God, one can also say of the Son of Man and vice-versa. Accordingly, the Fathers of Ephesus could teach that Mary gave birth to God. By the same token, one could say that God, the Immortal, died on the cross! It was not until 433, however, that the Antiochenes and Alexandrians finally agreed on a common profession of faith.<sup>134</sup> Although both rival schools accepted the symbol of faith of 433, not everyone on both sides was happy because they interpreted it as a theological sellout.<sup>135</sup>

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130. See Kelly, “ECD,” 326-328; Grillmeier, “*Jesus der Christus 1*,” 687-691.

131. See Grillmeier, “*Jesus der Christus 1*,” 631-632; Hofmann, “*Zentrale Aspekte*,” 178.

132. Kelly, “ECD,” 143.

133. See *Ibid.*, 328-329; Grillmeier, “*Jesus der Christus 1*,” 704.

134. See Stevenson and Frend, “*Creeds*,” 313-319; Grillmeier, “*Jesus der Christus 1*,” 703-704.

135. See Kelly, “ECD,” 330-331.

Meanwhile, the East Syriacs, who belonged to the see of Antioch, who followed its theological directions, and who lived outside the Roman Empire, cut the umbilical cord from their mother Church for linguistic, cultural, and political reasons. Moreover, they declared themselves in 410 and again in 424 as the Church of the East, whose Catholicos resided in Seleucia-Ctesiphon. In contrast to the Antiochene school who modified the teachings of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia as presented above, the Church of the East, under the influence of Narsai (d. ca. 500) and Barsauma of Nisibis (d. ca. 491-496), clung to the extreme interpretation of their Antiochene Christology: Jesus Christ; two natures, two persons, morally united in a *prosopon* (πρόσωπον).<sup>136</sup>

The direct theological debate leading to the Council of Chalcedon was the narrow reinterpretation of the expression “one *physis* (φύσις) of the incarnate Word,” namely, the assertion that the Lord is of two natures (ἐκ δύο φύσεων) - divine and human - before the Incarnation, but one nature afterward.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, Jesus’s human body is intrinsically different from that of a human and is, therefore, not consubstantial with it.<sup>138</sup> Although this extreme interpretation does not represent the original formulation of and enunciation by the Alexandrian School, Alexandria rose to its defense.<sup>139</sup> Pope Leo wrote a letter known as *Tomus Leonis* or also as *Epistola Dogmatica ad Flavianum* to be read at a council in Ephesus, which was held against his will in 449, and which he later calls it *Latrocinium* (Brigandage) or the “Robber Synod” of Ephesus.<sup>140</sup> In this letter, he condemns this new formulation and upholds the teachings of the symbol of faith of 433.<sup>141</sup> As its title indicates, the

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136. See Hofmann, “Zentrale Aspekte,” 185-186.

137. See Grillmeier, “Jesus der Christus 1,” 732-733.

138. See Stevenson and Frend, “Creeds,” 335-336.

139. See Hofmann, “Zentrale Aspekte,” 187-188.

140. See Kelly, “ECD,” 334.

141. See Stevenson and Frend, “Creeds,” 336-344; Grillmeier, “Jesus der Christus 1,” 734-750.

Robber Council proved to be very controversial and divisive. It was the catalyst that drove the Church to Chalcedon.<sup>142</sup>

#### 1.4.2 The Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451)

The Church convened in Chalcedon in A.D. 451 and declared,

... One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-Begotten, [is] made known in two natures [which exist] without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the difference of the natures having been in no wise taken away by reason of the union, but rather the properties of each being preserved, and [both] concurring in one person (*prosopon*) and one *hypostasis* - not parted or divided into two persons (*prosopa*), but one and the same Son and only-Begotten, the divine Logos, the Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from old [have spoken] concerning him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and as the Symbol of the Fathers had delivered to us.<sup>143</sup>

Based on this declaration, the Council's Fathers rejects both extreme interpretations of the Antiochene and Alexandrian Christologies. They employ four adjectives to explain how the Lord Jesus Christ is made known in two natures (έν δύο φύσεσιν). The two adjectives without confusion (άσυγχύτως) and change (άτρέπτως) are meant to rebut the extreme Alexandrian Christology that claims that there were two natures before the Incarnation, but a single nature afterward. The two other adjectives without division (άδιαίρέτως) and separation (άχωρίστως) discredit the strict Antiochene assertion that the two natures are so separate that two persons exist and are united in one *prosopon* (πρόσωπον). Although the two natures are united without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation, their different characteristics are not taken away by reason of the union (οὐδαμοῦ τῆς τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾶς ἀνηρημένης διὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν) and their distinctive properties are maintained (τῆς ιδιότητος ἑκατέρας φύσεως). They concur not in two parted and divided persons (*prosopa*) (οὐκ εἰς δύο πρόσωπα μεριζόμενον ἢ διαιρούμενον) but in one person (*prosopon*)

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142. See Hofmann, "Zentrale Aspekte," 189-190.

143. Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition: From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604)*, trans. Pauline Allen and John Cawte, vol. 2 (Atlanta: John Know Press), 3.

(ἐν πρόσωπον) and one *hypostasis*<sup>144</sup> (μίαν ὑπόστασιν), in the one and the same Son and Only-Begotten, the divine Logos, the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>145</sup>

Instead of bringing the different warring factions together, Chalcedon hardened the position of each group. Three main Christian parties finally emerged. The first are the Chalcedonians. They adhered to and promoted the teachings of the Council of Chalcedon. This group includes the Christians of Antioch, Rome, Constantinople and a small group of West Syrians known as the Maronites. The second party is the East Syrians. They belonged to the Church of the East, clung to the extreme interpretation of the Antiochene Christology, and were outside the realm of the Roman Empire to be affected by the Christological inclinations of the Roman emperors and by their church policies. The third and final party taught and promulgated the Alexandrian Christology and rejected its extreme interpretation. This group included the West Syrians and the Christians of Alexandria, Ethiopia, and Armenia.

#### 1.4.3 State and Church

Since the time of Emperor Constantine, a precedent had already been set for emperors to call for Councils, depose and exile opposing bishops deemed heretics, and meddle in Church policies. That was the case of Pulcheria, the sister of Emperor Theodosius (d. 450), who persuaded General Marcian, her husband,<sup>146</sup> to call together a Council to settle the dispute between the Antiochene and Alexandrian Christological teachings. He obliged by calling the Church to assemble in Chalcedon although against Pope Leo's wishes.<sup>147</sup> Besides, the Emperor, who was present at all of the conciliar sessions, forced the assembled bishops to produce a symbol of faith, albeit against their will.<sup>148</sup>

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144. Both *Prosopon* and *hypostasis* mean person.

145. For the Greek terms, see Grillmeier, "*Jesus der Christus 1*," 755.

146. See *Ibid.*, 738.

147. See Hofmann, "*Zentrale Aspekte*," 190.

148. See Grillmeier, "*Jesus der Christus 1*," 753.

The sympathizers with the Alexandrian school rejected the Chalcedonian Christology, for they found the Council's formulation to be too separative. It promoted, according to them, the teaching of two separate persons in Christ. Furthermore, the deposition of Dioscorus, the bishop of Alexandria, added insult to injury. The backers of the Alexandrian School must have felt as though they had lost the fight to Antioch! Consequently, the unity established in A.D. 433 fell through. The conflict reemerged and bedeviled the Church. As a result, violent rebellions occurred in Alexandria and other cities. Emperor Marcian responded forcibly to restore order and enforce the decrees of the Council of 451.<sup>149</sup> Many anti-Chalcedonian bishops, archimandrites, and other clergy were deposed and exiled.<sup>150</sup>

The situation worsened with the death of Emperor Marcian in A.D. 457 and with the coming of Emperor Leo I, a pro-Chalcedonian, to the throne. For example, a mob in Alexandria killed a Chalcedonian bishop in the baptistery, dragged his corpse through the streets, hung it, burnt it and scattered the ashes to the four winds.<sup>151</sup> An account of the resistance reports the slaughter of over ten-thousand people in Alexandria.<sup>152</sup> Emperor Leo I remained faithful to his pro-Chalcedonian policies until his death in A.D. 474, around the time when Jacob of Sarug was gaining fame for composing *mimre*.

Zeno (d. A.D. 491) succeeded Leo I as emperor in A.D. 474. Basiliscus, Zeno's son-in-law, who was an anti-Chalcedonian, overthrew him already a year later.<sup>153</sup> Although Basiliscus's reign was also short lived because Zeno returned at the head of a strong army and overthrew him in A.D. 476,<sup>154</sup> Basiliscus was able to depose Chalcedonian bishops and install anti-

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149. See *Die Geschichte des Christentums: Der lateinische Westen und der byzantinische Osten*, ed. Norbert Brox and others, *Altertum*, vol. 3 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2005), 120-122.

150. *Ibid.*, 125.

151. *Ibid.*, 126.

152. *Ibid.*, 127.

153. See Grillmeier, "*Jesus der Christus 2/1*," 268.

154. *Ibid.*, 279.

Chalcedonians, adherents to the Alexandrian Christology, in their stead. Consequently, Bishop Acacius of Constantinople (d. A.D. 488) called the Emperor a heretic and refused to sign the emperor's edict<sup>155</sup> issued against the Council of Chalcedon.<sup>156</sup>

The situation did not improve even six years after Emperor Zeno had regained the imperial throne. As a result, the Emperor attempted to reconcile the warring factions and to reunify the Church by issuing an edict, known as the *Henoticon*,<sup>157</sup> in A.D. 482. With the *Henoticon*, Bishop Acacius composed<sup>158</sup> tried to find the middle ground between the Chalcedonians and their opponents.<sup>159</sup> However, it was proved to be a failed attempt at achieving unity and led eventually to the first schism between the two Churches of Constantinople and Rome<sup>160</sup> whose bishops were pro-Chalcedon. In 489, Emperor Zeno shut down the famous theological school in Edessa, where Jacob of Sarug had studied, to hinder the doctrinal influence of the Church of the East from seeping westward.<sup>161</sup>

A new lifeline was given to the anti-Chalcedonians when Anastasius I climbed the imperial throne following Emperor Zeno's death in 491. His preferential treatment to the anti-Chalcedonians helped the two protagonists, Philoxenus of Mabbug,<sup>162</sup> and Severus, defend and promote the Alexandrian Christology, and even catapulted the latter to the Antiochene episcopal See in 512.<sup>163</sup> With the death of Emperor Anastasius I on July 9, 518, began the pro-Chalcedonian comeback.

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155. For a German translation of Basiliscus's edict, see *Ibid.*, 269-271.

156. "*Geschichte des Christentums*," 129-131.

157. For a German translation of Zeno's edict, better known as the *Henoticon*, see Grillmeier, "*Jesus der Christus 2/1*," 285-287.

158. *Ibid.*, 284.

159. See "*Geschichte des Christentums*," 133.

160. *Ibid.*, 134-135.

161. *Ibid.*, 136.

162. See *Ibid.*, 140-141; Grillmeier, "*Jesus der Christus 2/1*," 304-409.

163. See "*Geschichte des Christentums*," 143-144.

### 1.5 Chalcedonian or Non-Chalcedonian?

What should he who is seeking to speak about your generation do when everyone wants to talk about it according to their whims? The one [group] gazing at your divinity and greatness wants [only] to hear you are God and nothing else. Another [group] came closer to you. Since it saw you have a body, it hastened to cry out that you are [just] a human being. The other [group], being cunning, perceives that you are two [persons]: a God and a man. What could your Virgin Church, betrothed to you, make of these opinions [of the different groups], which, opposite each other, bark at her?

O Speaker, why would [anyone] agree to talk to you, for each one desires to hear the saying according to their whims? The simple, innocent, and single-minded folk are agitated by the many and various expressions. The world is perturbed. Still, each to themselves wants to uphold [their] perturbing saying[s] with perturbing voices that obey [them].<sup>167</sup>

وَمَا يُعَلِّمُ الْوَعْدَ إِلَّا بِمَا كَانَ عَمَلًا  
فِي الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْبِرُ الْوَعْدَ إِلَّا  
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

[illegible]

Jacob himself, however, did not contribute to the discords. His *mimre* betray a pastoral and biblical approach which allowed him to engage in the controversies of his day without being directly involved in the conflicts over doctrinal terminologies. Whereas many of his contemporaries chose the path of confrontation, debate, and theological investigation of the Son of God, Jacob of Sarug elected the less traveled road by rejecting theological inquiries into him.<sup>168</sup>

The Father freely offered us his Son  
that we might speak about him with love and undebatable simplicities,  
[and] not with contention, and not with strife, and not with debate,  
and not with knavishness which begets words by perversions.<sup>169</sup>

Jacob of Sarug's association with a specific Christological school is difficult to ascertain, for he walked a thin line between the feuding Christian parties. Nonetheless, the following explores some of the available scholarly research on the subject.

Undoubtedly, Jacob of Sarug refuted the teachings of the Docetists, Apollinarians, and Euthychians,<sup>170</sup> and also rejected the Christological formulation that divided Christ into two persons. However, his position on the Chalcedonian symbol of faith is ambiguous not only to modern readers but his earliest readers as well. The anecdote of bishops coming to ascertain the rectitude of his teachings allows the reader a glimpse into a world when influential clergy was forced to take up a clear position regarding Chalcedon. Furthermore, it highlights the enigmatic position of Jacob of Sarug. Bar

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168. See appendix below.

169. "SM," 686:21-687:3.

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170. See Paul Krüger, "Das Problem der Rechtgläubigkeit Jakobs von Serugh und seine Lösung," OS, 5, (1956), 172.



Hebraeus's claim that it was Severus, the bishop of Antioch, who tested and accepted the teachings of Jacob of Sarug further shows how, at least, Bar Hebraeus, who lived in the thirteenth century, associated Jacob of Sarug with the party of Severus. However, Timothy, the priest of the main church in Constantinople, believed to have lived in the seventh century, wrote that Jacob was an adherent of the Chalcedonians.<sup>171</sup>

The question of Jacob's faithfulness to the Council of 451<sup>172</sup> returned to the fore no sooner than Western scholars took notice of him. Already in the late 1700s, Renaudot judged Jacob to be a disciple of Severus of Antioch and a champion of the heresy of Eutyches.<sup>173</sup> Assemani,<sup>174</sup> followed by Abbeloos<sup>175</sup> and Lamy,<sup>176</sup> defended Jacob's pro-Chalcedonian stance. Interestingly, Lamy goes as far as accusing Anti-Chalcedonians of doctoring some of Jacob's *mimre* by adding expressions that favored their Christological formulation.<sup>177</sup> These are old accusations, for, already in the seventh century, Jacob of Edessa (d. 708) leveled these charges against the same group.<sup>178</sup> Malagne, whose ideas Bickell adopted,<sup>179</sup> propounded the view that Jacob had non-Chalcedonian tendencies, but, at the end of his life, was reconciled with the Chalcedonian Church and died in that faith.<sup>180</sup> Bickel also accused the Anti-Chalcedonians of tampering with Jacob's *mimre* by removing Chalcedonian expressions.<sup>181</sup> The circle of arguments was closed with Martin emphatically

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171. See Peeters, "*Appartient-il à la secte monophysite?*", 196.

172. It is not the intention of the author to present a detailed account of Jacob of Sarug's stance on the Council of Chalcedon but to show how scholars teetered between opinions. To understand better the complexity of this issue at hand, see Krüger, "*kirchliche Zugehörigkeit*," 16-21.

173. See Eusèbe Renaudot, *Liturgiarum Orientalium Collectio*, vol. II (Parisiis: Joannem Baptistam Coignard, 1716), 367.

174. See Assemani, "*BOCV I*," 290-299.

175. See Abbeloos, "*Vita et Scriptis*," 136-185.

176. See Lamy, "*patrologie orientale*," 520-525.

177. *Ibid.*, 521.

178. See Robert Schröter, "Erster Brief Jakob's von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten," *ZDMG*, 24, (1870), 270, 274.

179. See Bickell, "*Ausgewählte Gedichte*," 206.

180. See Matagne, "*Episcopo Sarugensi*".

181. See Bickell, "*Ausgewählte Gedichte*," 213.

asserting, “Jacob was born, lived and died in heresy [i.e., non-Chalcedonian].”<sup>182</sup> Martin seemed to have settled the debate over Jacob’s position on the Council of Chalcedon with his publication of anti-Chalcedonian letters attributed to Jacob of Sarug.<sup>183</sup> Moreover, the host of letters edited and published by Olinder<sup>184</sup> and whose author decidedly rejects the Council resolved this debate conclusively. Landersdorfer concluded thus.<sup>185</sup>

This mystery was supposedly solved, but when it reached modern times, Peeters<sup>186</sup> reopened against all odds. He defended Jacob of Sarug’s Chalcedonian affiliation against the predominantly scholarly opinions.<sup>187</sup> He based his arguments on historical events. The gist of it is that Jacob was consecrated bishop of Batnan in 419 during the time of the pro-Chalcedonian Emperor Justin I, who deposed the likes of Severus and Philoxenus of Mabbug. Non-Chalcedonian bishops were severely persecuted, banished from their eparchies, and their empty Sees were filled with Chalcedon sympathizers.<sup>188</sup> Consequently, Jacob, according to Peeters, could not have been but Chalcedonian. Others such as Altaner<sup>189</sup> and De Vries<sup>190</sup> agreed with Peeters’s arguments, while Ortiz de Urbina cautiously placed Jacob in the

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182. See Martin, “*Évêque-Poète*,” 419.

183. See Jean-Pierre Martin, “Lettres de Jacques de Saroug aux Moines du Couvent de Mar Bassus, et à Paul d’Edesse, Relevées et Traduites,” *ZDMG*, 30, (1876): 217-275.

184. See “*Epistulae*”. For a French translation of Jacob’s letters, see *Les lettres de Jacques de Saroug*, trans. Micheline Albert, Patrimoine Syriaque, vol. 3 (Kaslik: Université Saint-Esprit, 2004).

185. See Landersdorfer, “*Ausgewählte Schriften*,” 261-262. Bedjan followed by Jugie arrived at the same conclusion. See Paul Bedjan, ed., *Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*, I (Paris and Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1905), avant-propos, V-VI; Martin Jugie, *Theologia dogmatica christianorum orientalium : ab ecclesia catholica dissidentium*, vol. 5 (1935), 418.

186. For Peeters’s arguments and Jansma’s counterarguments, see Peeters, “*Appartient-il à la secte monophysite?*”.

187. *Ibid.*, 134.

188. See Vööbus, “*unbekannte Biographie*,” 402.

189. See Berthold Altaner, *Patrologie : Leben, Schriften und Lehre der Kirchenväter* (Freiburg: Herder, 1950), 303.

190. See Wilhelm De Vries, *Primat, Communio und Kirche bei den frühen syrischen Monophysiten*, OCP, vol. 18 (1952), 59-60; De Vries, “*Kirchenbegriff*,” 23-24.

Chalcedonian camp, and left the question open for debate.<sup>191</sup> Meanwhile, Armalé published his study on Jacob of Sarug in Arabic in which he defended Jacob's Chalcedonian affiliation.<sup>192</sup>

Jacob's Christological elucidations remained an enigma, for one could fish out of his vast writings Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian. To illustrate this point, one has to read Krüger, who kept returning to this subject over a span of twenty years! Unlike Peeters, Krüger looked at the content of Jacob's writings and dealt with Jacob's letters and *mimre*. In his first assessment, which he published in 1953, Krüger found Jacob to be Chalcedonian.<sup>193</sup> Looking at the question again, Krüger argued that Jacob was assuredly non-Chalcedonian and ascribed him to the school of Severus.<sup>194</sup> In another article, Krüger arrived at the same conclusion.<sup>195</sup> He was so certain of his investigation that he emphatically wrote that one could say that Jacob of Sarug did not only belong to the non-Chalcedonian party, but he was also its advocate!<sup>196</sup> In the last three articles he wrote on the subject, Krüger defended and adhered to his final opinion on the subject. One can summarize it as such: Jacob started out Anti-Chalcedonian, but at the end of his life, two to three years before he was forced to abdicate his episcopal See and retire back into the desert, i.e., back to his monastery, Jacob reconciled himself with the Chalcedonian Church.<sup>197</sup>

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191. See Ignatius Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia Syriaca* (Rome: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1958), 99-100.

192. See Ishaq Armalé, مار يعقوب اسقف سروج الملقب: بحث انتقادي تاريخي ديني (Jounieh: 1946).

193. See Paul Krüger, "War Jakob von Serugh Katholik oder Monophysit?," *OS*, 2, (1953): 199-208.

194. See Krüger, "Problem der Rechtgläubigkeit," 242.

195. See Paul Krüger, "Untersuchungen über die Form der Einheit in Christus nach den Briefen des Jakob von Serugh," *OS*, 8, (1959), 201.

196. *Ibid.*, 199.

Nach den bisher von uns vorgeführten inneren Gründen kann es keinen begründeten Zweifel mehr geben, daß Jakob als Monophysit zu gelten hat. Ja, er kann sogar ein Anwalt des Monophysitismus genannt werden.

197. See Krüger, "kirchliche Zugehörigkeit," 28, 32; Krüger, "Neues über die Frage," 248; Paul Krüger, "Zur Prolemtik des Memra (Sermo) über den Glauben des Jakob von Serugh und seine Lösung," *OS*, 23, (1974), 192.

The circle of the debate is once more closed with Jansma who concludes that Jacob's Christology is pure Alexandrian,<sup>198</sup> i.e., the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria, one of the main antagonists who signed the symbol of faith agreed upon with the Antiochene school in 433 (see above). The difference between the two is that Cyril, who slept in the Lord before 451, died in communion with the Church, whereas, alas, Jacob died after 451.

If the Monophysites revere him as their saint, they do so - as we have seen - on good grounds, in spite of the fulminations of the abbot of Mar Bassus ... And if, beginning with Timotheus Constantinopolitanus in the early seventh Century, Catholic authors regard him as one of their number, they too in a sense are entitled to do so. In a sense: for Jacob in his Christology has not written a single positive word that is not to be found in Cyril of Alexandria as well. But whereas Divine grace allowed the latter to die before 451, it fell to the lot of the former to be born in the very year in which the Council met, whose formula was henceforth to be the touchstone of the orthodox creed.<sup>199</sup>

Furthermore, Jansma rejects the idea of Jacob's conversion to the Chalcedonian Church toward the end of his life.<sup>200</sup> Last, but not least, Bou Mansour joins the debate and extracts doctrinal expressions from Jacob of Sarug's large corpus to argue Jacob's non-Chalcedonian stance.<sup>201</sup> Meanwhile, he rejects the false claim advanced by Chestnut that Jacob of Sarug was a sympathizer of apthartodocetism.<sup>202</sup>

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198. See Taeke Jansma, "The Credo of Jacob of Serugh: A Return to Nicea and Constantinople," *NAKG*, 44:1, (1960), 24, 26; Taeke Jansma, "Die Christologie Jacobs von Serugh und ihre Abhängigkeit von der alexandrinischen Theologie und der Frömmigkeit Ephräms des Syrers," *LM*, 78, (1965): 5-46; Taeke Jansma, "Encore le credo de Jacques de Saroug. Nouvelle recherches sur l'argument historique concernant son orthodoxie," *L'OrSyr*, 10, (1965), 349-350, 475-476.

199. Jansma, "Credo," 33.

200. See Jansma, "Encore le credo," 477-510.

201. See Tanios Bou Mansour, "Die Christologie des Jakob von Sarug," in 2/3, ed. Alois Grillmeier and Theresia Hainthaler, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche: Die Kirchen von Jerusalem und Antiochien nach 451-600*, (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2004).

202. See Roberta Chestnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies: Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of Mabbug, and Jacob of Sarug* (Oxford, London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 119-122; Bou Mansour, "Christologie," 463-464.

Lest this important and fascinating topic consume the rest of this work, it must be brought to an end. Was Jacob of Sarug Chalcedonian or non-Chalcedonian? Before placing Jacob in either camp, one must keep in mind that it would have been difficult for a Syriac theologian to accept the formulation of the Council expressed in Greek, which was absurd in the Syriac language because the technical term *nature* (ܡܬܠܐ) necessitates a *hypostasis* (ܡܬܠܐ). *Nature* and *hypostasis* are closely associated and could not be separated. Therefore, either *one nature* corresponding to *one hypostasis* could exist in Christ, or *two natures* corresponding to *two hypostases*. Accordingly, the *two-nature in one hypostasis* declaration of Chalcedon would have seemed to Syriac theologians illogical.<sup>203</sup> Furthermore, to declare Jacob's Christology as pure Alexandrian would ignore his Syriac tradition in which he was rooted. He is well established in the tradition of Ephrem, whom Jacob studied while a student in Edessa. The utter hiddenness of God and his incomprehensible nature compels the theologian to adore him rather than inquire into him.<sup>204</sup> For that reason, a good number of Syriac Church Fathers, when contemplating the divine realm, prefer the language of symbols, types, and images extracted from the Holy Scriptures, the principal source of their theological elucidation, to a philosophical mode of expression.<sup>205</sup>

This author agrees with Albert and Konat's discrete analyses: although Jacob of Sarug does not use the exact terminology used by the Council's Fathers, he ascribes to their teachings. By not using the Council's terms, one could pronounce him non-Chalcedonian. However, one could declare Jacob of Sarug Chalcedonian, for he expresses and defends the same beliefs of the Council of 451, albeit within his own pre-Chalcedonian Alexandrian and

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203. See Christian Lange, "Jakob Von Sarug, † 521," in *Syrische Kirchenväter*, ed. Wassilios Klein, Urban-Taschenbücher 587, (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2004), 219.

204. Ephrem refuses to answer the Arians by developing speculative theology on the orthodox side, as both Athanasius and the Cappadocians did; he sticks to his symbolism and demands that the mystery remain veiled. Not *fides quaerens intellectum* but *fides adorans mysterium*! Murray, "Symbols," 89.

205. See Lange, "Jakob Von Sarug, † 521," 223-225.

Syriac Christological framework. Albert showed this point by looking at the debatable tenets of the Council of 451 and exposed how Jacob of Sarug proclaimed the same beliefs of Chalcedon.<sup>206</sup> Taking a closer look at Jacob's typological expressions, Konat evinces Jacob's beliefs in the divinity and humanity in the one person of Christ.<sup>207</sup> Konat wrote in his conclusion,

Without going into philosophical criteria to explain how the union occurred in the incarnation - whether it was a hypostatic union or in nature or in the prosopon - he (Jacob) solves the problem by affirming that Christ is fully God and man ... we can affirm that Jacob's writings contain all the essential elements of a sound Christology.<sup>208</sup>

The irenic Syriac Poet could have purposely avoided the wording of the controversial Council of 451 altogether to give a wide berth to the conflict between the contending Christological schools while hoping for a reunited Church and nostalgically looking at what he found to be a better past.<sup>209</sup>

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206. See Micheline Albert, "Jacques de Saroug (521) et le Magistère," *Pdel'O*, 17, (1992): 61-71.

207. See Johns Abraham Konat, "Christological Insights in Jacob of Serugh's Typology as Reflected in His Memre," *ETL*, 77:1, (201): 46-72.

208. *Ibid.*, 71-72.

209. See Jansma, "Credo," 32-33.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE CHURCH, BUILDING ON GOLGOTHA

In Jacob of Sarug's theological outlook, the prophets, whose prophecies the Old Testament records, announce the complete truth about the Son of God and his Church. God the Father, however, conceals this revelation as if he had covered the whole Old Testament with a veil. Jacob justifies God's action by the fact that the Almighty did not want to be the cause that led people to polytheism.<sup>1</sup> Only the Son, who did not break the seal of virginity by his birth, does rend the veil of prophecy by his crucifixion,<sup>2</sup> thus making possible the interpretation and explanation of the Old Testament<sup>3</sup> using typology.<sup>4</sup> Types and symbols<sup>5</sup> are ubiquitous throughout the pages of the Old Testament according to the bishop of Batnan, who tirelessly fished them out based on people,<sup>6</sup> events,<sup>7</sup> and prophecies.<sup>8</sup> He explains,

Not so are waters gathered in the great sea

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1. See "HSJS III," 285:13-20.

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ⲉⲙⲉⲙⲉ ⲛⲁⲛⲁ ⲛⲁⲛⲁ ⲛⲁⲛⲁ ⲛⲁⲛⲁ ⲛⲁⲛⲁ : ⲛⲁⲛⲁ ⲛⲁⲛⲁ ⲛⲁⲛⲁ ⲛⲁⲛⲁ :  
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2. See Joseph Zingerle, "Eine ungedruckte Homilie Jakobs von Sarug. Einleitung: Jakob's von Sarug Topologie," ZKT, 11, (1887), 105; "HSJS III," 300:17-18.

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3. On the exegetical method employed by Jacob of Sarug, see Zingerle, "ungedruckte Homilie," 315-466.

4. On the Syriac Church Fathers' use of symbols and types, see De Vries, "Kirchenbegriff".

5. On typological exegesis in the writing of Jacob of Sarug, see Johns Abraham Konat, "Typological Exegesis in the Metrical Homilies of Jacob of Serugh," *Pdel'O*, 31, (2006): 109-121.

6. See "HSJS III," 209:5-6.

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7. The vision of Jacob at Bethel is such an example. See *Ibid.*, 192-207.

8. *Ibid.*, 287:17.

like the Book of Moses is filled with the types of our Lord.  
The sky is not lit by the moon, that orbits in it,  
like the Torah shines with the news of the Son of God.  
The sun is not adorned by rays surrounding it,  
as the Book of the Father manifesting the beauty of the Son.  
The glow [of a flame] is not close to it  
as the Cross lucidly depicted in the Scriptures.  
All those who prophesied about hidden things foretold about our Lord,  
for otherwise the revelations of truths would be of no effect.  
The Scriptures were for him like [body] members, and he was like a soul to  
them  
and through, him they were moved to speak about him abundantly.<sup>9</sup>

These types and symbols foretell not only the coming of the Son of God but also prefigure his Church. The bishop of Batnan poetically states that along the glowing beauty of the Son, the definition of all that is beautiful,<sup>10</sup> shone also forth, in the Book of the Father,<sup>11</sup> i.e., the Old Testament, the beauty and brilliance of his Church. Furthermore, the Church is inseparable from the Only-Begotten,<sup>12</sup> for the type of the Son of God does not journey without her.<sup>13</sup>

A building is one of these images that Jacob of Sarug exploits as a type of the Church. For him, prophets, priests, and patriarchs toiled as architects in building her.<sup>14</sup> In fact, they contributed, in their ways, to the preparation and

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| <p>9. <i>Ibid.</i>, 243:18-244:8.</p> <p>         ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ<br/>         ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ<br/>         ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ<br/>         ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ<br/>         ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ<br/>         ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ<br/>         ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ       </p> | <p>ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ :</p> <p>ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ :</p> <p>ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ :</p> <p>ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ :</p> <p>ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ :</p> <p>ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ :</p> |
| <p>10. <i>Ibid.</i>, 301:14.</p>   | <p>ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ :</p>  |
| <p>11. <i>Ibid.</i>, 244:2.</p>  | <p>ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ :</p>  |
| <p>12. <i>Ibid.</i>, 289:18-19.</p>  | <p>ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ :</p>  |
| <p>13. <i>Ibid.</i>, 193:14.</p>   | <p>ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ :</p>  |
| <p>14. "HSJS IV," 801:14-15.</p>   | <p>ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ :</p>  |



The Syriac Churches value the depiction of the Church as a building. Their liturgical books, in which this symbolism appears, witness to this fact. In his book *Der Kirchenbegriff der von Rom getrennten Syrer*, Wilhelm De Vries enumerates such building-images: the tent of meeting, Solomon's temple, Noah's ark, the altar built by Abraham on the mountaintop, the stone anointed by Jacob. De Vries writes quoting from the breviary of the Syriac Antiochene Church,

15. See "HSJS III," 203:13-14.  
 16. See "HSJS IV," 802:5-6.  
 17. *Breviarium Juxta Ritum Ecclesiae Antiochenae Syrorum*, vol. II (Mosul: Typis Fratrum Praedicatorum, 1886-1896), 14.  
 18. *Ibid.*, 10.

Quoting liturgical texts satisfied De Vries's research interests on this topic. Therefore, he did not provide his readers with other written sources whose Syriac authors could have been the pioneers — at least in the Syriac-speaking world — of these types.

These images are clearly present in the works of early Syriac writers such as Ephrem and Balai. Robert Murray, writing a few years after De Vries, identifies in his book *Symbols of the Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* Syriac authors who have portrayed the Church as a building in their writings. His investigation shows that Aphrahat appears to have been the first "to develop the image of a building at length, but always as the structure of faith, laid on the foundation of Christ the rock (*kepha* or *šôcâ*)."<sup>20</sup> This image, however, relates to the individual believer rather than to the Church.<sup>21</sup> Aphrahat's structure of faith then falls short of referring to the Church. In Ephrem's oeuvres, Murray identifies three Old Testament types symbolizing the Church: the tower of Babel, the Tabernacle and the City of Refuge. Balai, composing about a century after Aphrahat and two generations after Ephrem, develops the image of the temple as a type of the Church.<sup>22</sup> Murray's investigation, limited to the period before the fifth-century schism,<sup>23</sup> shows that the Church as a type of a building already belonged to the Syriac theological worldview at the time of Jacob of Sarug.

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Abraham in dem Altar, den er auf der Spitze des Berges baute, Jakob in dem Stein, den er salbte, Moses in dem zeitweiligen Zelt und Salomon in dem Hause, das er baute.« Die Arche Noes, der einzige Zufluchtsort der Rettung für die Menschheit ist ein recht passendes Bild der Kirche. »Selig bist du, gläubige Kirche, Braut des Sohnes, da in dir erfüllt worden sind die Parabeln und Geheimnisse, die verborgen waren. Dich stellte Noe der Gerechte dar in jener Arche. Es deutete dich an Jakob der Gerechte durch jenen Stein, den er salbte. Es sah dich Moses, der Auserwählte, auf dem Berge Sinai und Isaïas mit dem Augen des Geistes. Christus vollendete deine Geheimnisse in Blut, das aus seiner Seite floss.« De Vries, "Kirchenbegriff," 185-186.

20. Murray, "Symbols," 218.

21. *Ibid.*, 219.

22. *Ibid.*, 219-228.

23. *Ibid.*, 1.

Jacob of Sarug, in turn, availed himself of these types in his interpretation of the Old Testament. Tanios Bou Mansour recognizes this but chooses not to elaborate on the subject. He states,

Jacob goes even further: that the just ones of the Old Testament, “those who lived spiritually,” were allowed to celebrate God was due to the mysteries (râzê) of the Church (IV 796, 10-11). Therefore, in light of eschatology, of the Church as an eschatological reality, does the past gain its meaning. In this manner, the prefigurative deeds of Melchizedek, Abraham and Isaac, and in particular those of Jacob, who, by building the house of God (Bethel), has apparently signified the Church, should be evaluated (IV 796, 18sv). Jacob even sees in the building of Bethel a foundation (šetestâ) of the Church (IV 800, 18-19). I certainly do not have the intention to study at this juncture all the ecclesiological typology that Jacob discerns in the people and events of the Old Testament. Let us remember the importance he attributed to the prophets, here to Moses, Samuel, and Elisha (IV 801,8-11), and to the fact that they significantly contributed to the establishment of the Church: Architects have forever toiled in (building) this house; prophets, priests, and patriarchs by their revelations (IV 801,14-15).<sup>24</sup>

This chapter picks up where Bou Mansour left off. Its objective is to explicate three building-images Jacob of Sarug exploits in the people and events of the Old Testament to speak of the Church. The following section discusses the first type, the Church as *A House on Golgotha for the Holy Things*. Its context is Melchizedek’s encounter with Abraham (see Gn. 14:18-20). Then, the second section elaborates on the image of the Church as *The Altar Abraham and Isaac Built* (see Gn. 22: 1-19). This type anticipates the sacrifice of the Lord

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24. Jacques va encore plus loin: s’il a été donné aux justes de l’Ancien Testament, “ceux qui ont vécu spirituellement”, de célébrer Dieu, c’est grâce aux mystères (râzê) de l’Église (IV 796, 10-11). C’est donc à la lumière de l’eschatologie, de l’Église comme réalité eschatologique, que le passé prend sens. Ainsi faut-il évaluer l’action préfigurative de Melchisédech, d’Abraham, d’Isaac, mais surtout celle de Jacob qui, dans sa construction de la maison de Dieu (*Bet-El*), a clairement signifié l’Église (IV 796, 18sv). Jacques voit même dans la construction de *Bet-El* un fondement (šetestâ) de l’Église (IV 800, 18-19). Nous n’avons certainement pas l’intention d’étudier ici toute la typologie ecclésiale que Jacques discerne dans les personnes et les événements de l’Ancien Testament. Rappelons l’importance qu’il donne aux prophètes, ici à Moïse, à Samuel et à Élisée (IV 801,8-11), et au fait qu’ils ont grandement contribué à établir l’Église: Dans (la construction de) cette maison on peiné les architectes (ʿardiklê) depuis toujours. Les prophètes, les prêtres, les patriarches, par leurs révélations (IV 801,14-15). Bou Mansour, “*Théologie I*,” 149.

on the cross and the water and blood flowing from his side. The goal of the third part is to explore the type of the Church as *The Rock Jacob Anointed* (see Gn 27:46-28:5). By doing so, he establishes the foundation of the Church. Lastly, this chapter ends with a conclusion.

## 2.1 The House on Golgotha Melchizedek Built

Jacob of Sarug shares with his audience the image of a house on Golgotha for the holy things as a symbol of the Church in his *mimro* entitled *On Melchizedek, Priest of the Most High God and the Types of Our Lord* (ܡܡܪܘ ܕܡܠܚܝܕܝܩܐ ܩܝܡܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ).<sup>25</sup> In it, he credits Melchizedek with establishing this building within the walls of the Holy City, Jerusalem.

That perfect priesthood (ܡܠܚܝܕܝܩܐ ܩܝܡܐ) established, from the beginning,  
the Holy City, the beloved place of the crucifixion.  
He (Melchizedek) built it abounding in delights and abundant in treasures  
that the *tabernacle of mysteries* (ܡܡܪܘ ܕܡܠܚܝܕܝܩܐ) might be pitched there from the  
beginning.

He became there a proxy for the crucifixion  
to minister spiritually according to *new mysteries* (ܡܡܪܘ ܕܡܠܚܝܕܝܩܐ).  
The faithful [servant] built a *house on Golgotha for the holy things* (ܡܡܪܘ ܕܡܠܚܝܕܝܩܐ)  
that they might be sustained within it by the mysteries of the Church.<sup>26</sup>

### 2.1.1 Perfect Priesthood

Melchizedek was a figure of captivating mystery for Jacob of Sarug.<sup>27</sup> The Old Testament (see Gn 14:18-20; Ps 110:4) briefly mentions this obscure Canaanite.<sup>28</sup> Whereas Ephrem identifies him with Shem, who became a king due to his greatness and was the head of fourteen nations,<sup>29</sup> Jacob of Sarug,

25. See "HSJS V," 154-180. For a translation of this *mimro* see "A Homily on Melchizedek, Priest of the Most High God, and on Types of Our Lord," TTV, 2, (1989): 30-55.

26. "HSJS V," 160:15-22.

ܡܠܚܝܕܝܩܐ ܩܝܡܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ	ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ
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27. See "Priest of the Most High God," 30.

28. See "HSJS V," 161:1.

ܡܠܚܝܕܝܩܐ ܩܝܡܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ

He (Melchizedek) was a Canaanite, and this is clear to all learned people.

29. See *Sancti Ephraem Syri In Genesim Et In Exodum: Commentarii*, ed. R.-M. Tonneau, CSCO, vol. 152, *Scriptores Syri* 71 (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1955), 68-69.

adhering to Heb 7, does not identify Melchizedek with anyone. According to the bishop of Batnan, Melchizedek's origins,<sup>30</sup> birth, and death are a mystery,<sup>31</sup> and his likeness is transcendent, just like Christ.<sup>32</sup> He is a priest forever,<sup>33</sup> whose enduring priesthood has neither beginning nor end.<sup>34</sup> In contrast to Ephrem, who claims that Melchizedek received his priesthood from his father, Noah, through the rights of succession,<sup>35</sup> Jacob insists that no priest has conferred it on Melchizedek and he did not pass on to another.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, the priesthood of Melchizedek, by which he established Jerusalem, the Holy City, is unequaled in perfection.<sup>37</sup> He is the perfect priest<sup>38</sup> embodying the perfect priesthood that contrasts with the imperfect priesthood of the children of Levi.

This imperfection of the levitical priesthood lies in the manner they worshiped. The priests of old immolated sacrificial animals to God, a gift

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30. See "HSJS V," 161:9-12.

31. *Ibid.*, 162:3-4.

32. *Ibid.*, 161:5-6.

33. *Ibid.*, 162:6.

34. *Ibid.*, 155:20.

35. See "In Genesim I," 68.

36. See "HSJS V," 155:21-22.

37. *Ibid.*, 160:6.

38. Jacob of Sarug seemingly preferred to employ the title *ܡܠܝܚܝܕܝܐ* (pagan priest) when referring to Melchizedek and the title *ܡܠܝܚܝܕܝܐ* (levitical priest) when referring to the priests of Israel, albeit inconsistently.

outside of themselves.<sup>39</sup> Abel, Noah the righteous, Abraham,<sup>40</sup> Levi and his descendants, the great Aaron, the distinguished priest Eleazar, even Phinehas, who kept the angel of death away from the Hebrews,<sup>41</sup> and all other priests of old sacrificed animals and shed animal blood before God.<sup>42</sup> Despite the holiness of these priests,<sup>43</sup> their “priesthood was imperfect, for it served shadows until his advent,”<sup>44</sup> i.e., until the coming of the Son of God (see Heb 8:5, 10,1).

The priesthood of Melchizedek is perfect and unlike any other priesthood in the Old Testament, for the way he worshiped was distinct. He did not perform his priestly duties like other priests<sup>45</sup> and did not vest like them, for he was both a king and a priest.<sup>46</sup> Rather than staining his hands

39. See “HSJS II,” 201:5-6.

מִלְכִּיזֶדֶק וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט

40. See “HSJS V,” 156:11-14.

וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 אֲדָמָה וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט

41. See “HSJS II,” 200:5-20.

וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט

42. See “HSJS V,” 156:5.

וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט

43. See “HSJS II,” 200:21-22.

וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט

44. See “HSJS V,” 158:21-22.

וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט

45. See *Ibid.*, 156:15-16.

וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט

46. See *Ibid.*, 157:11-158:4.

וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט  
 וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁשָׁכָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר וְיִזְחָר : סֵפֶר הַמִּשְׁפָּט

I shall not bring [animal] flesh to offer to the Lord  
because he certainly does not eat the sacrifice offered to him.  
The sacrifice of animals will be an insult to the Lord.  
[Therefore,] I shall purify myself and sacrifice my mind to the Godhead.<sup>58</sup>

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service.<sup>69</sup> Jacob also wrote elsewhere, “Melchizedek saw him (the Son of God) giving the world his body and blood and drew an image through bread and wine that he offered.”<sup>70</sup> Indeed, Melchizedek invited Abraham to the sacrifice of the Spirit that the latter might take delight in it.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, Melchizedek joined, through his action, Abraham to the priesthood of the Lord.<sup>72</sup>

### 2.1.3 House on Golgotha for the Holy Things

The house Melchizedek built on Golgotha for the holy things refers to the Church owing precisely to this Eucharistic context. Scriptures do not speak of any structure that Melchizedek constructed. Still, Jacob of Sarug claims that Melchizedek has built a house for the holy things. It is unclear how Jacob comes up with this type, unless he was thinking of Jerusalem, which Melchizedek established and is its king. It seems, however, that the sacramental mysteries provide the bishop of Batnan with the necessary context to identify the Church while he supplies the image of a building: the house for the holy things. Now, the tabernacle of mysteries (ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ) and the house for the holy things (ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ) appear to be one and the same. Jacob informs his audience that Melchizedek built this structure on Golgotha, where the crucifixion will occur. This declaration foretells the founding of the Church on the crucified One, Jesus Christ. Each structure, be it physical or spiritual, must be built on a firm foundation lest it may collapse. A reference to Golgotha or the Cross, in the mindset of Jacob of Sarug, is a direct reference

69. *Ibid.*, 166:14-19.

ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ  
ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ  
ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ

ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ  
ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ  
ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ

70. *Ibid.*, 400:11-12.

ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ

ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ

71. *Ibid.*, 166:21.

ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ

72. *Ibid.*, 167:3-4.

ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ

ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ

to Jesus Christ. Therefore, the house for the holy things built on Golgotha is a plausible allusion to the Church.

It is worthwhile stating that for Ephrem the Church is built on the location where the temple stood.<sup>73</sup> Contrary to Ephrem, Jacob imagines the Church built on Golgotha as attested in his account of Melchizedek. The place where the Church is built remains unchanged in the mindset of Jacob of Sarug as shown below.

## 2.2 The Altar Abraham and Isaac Built

The altar Abraham built to sacrifice his son Isaac in fulfillment of God's command is another image that Jacob of Sarug interprets as a type of the Church. In his *mimro* entitled *On Abraham and His Types* (ܐܒܪܗܡ ܕܗܝ ܬܝܦܝܬܗ),<sup>74</sup> a commentary on Genesis 22: 1-19, Jacob of Sarug portrays Abraham as one who established the Church symbolically. As the architect of faith, Abraham builds a house for the mysteries on the spot of the crucifixion. The connection between that which Abraham built and the Church will come to the fore as the journey of Abraham and Isaac unfolds below.

### 2.2.1 The Day of the Lord

An arch-patriarch, a great prophet, and priest, Abraham was close to God by his deeds. He so trusted God that he did not ask him for the reasons behind God asking him to leave his ancestral home. Furthermore, although dragged throughout the lands of pagan kings and without a place to lay his head, Abraham did not murmur against God. He starved, had to surrender the well he dug and had to endure the pain of having his wife taken away from him. Moreover, God has not blessed him with children yet, and his trials were numerous!

Come, see the love of this patriarch

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73. See Murray, "Symbols," 226.

74. "HSJS IV," 61-103. For an analysis of this *mimro*, see Richard E. McCarron, "An Epiphany of Mystical Symbols: Jacob of Sarug's Mêmra 109 on Abraham and His Types," *HJSS*, 1.1, (1998): 57-78.

and how close he was to God by his deeds:  
 When a voice called him away from his ancestral home,  
 he did not delay by asking, "Why, indeed?"  
 When dragged throughout the lands of pagan kings, he did not have a pillow  
 for his head in their kingdoms.  
 At one location, hunger drove him away, and he moved to another region.  
 His wife was taken to another country, and he did not murmur.  
 At one place, he dug a well, which they seized from him.  
 At one time, his wife was carried away.  
 He was without children and abundant in trials.  
 He loved his Lord and was a great prophet as stated by the revelations.<sup>75</sup>

Abraham never ceased loving the Lord despite all the trials and tribulations he endured. Although he lived among Canaanites and the inhabitants of Sodom, he did not follow in their sinful footsteps.<sup>76</sup> On the contrary, Abraham "diligently sprinkled them with his sweetness every day and dropped on them a wholesome taste of his kindness"<sup>77</sup> that they might imitate his good deeds.<sup>78</sup> By his acceptance and willingness to sacrifice to God his only son, Isaac, whom Sarah miraculously bore to him late in their lives, he further manifested plainly his great love to God and foreshadowed the Father's sacrifice of his only-begotten Son on the cross. Abraham, "who tied up his only son that he might become a sacrifice, clearly manifested, by his trials, whom he loved."<sup>79</sup> Abraham was an important figure, who left behind

75. "HSJS V," 175:5-16.

<p>           * ܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            * ܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            * ܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ         </p>	<p>           ܠܐ ܫܐܝܬ ܫܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ         </p>
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76. *Ibid.*, 83:9-12.

<p>           * ܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ         </p>	<p>           ܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ         </p>
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77. *Ibid.*, 83:17-18.

<p>           * ܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ         </p>	<p>           ܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ         </p>
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78. *Ibid.*, 83:19-20.

<p>           * ܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ         </p>	<p>           ܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ         </p>
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79. *Ibid.*, 175:19-20.

<p>           * ܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ         </p>	<p>           ܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ            ܕܡܠܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ         </p>
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Unbeknownst to Abraham, God leads him to Golgotha to show him the day of the Son that he longed to see (Jn 8:56). On this mountain of Sacrifice, Abraham observes the crucifixion of the Son of God and contribute symbolically to the establishment of the Church. Through the Eye of Prophecy,<sup>91</sup> Abraham recognizes the mountain to which they had to travel.<sup>92</sup>

When the *day of the Son* (ܕܝܢܐ ܕܒܢܐ) [Jn 8:56] arrived on the third [day],  
and the road of the mysteries of the Only-Begotten ended,  
Abraham looked up and saw the mountain toward which he was traveling,  
since the sign of the Son signaled to him, "Hither, old man."  
After every mile on the road of the slaughter had been trodden,  
and since there was on it one abode, namely, that of the altar,  
the type signaled to him, "Come, ascend to me. Behold! Here I am.  
It is mountain on which the redemption of the world occurs.  
Come, go up to see the slaughtered One placed on the altar alive,  
and the Sacrifice slain but the knife does not kill him.  
Come, I shall show you the *day of the Son* (ܕܝܢܐ ܕܒܢܐ) [Jn 8:56] through signs  
and manifest to you the slaughter of the Only One.  
Come nearer to me, see the type of truths,  
and observe me. Behold! I anticipate sincerity.  
Behold! Come, draw the types shall be set here,  
and take with you a great image of the Son of God.  
It is the sign [indicating] your way, man, go towards peace.  
Come to me. Do not pass by as a stranger.  
To this harbor steer your ship, captain of types,  
for the cargo of treasures, which enriches you, is laid here.  
Come, painter, take divine colors,  
and through chosen pigments form an image of the Son.  
It is the place in which the truths are achieved.  
Do not go another mile, lest you miss it.  
It is the spot on which the forgiving blood shall be poured [Jn 19:34].  
Come, sprinkle on it the blood of the type. Pass by and depart.  
It is the mountain on which is sharpened the spear for the slaughter [Jn  
19:34].  
Come, try upon it the knife that sharpened your love.  
Golgotha, as we say, is the mountain of Isaac,  
for, on the spot of the crucifixion, his father tied him up.<sup>93</sup>

91. On the Eye of Prophecy, see Armando Elkhoury, "Jesus Christ, the Eye of Prophecy," in *Les Exégètes Syriacques: Actes du Colloque XIII Patrimoine Syriaque*, ed. Paul Feghali, Patrimoine Syriaque, (Antélias, Lebanon: CERO, 2015).

92. "HSJS IV," 77:4-5.

93. *Ibid.*, 74:19-76:5.







He saw the priest building an altar for his slaughter  
yet calmly extended his hand to offer [the sacrifice]<sup>99</sup> with him.  
For he (Abraham) is the priest, the architect and the father of the lamb.  
And Isaac is the sacrifice, the stonemason and the priest's son.<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore,

Isaac lent a hand to his old man with the building  
that he would not estrange the type by this construction.  
Who has [ever] seen a lamb building an altar for its slaughter,  
or a sacrifice becoming a laborer on the day of its death?  
Where and when did an offering build an altar for itself,  
or did first fruits make, with its hand, a house for the holy things?  
A sweet [grape] cluster made a winepress to be pressed by it,  
and it stomped to trample, alongside its crusher, its grapes.  
A calf carried stones on its shoulder to build its altar.  
It dragged and unloaded the load for the house of its sacrificing.<sup>101</sup>

In his *mimre* on Melchizedek, discussed above, and on Abraham, Jacob of Sarug employed the same or similar expressions to refer to the building Melchizedek, and Abraham and Isaac erected on Golgotha, namely, a *tabernacle of mysteries* (ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ), a *house for the holy things* (ܡܚܒܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ) or a *house for the mysteries* (ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ). The symbolism of these structures closely connects with the crucifixion on Golgotha and the Eucharistic connotation it carries. These structures refer to the crucified Son of God, Jesus Christ, who floods the world with water and blood flowing out of his side (see Jn 19:34). In other words, Jesus is the tabernacle or the house, and the water and blood are the mysteries. By extension, these structures also refer to the Church, whom Jesus

99. The verb ܡܚܒܐ has many meanings, one of which is *to offer* a sacrifice. See "CSD," 274. The verses that followed, mainly, "Bedjan IV," 90:18-91:7 were the reason behind selecting this meaning. They refer to the offering helping in its own oblation.

100. "HSJS IV," 90:8-13.

ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ	ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ
ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ	ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ
ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ	ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ

101. *Ibid.*, 90:18-91:7.

ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ	ܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ
ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ	ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ
ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ	ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ
ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ	ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܚܒܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܝܐ

Christ, the Crucified One, made her responsible for dispensing these mysteries. Furthermore, she may not be separated from him, for he had joined her to him. That these structures refer to the Church could also be implicitly inferred from the allusions to the Eucharist further depicted as the sweet wine overflowing from Golgotha. According to Jacob of Sarug, Abraham became inebriated with the sweet wine that flew down Golgotha toward him.<sup>102</sup> In contrast to Melchizedek, whom Scriptures did not portray erecting a structure, Abraham built an altar by stacking up stones. Whereas Ephrem seems to be silent on interpreting the meaning of the altar Abraham built, Jacob of Sarug interprets it as a type of the Church built on Golgotha.

### 2.3 The Rock Jacob Anointed

Jacob, the son of Isaac, is another figure in the Old Testament who, according to Jacob of Sarug, contributed to the building of the Church symbolically. According to the biblical story, Isaac sent his son to his ancestral land that Jacob might pick for himself a wife, just as his father did before him, for fear of Jacob marrying a Canaanite or a Hittite girl (see Gn 27:46-28:5). However, according to Jacob of Sarug's interpretation of this biblical narrative, another reason was behind this journey, namely, for Jacob to travel on the road of the Son and climb the mountain of suffering, where God would reveal to him in a dream the crucifixion of his Son. This revelation impelled Jacob to set down the cornerstone of the Church, thus establishing her foundation. Whereas the structures built by Melchizedek, Abraham and Isaac implicitly allude to the Church, the stone that Jacob laid down undoubtedly refers to her. This powerful imagery unfolds in Jacob of Sarug's *mimro* entitled *On the Revelation to Jacob at Bethel* (ܐܬܪܬ ܒܬܠ ܕܐܝܬܐ ܕܝܫܐܥ ܕܝܫܐܥ),<sup>103</sup> a commentary on Jacob's dream at Bethel (see Gn 28:10-22).

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102. *Ibid.*, 79:19-20.

103. See "HSJS III," 192-207.





the cross,<sup>116</sup> the highway<sup>117</sup> connecting Sheol<sup>118</sup> and earth<sup>119</sup> to the realm of God.<sup>120</sup>

The dream was clearly a teacher for Jacob.  
It gave him a vision that he might read it and be enlightened by it in [his] sleep.  
Through the slumber of the night, he rested from the hustle and bustle of the world and saw  
the Lord of the universe teaching him about the concealed things.  
He entered the [realm] of sleep and arrived at the place of the hidden things  
where he learned [about] the concealed mysteries and their elucidations.<sup>121</sup>

### 2.3.3 Anointed Stone Symbol of the Church

The patriarch Jacob finally realized that the place where he was was not, as he had previously thought, deserted, for the Lord was indeed there.<sup>122</sup> Moreover, he discovered that “This is truly the house of God, and this is clearly the gate of heaven (ܠܐܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ).”<sup>123</sup> Ephrem had used the image of the gate of image in this context.<sup>124</sup> Consequently, as soon as “he got up in the morning, he began with the construction of the Church that the location of the vision might be honored with beautiful symbols.”<sup>125</sup> Jacob accomplished this

116. *Ibid.*, 197:17-18.

ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܣܠܐ ܕܐܡܪܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܐܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ : ܕܐܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

117. *Ibid.*, 200:9-10.

ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ : ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

118. *Ibid.*, 197:7-8.

ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ : ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

119. *Ibid.*, 196:9-10.

ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ : ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

120. *Ibid.*, 197:9-10.

ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ : ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

121. *Ibid.*, 197:19-198:2.

ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ : ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ : ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ : ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

122. *Ibid.*, 201:5-6.

ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ : ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

123. *Ibid.*, 201:7-8.

ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ : ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

124. “In Genesim II,” 74 (Latin); “In Genesim I,” 89 (ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ).

125. “HSJS III,” 201:11-12.

ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ : ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܚܝܬܐ

by erecting the Church's cornerstone and smeared it with oil, thus symbolizing her establishment. This foundation stone refers to the stone that Jacob used as a pillow. Jacob of Sarug wrote, "Jacob erected a stone and brought oil to pour on its top that the type of the Church might be clearly completed."<sup>126</sup> Consequently, Jacob

built God a house in name, for he set up a stone for him  
as one evidently affirming the Church in the world.  
The sagacious man called the entire place the house of God,  
placed a stone in it, and smeared it as in mystery.<sup>127</sup>

The bishop of Batnan points out that Jacob was the first one to anoint a stone and that he did not learn it from anyone who came before him.<sup>128</sup>

For both Aphrahat and Ephrem Jacob anointing the stone is a type of Christ anointing Gentile believers. The stone is a type of believers stemming from the Gentiles. The following passage is Murray's translation of the related text from Aphrahat's Demonstration IV, *On Prayer*,

And Jacob called that place Bethel; and Jacob set up there a pillar of stone for a testimony, and poured oil on its head. This also our father Jacob did as a mystery, foreshadowing that stones were to receive unction; for the nations who have found faith in Christ are they who are anointed, as John said concerning them, From these stones God is able to raise up sons for Abraham. Thus in Jacob's prayer the mystery of the calling of the Nations was prefigured.<sup>129</sup>

126. *Ibid.*, 201:13-14.

وَحَدَّاهُ لِقَابِهَا وَجَبَّلَ بِحُكْمِ تَوَاتُفِهَا : وَهَذَا قَابُهَا لِقَابُهَا وَهَذَا قَابُهَا وَهَذَا قَابُهَا :

127. *Ibid.*, 202:10-13.

أَبْنِ إِبْنِ نَائِدِ خَبْلًا حَكَمًا بِبَيْتِهَا : حَبْلًا لِقَابُهَا حَبْلًا حَكَمًا وَهَذَا قَابُهَا :  
وَهَذَا قَابُهَا حَكَمًا وَهَذَا قَابُهَا حَكَمًا وَهَذَا قَابُهَا : حَكَمًا لِقَابُهَا حَكَمًا وَهَذَا قَابُهَا :

128. *Ibid.*, 201:15-202:5.

وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا : وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا :  
وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا : وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا :  
وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا : وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا :  
وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا : وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا :  
وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا : وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا :

129. Murray, "Symbols," 45. For the Syriac text see, Ioannes Parisot, ed., *ASPD*, *Patrologia Syriaca*, vol. I.1 (Paris: 1894), 145:15-25.

وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا : وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا :  
وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا : وَهَذَا حَقْلًا حَقْلًا وَهَذَا حَقْلًا :





The house built by the Patriarch Jacob is not just any house. It is the Church, the house of mysteries (ܡܝܫܬܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܐ).<sup>136</sup> This expression brings to light similar phrases Jacob of Sarug used to manifest the structures built by Melchizedek, and Abraham and Isaac. Furthermore, it reinforces the interpretation that these structures are symbols of the Church. The house of mysteries is a place of rest for the Lord, who had already decided to come down to earth.<sup>137</sup> The Patriarch Jacob thought to himself, “The Lord, who is standing on the ladder, desires to come down. [Therefore,] I shall prepare him a befitting house that he might be honored by it.”<sup>138</sup> Ultimately, the Lord is the One building his house.

He (the Lord) set his face to descend to become one of us.  
 He builds a house that it may be prepared for his honor.  
 He desires to do something on earth that when he comes down to it,  
 a place will be established henceforward for his resting-place.<sup>139</sup>

So, the Patriarch Jacob was God’s instrument in building the Church, the Lord’s house, symbolically.

## 2.4 The Rock upon Which Moses Sat

As will be shown below Jacob of Sarug, in his *mimro* entitled *On the Extended Hands of Moses, a Symbol of the Cross, During the Battle of Amalek* (ܡܝܡܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ),<sup>140</sup> sees, in this specific scene (see Ex 17:8-16), a clear symbol of Jesus crucified between two thieves. This biblical event out of the Old Testament further provides the bishop of Batnan yet

136. *Ibid.*, 207:16-17.

ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ : ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ

The righteous Jacob built a house of mysteries there  
 and greatly supported it with tithes and vows.

137. *Ibid.*, 203:21-204:1.

ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ : ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ

138. *Ibid.*, 204:6-7.

ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ : ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ

139. *Ibid.*, 204:12-15.

ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ : ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ  
 ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ : ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ

140. See “*HSJS V*,” 290-306.

again with another rock — the one upon which Moses sat — which he perspicuously interprets to be a symbol of the Church.

The biblical narrative of Ex 17:8-16 tells of the Israelites defeating Amalek in a battle which he waged against them. Moses sent Joshua at a head of a group of selected courageous men to engage the Amalekites in battle, while he, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of a nearby hill. The outcome of the combat depended solely on Moses, standing with raised arms atop the hill. As long as he, carrying the staff of God, kept them up, the Israelites had the upper hand in the fight. But, when he let them down due to weariness, the tables were turned, and Amalek was at an advantage. To bear his tiredness, Moses sat on a rock which Aaron and Hur had pushed underneath him, and they supported his arms, standing one to his right and the other to his left. They remained in this posture until sunset when Joshua finally crushed the forces of Amalek.

#### 2.4.1 Miracle by the Hidden Sign

Moses, bearing a hidden sign and carrying the staff of God, stood atop a nearby hill, whereas Joshua, following Moses's instruction, faced Amalek in a fierce battle. Notwithstanding that Jacob of Sarug questions Moses's decision to climb the mountain and is ready to call him a coward, he hints at the fact that there is more to the story than meets the eye.

Why would you, Moses, go up the hill near the battle?  
The combat is [occurring] in the valley, and you climb to a high place!  
The marshaled troops are alarmed, and you crawl up to a hilltop!  
The combat is ferocious, and you climb to a pronounced place!  
Behold! The Amalekites are engaged in battle with the Nation. Go down,  
fight!  
Behold! Legions attack each other, point out yours.  
If it were not for the *sign* (אֵימָנָה), I would count you as a deserter.  
If you had not been a *type* (מִצָּדִיק), you would have wanted to escape.  
Unless you courageously join the battle and fight with your people,  
it would look like as if you had abandoned the struggle and fled.  
You had provoked the young man, who led the mighty men, [into battle]!  
Now go out and fight.

You, in the fortress of hilltops, did you expect that you would not be smitten?<sup>141</sup>

Moses goes up the mountain, for he is on a mission which he had shared with Joshua. “I shall climb the hill with the hidden sign (ⲙⲓⲁⲓⲛⲓ) and the staff of God in my hands to perform a miracle.”<sup>142</sup>

#### 2.4.2 Victory by the Cross and Crucifixion

Moses is “the fountain of prophecy, who set down in his book all unfathomable wealth, treasures, and riches.”<sup>143</sup> He had the temerity to call the Son of God, who is to come, “a prophet like me” (see Dt 18:15, 18; Act 3:22, 7:37), for he served his types from his youth on and depicted him in everything his entire life. This great prophet, who was to the Son of God what a shadow is to the body, also represented the crucifixion of Christ during the battle waged by Amalek against the Hebrews.

The great Moses depicted in everything the Son who is to come.  
On that account, he had the audacity to declare him “like me” to his people.  
The inarticulate [Moses] declared him “a prophet like me” without being ashamed,  
for he knew that he served his types from his youth.  
The son of the virgin, the daughter of Pharaoh, depicted, by his types,  
the Son of Mary, the Virgin, who gave birth without relations.  
Moses portrayed him by his birth and *crucifixion* (ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ),  
for he cleaved to him as a shadow to a body to depict his likeness.  
He wore his types from birth until death.  
For this reason, he declared him “like me” without shame.  
He prepared before his Lord every abode in which his Lord dwelt  
until he (Moses) ascended on the cross (ⲕⲣⲓⲭⲁ) just like Jesus.  
He began to depict the Son’s image by his prophecy.

141. *Ibid.*, 293:1-12.

ⲙⲓⲁⲓⲛⲓ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲙⲓⲁⲓⲛⲓ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲙⲓⲁⲓⲛⲓ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ	ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ
ⲙⲓⲁⲓⲛⲓ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲙⲓⲁⲓⲛⲓ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲙⲓⲁⲓⲛⲓ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ	ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ
ⲙⲓⲁⲓⲛⲓ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲙⲓⲁⲓⲛⲓ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲙⲓⲁⲓⲛⲓ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ	ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ ⲕⲁⲙⲉⲩⲉⲗⲁ
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142. *Ibid.*, 292:20-21.

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143. “HSJS III,” 44:1-2.

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nor the innocent could be decimated because of their indolence.  
The one not helping was esteemed surpassing,  
for Moses vanquished [them], brought [them] to their knees, made [them]  
rise, granted them victory, and condemned them to defeat.  
They who shot [arrows] did not conquer and who neglected [to fight] were  
not decimated and who deserted did not revolt.  
Those who battled did not triumph and who ceased [to fight] did not lose  
and who kept silence did not die.  
Although they battled with their might, they did not triumph,  
but if Moses raised his hands, he strengthened them.  
Their zeal to attain victory was to no advantage,  
and whenever the power appeared on the hilltop, their troops prevailed.  
By the burnished swords in their hands, they were not victorious,  
and whenever the shadow [of the cross] inclined down from the mountain,  
the battle intensified.  
By spears and the arrows on their round shields, they did not break through  
the [enemy] troops.  
As long as the son of Amram was over his army, those killed were many.  
Even if they had ceased [to fight], the enemies would not have decimated  
them,  
but if Moses slacked a little, the hosts went on their knees.  
The bravery on both sides was of no effect,  
for the power that overthrows and raises up appeared from the hilltop.<sup>147</sup>

To grant the Hebrews victory, Moses must keep the posture of the cross, however. As soon as he lets his hands down due to weariness, Amalek and his troops had the upper hand.

[When] he (Moses) outspread his hands, he gave his kinsfolk victory,  
[but when] he lowered them, he made them powerless by his feebleness.

147. "HSJS V," 295:3-296:10.

<p>         * רָגַחַא חַעֲדָהּ עִיִּי מַעֲלִיָּא כֵּן אֲחֵלָּא          * מִיָּד מִיָּד יֵהְיֶה אִם אֲחֵלָּא מִסְּחָלָא          * וְלֵאלֹהִים יִרְגַּח אִם מִסְּחָלָא יִרְגַּח          * וְאִם אֲחֵלָּא חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ עִיִּי מִיָּד          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח יֵהְיֶה מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * וְאִם אֲחֵלָּא חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ עִיִּי מִיָּד          * לֹא יִרְגַּח יֵהְיֶה מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * אִם יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * וְאִם אֲחֵלָּא חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ עִיִּי מִיָּד          * וְאִם אֲחֵלָּא חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ עִיִּי מִיָּד          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ       </p>	<p>         * לֹא יִרְגַּח יֵהְיֶה מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ          * מִיָּד יִרְגַּח מִיָּד מִיָּד חֲתִיבָהּ חֲתִיבָהּ       </p>
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When he was able to raise the symbol, he grew strong,  
but when he grew weary, he rested the Type, the Hebrews were impuissant.  
When he (Moses) depicted the image of the crucifixion, Amalek was  
powerless,  
but when he wanted to stop, the spear was drunken with his kinsfolk's  
[blood].  
When he displayed the King's sign, the persecutors fell,  
but when he wanted to hide it, the uncircumcised dared to destroy them.  
When he outspread the sign on the mountain, Israel prevailed,  
[but when] he concealed the likeness, the persecutors entered his camp.  
When he clung to his Lord's sign, the foreigners were powerless,  
[but when] he came close to resting, he brought suffering onto those  
belonging to his family.  
When he stretched out on the crossbeams of pains, his people were relieved,  
but if came close to [taking] a break, he afflicted his people.  
When he bore the image of the Shepherd, his sheep exulted,  
[but when] he rested the image, the wolves returned to his pasture.  
When he took up the Eagle to the summit, his flocks leaped for joy,  
[but when] he brought [it] down into the depth, hawks pounced on his  
nestlings.  
He was not able to uphold the symbol the whole day,  
so the combat down below was both waxing and waning.<sup>148</sup>

Aaron and Hur came to help the old man Moses endure tiredness. They assisted him by keeping his arms until the Israelites finally triumphed over the Amalekites. To make the event of Golgotha vivid, Jacob of Sarug explains that Aaron and Hur also extended their hands standing one to Moses's right and the other to his left. Like Moses, their postures represented the crosses on Golgotha. Therefore, the three men thoroughly depicted the crucifixion of Jesus; Moses being the type of Jesus and Aaron and Hur typifying the two thieves crucified on either side of Jesus. Although Jacob of

148. *Ibid.*, 298:13-299:11.

<p>         * أَوْفَى أَنْتَ سَيِّدَ الْبَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ          * هُمَا وَالْأَمَّالُ إِسْرَءِيلُ حَقَّقَ فَعَمَلًا سَحَاحًا          * رُجَا يَوْمًا وَبَنِيهَا وَهَذَا سَحَابًا حَقَّقَ كَحَقِّهِ          * حَلَا وَبَنِيهَا يَوْمًا أَوْفَى حَقَّقَ حَقًّا حَقَّقَ الْبَنِي          * هَلَا يَوْمًا حَقَّقَ حَقًّا وَهَذَا كَحَقِّهِ          * مَنِي كَنَسًا أَلَا سَعَا كَحَقِّهِ          * إِذَا كَفَلًا حَقَّقَ يَوْمًا كَحَقِّهِ          * إِسْرَءِيلُ حَقَّقَ حَقًّا وَهَذَا كَحَقِّهِ          * أَلَا حَقَّقَ حَقًّا أَلَا حَقَّقَ حَقًّا          * كَحَقِّهِ سَأَى أَلَا حَقَّقَ حَقًّا          * هَلَا حَقَّقَ حَقًّا وَهَذَا كَحَقِّهِ       </p>	<p>         فَعَمَلًا يَوْمًا أَوْفَى حَقَّقَ حَقًّا :          * هُمَا وَالْأَمَّالُ إِسْرَءِيلُ حَقَّقَ فَعَمَلًا :          * رُجَا يَوْمًا وَبَنِيهَا وَهَذَا سَحَابًا حَقَّقَ :          * حَلَا وَبَنِيهَا يَوْمًا أَوْفَى حَقَّقَ حَقًّا :          * هَلَا يَوْمًا حَقَّقَ حَقًّا وَهَذَا كَحَقِّهِ :          * مَنِي كَنَسًا أَلَا سَعَا كَحَقِّهِ :          * إِذَا كَفَلًا حَقَّقَ يَوْمًا كَحَقِّهِ :          * إِسْرَءِيلُ حَقَّقَ حَقًّا وَهَذَا كَحَقِّهِ :          * أَلَا حَقَّقَ حَقًّا أَلَا حَقَّقَ حَقًّا :          * كَحَقِّهِ سَأَى أَلَا حَقَّقَ حَقًّا :          * هَلَا حَقَّقَ حَقًّا وَهَذَا كَحَقِّهِ :       </p>
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Sarug does not foresee the hilltop where Moses stood extending his hands to be Golgotha, his reader could still adduce a close association between the two and that the former depicts the latter.

The distinguished Aaron and the illustrious Hur approached him (Moses)  
to attend to the hands of the old man that were waxing feeble.  
They outspread their hands in conformity with the crucifixion  
lest [this event] be void of the three on Golgotha.  
Wanting to attend to Moses's hands,  
they also raised theirs on the right and left.  
They signified with the outstretched hands the type as if [to represent] with  
the affair the truth,  
and they accomplished the type which occurred at its appointed time with  
[their] action.  
Who would consider hill of Moses and his (the Son's) Golgotha  
and would interpret their crucified ones differently?  
Three are on that of Moses and three on that of the Son, [so there is] one  
interpretation.  
There is the shadow, and here the body that manifested the truth.<sup>149</sup>

#### 2.4.3 Victorious Cross Fixed on the Church

Lastly, the rock, brought by Aaron and Hur to Moses that he might sit on it, depicts the Church. Jacob of Sarug, moreover, sees in this rock her establishment on Golgotha, whereas Ephrem does not make this association. The bishop of Batnan, therefore, presented and offered his hearers with a vivid image of a church structure adorned with the victorious cross, whose foundations are entrenched in Golgotha. With this depiction, Jacob of Sarug ends his *mimro*.

Moses was crucified on the hill summit in conformity with an evident type  
and strengthened in the battle by a hidden sign.  
The old man was long-suffering and reached the evening. Behold he would  
have gone down  
but he had realized that the count of his talents was missing a small coin.  
The painter looked at the awesome painting he accomplished,

149. *Ibid.*, 300:2-13.

✦ كَصُفْحَةٍ لِّلْأَتْبَاقِ هُجْلًا فِي الْمَوَاقِعِ	مَنْ يَوْمًا يَنْبُؤُهُ أَمْرًا سَاقِيًا تَنْبِيًا :
✦ وَلَا أَحَدًا كَمَنْ يَلْجَأُ إِلَى جُحْشٍ دَلِيلًا	فَعَلِمَهُ أَتْبَاقُهُ لَمَّا دَفَعَهُ إِلَى كَامِغَةٍ :
✦ رَفَعَهُ أَوْ يَمْدَحُهُ فِي مَعْنَى هَوْنٍ هُجْلًا	دَبَّ حُجْبٍ يَوْمَهُ كَصُفْحَةٍ لِّلْأَتْبَاقِ مَعْنَاهَا :
✦ دَحَاهُ لِهَفْصِهِ يَوْمًا دَاحِيًا دَبَّحًا كَصُفْحَةٍ	أَسْرَعَ مَعَ حُدُودِهَا حَقِيقَةً يَوْمًا كَأَنْفُسِهَا :
✦ دَحَاهُ سَحْلًا بَعْدَ أَنْ كَامَتْ قِيَمَتُهُ	مَعَ تَسْلَا يَوْمًا حُجْلًا يَوْمَهُ دَحَاهُ كَصُفْحَةٍ دَلِيلًا :
✦ دَحَاهُ لِحُلَا هَوْنًا سَاقِيًا سَاقِيًا هَوْنًا	يَوْمَهُ لِحُلَا هَوْنًا دَحَاهُ لِحُلَا سَبَّحَهُ هُجْلًا :



and one single color was lacking on it, so he finished it.  
 He realized that the subject of the Church was remote from his account,  
 and he feared going down, for he has not depicted her in his hymns.  
 They brought a rock, placed it underneath him, and he sat on it.  
 Then the Church was established with the cross on her. Blessed be his  
 redemption!<sup>150</sup>

## 2.5 Conclusion

The Old Testament is full of typological interpretation that the Son of God overtly revealed. These many types and symbols fed the extraordinary imagination of Jacob of Sarug. In these representations, he identified a building as an ecclesiological type.

This chapter explored the biblical events of Melchizedek encountering Abraham and offering him bread and wine, of Abraham and Isaac building an altar, and of Jacob's dream that provided the essential background allowing Jacob of Sarug to identify structures as types of the Church. Although Melchizedek did not, according to Scriptures, build a structure, Jacob of Sarug claims that Melchizedek built a house for the holy things on Golgotha. This building is an implicit type of the Church due to the Eucharistic connotation that the bread and wine offered. Jacob of Sarug apparently interprets the bread and wine as symbols of the body and blood of Christ.

The bishop of Batnan explicitly explains the altar built by Abraham and Isaac as a type of the Church. The wording used to interpret this image is the same as the expressions used in connection with the building built by Melchizedek. The location of the altar is Golgotha, the exact location where the crucifixion of Jesus will occur.

150. *Ibid.*, 305:8-306:5.

<p>             ܐܡܪ ܝܥܩܒ ܕܫܪܘܓ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ              ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ              ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ              ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ              ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ           </p>	<p>             ܐܡܪ ܝܥܩܒ ܕܫܪܘܓ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ              ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ              ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ              ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ              ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ ܕܡܠܚܝܙܝܕܝܩ           </p>
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The stone that Jacob, the son of Isaac, used as a pillow and anointed is a clear symbol of the Church and its foundation. Here too, the bishop of Batnan envisions Jacob dreaming on Golgotha where he set the foundation of the Church. Lastly, the rock upon which Moses sat during the battle of Amalek became for Jacob of Sarug a depiction of the Church adorned by the victorious cross of the Jesus.

In these biblical events, the image of the Son of God on the cross is at their center. From his side on the cross flow water and blood which inundate the world. These are God's gift for the redemption of the world and are the responsibility of the Church to dispense on all believers. One of her other duties is to evangelize by becoming a fisherman like her Lord and a fishing net cast by him into the sea of the world. The following chapter presents these images employed in the poetry of Jacob of Sarug.



to the Fisher of all!  
 The Fisher of all fished for her  
 so as to fish through her fishermen.  
 [Once] they sought a catch for the belly,  
 [but now] a catch for the Kingdom.  
 The twelve fishermen went out and netted the world;  
 they caught kings from the sea of bitterness,  
 freeborn men from the abyss of lust,  
 and slaves from the stream of wickedness.<sup>4</sup>

Cyrrillona also adverts to Christ as a fisherman casting his fishing net and sending his Apostles as merchants into the world that they may fish for souls.<sup>5</sup> None of the Syriac Fathers before Jacob of Sarug seem to have associated the image of a Fishnet with the Church.

Now Jacob of Sarug inherits this fisherman-imagery tradition. "The Light came out to kill the darkness of the world and fished wisely in every region."<sup>6</sup> The bishop of Batnan does not only make use of it but expands upon it as well. His interpretation of several biblical texts using this image is distinctive. In his theological outlook, the symbol of a *ṣayādā* (ܣܝܝܕܐ)<sup>7</sup> refers both

4. *Ibid.* For the Syriac Text, see *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Virginitate*, ed. Edmund Beck, CSCO, vol. 223, *Scriptores Syri* 94 (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1962), 119.

ܡܠܟܐ ܠܡܕܢ ܕܗ ܐܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ	ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ
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5. Murray, "Symbols," 178.

6. "HSJS I," 138:20-21.

ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ : ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ

7. A word is due concerning the Syriac word *ṣayādā* (ܣܝܝܕܐ), which normally means a fisher or hunter. See R. Payne Smith, ed., *TS*, II (Oxonii: E Typographeo Clarendonianon, 1901), 3376; "CSD," 477. Since Jacob of Sarug employs it in different contexts, it is challenging to translate it consistently. Admittedly, it is a biblical image which signifies a fisherman (see Mt 4:18-22; Mk 16:1-20 and their parallels Lk 5:1-11; Jn 21:1-14), yet nor the word fisherman nor the noun hunter nor the substantive bird-catcher always fits the theme of a poem-snippet under consideration. Thus, the title *ṣayādā* (ܣܝܝܕܐ) is left untranslated. Also, one should keep in mind that besides the meanings just mentioned above, *ṣayādā* (ܣܝܝܕܐ), in its wider sense, can also signify a catcher.

to the Lord and the Evil One, and the Church's symbols as a fisher and a life-giving fishnet emerge as appropriate tools the resurrected Lord employs to capture souls. The remainder of this chapter explicates this rich symbolism in the writings of Jacob of Sarug.

### 3.1 Jesus Christ, ṣayādā (ܣܝܝܕܐ) Par Excellence

The title ṣayādā (ܣܝܝܕܐ) relates to a net as a symbol of the Church in that it refers to the agent casting the net, to Jesus Christ. Without him, the net is useless because it cannot throw itself. The Lord, in the theological understanding of the bishop of Batnan, employs different means at his disposal to capture the world, and lead it to repentance,<sup>8</sup> thus bringing human beings to him, into his light, for he is light and life to them. "Jesus, Might of the Father, who sent you, strengthen me too. You are altogether light and life for human beings."<sup>9</sup>

Jacob compares Jesus Christ to a ṣayādā (ܣܝܝܕܐ), for he "cast his net here and there in the whole world that the entire creation might be gathered in the life-giving net [see Lk 5:10]."<sup>10</sup> This designation is not an innovation of Jacob. Ephrem, before him, refers to Jesus as the *Fisher of all* (ܦܝܫܝܐ ܕܐܝܬܐ).<sup>11</sup> The story of the Magi who came to Bethlehem seeking the newborn King (see Mt 2:1-12) will serve as one of two examples employed herein to illustrate the theme of the Lord as a ṣayādā.<sup>12</sup> The other extracted from the corpus of Jacob of Sarug deals with the narrative about the Samaritan woman whom Jesus met at the well (see Jn 4:1-42).

8. See "HSJS I," 356:13.

ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝ

By every means he captured the world for repentance.

9. "HSJS V," 688:14-15.

ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝ

10. "HSJS I," 139:2-3.

ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܝ

11. See "Hymnen de Virginitate," 119; Murray, "Symbols," 177.

12. The reader of Jacob of Sarug could certainly find other examples scattered in his numerous *minre*.

### 3.1.1 The Magi

To attract Assyria and Persia to him, represented henceforth by the Magi, the Lord acted as a skilled ܡܕܝܢܐ. In his *mimro* entitled *On the Star that Appeared to the Magi and the Massacre of the Innocents* (ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ :),<sup>13</sup> Jacob of Sarug likens the Lord to a skilled ܡܕܝܢܐ. This ܡܕܝܢܐ knows that setting up the proper trap and choosing the suitable bait to lure are essential for capturing their prey. The wrong bait will produce a failed catch and lead the prey not to bite, but to flee.

A ܡܕܝܢܐ sets up bait to lure [a prey].  
They attract and ensnare every kind [of prey] by the food it desires,  
for they know that unless they lure [it], they cannot catch [it].  
For this reason, they attract each kind [of prey] by [a bait] pleasing to it.<sup>14</sup>

Being astronomers, the Magi study the zodiacal signs, observe the luminaries and stars and busy themselves with their calculations. Therefore, the heavens, being the passion of these stargazers from the East, are the perfect snare. Magianism, referring to the Magi and their peoples,

labored with birthdays and the zodiacal signs.  
For this reason, Truth caught it by [the thing] about which it muses.  
It turned its mind toward the luminaries to gaze at them.  
Truth then come upon it out of them and through them by his skillfulness.  
It gazed at the stars and [busied itself] with the way of their calculations.  
Truth then set traps for it that it may see him there while he is ensnaring it.  
It has power over customs based on the zodiacal circle.  
The news of the Son shone to it out of it that it may see his face.<sup>15</sup>

13. See "HSJS I," 84-152.

14. *Ibid.*, 90:6-9.

ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ :  
ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ :  
ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ :  
ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ :

15. *Ibid.*, 91:3-10.

ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ :  
ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ :  
ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ :  
ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ :  
ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ :  
ܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ :

Jacob asks, what is the best way to catch the Magi? They are fascinated with the skies, gaze at, and study heavenly bodies and their movements. Therefore, to catch them, the Lord must choose something out of the zodiacal signs they desire and employ it as the suitable bait.

What is the [right] bait to catch Magianism  
if it is not something out of the zodiacal signs that it desires?  
He gave it that for which it yearns while seizing it that it come to him,  
for it would have run away from its <sup>١٦</sup> if it had perceived [that which was  
happening].<sup>16</sup>

The star of light is the right bait which peeked the Magi's interest, drew their attention, intrigued them, and raised their curiosity. Through this celestial body, the Magi knew of the newborn King.

Although it (Magianism) is mad and gazes upon auguries, in its judgment,  
the star of light signaled to it guilefully that the King is in Judea.  
Its heart was captured based on the calculations of its craft,  
from which it learned that the King has appeared, as we have said.<sup>17</sup>

The Lord also employs the craft of the Magi to their benefit. He uses it to lure them to him. This call to him does not mean, however, that he approves of their craft, for once he caught the Magi, he destroys Magianism.

The Wise-Hearted caught the skilled one by what it possesses.  
However, it did not know how he ensnared it by its craft.  
He conquered it by skillful trappings that it had honed, and he subjugated it.  
He valiantly killed it by that which it possessed like Goliath.<sup>18</sup>

That the heavens, the star of light and the craft of the Magi were the appropriate capturing tools used by the Lord could be seen by the fact that

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16. *Ibid.*, 90:10-15.

<p>❖ اَلَّا تَتَّبِعَ مَعَهُ مَتَكَلِّفًا وَيُسَمِّدَ اُنَّهٗ ❖ ❖ وَحَمَلًا يَوْمَ لَا يَدْرِي فِيْهِ نَجْوٰى لِّكَ تَبْكَا ❖ ❖ وَتَكْلِفُهُمْ نَا حَبِيْٓبٍ يَّسِيْرٍ كَيْ تَحْلُسُوْا ❖</p>	<p>اٰتٰىا حَمَلًا اٰمِدًا يَّوْمَ لَا يَدْرِيْ كَيْفَ تَكْلِفُهُمْ اَلَا : وَيُسَمِّدُ يَّوْمَ كَيْ اُنَّ كَيْ اَلَّا يَدْرِيْ نَجْوٰى يَّوْمَ : لِّكَ تَبْكَا يَوْمَ لَا تَعْلَمُ كَيْ لَا تَحْلُسُوْا :</p>
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17. *Ibid.*, 92:1-4.

<p>❖ تَعْلَمُ يَوْمَ لَا يَدْرِيْ كَيْ حَمَلًا وَتَحْلُسُ كَيْفَ ❖ ❖ وَتَعْلَمُ يَوْمَ تَحْلُسُ يَوْمَ تَحْلُسُ اَنْ يَّوْمَ ❖</p>	<p>هَكَذَا فَهَمَّ اَلَا يَسْتَلِمْ حَمَلًا اَنْ يَّوْمَ : مَعًا يَوْمَ كَيْفَ تَحْلُسُ تَحْلُسُ اَلَا تَعْلَمُ اَلَا :</p>
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18. *Ibid.*, 89:17-18.

<p>❖ لَا يَدْرِيْ تَبْكَا اَنْ تَبْكَا سَحْمًا حَاوِيَةً اَلَا ❖ ❖ تَبْكَا مَلِكًا اَنْ يَّوْمَ كَيْفَ تَحْلُسُ اَلَا ❖</p>	<p>تَبْكَا حَمَلًا تَبْكَا يَوْمَ كَيْفَ تَحْلُسُ اَلَا : حَمَلًا يَوْمَ تَحْلُسُ يَوْمَ كَيْفَ تَحْلُسُ اَلَا :</p>
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or to refute his words, [for] it was preoccupied with its craft.<sup>22</sup>

Since the Lord knows that the Magi's passion lies in the observation of the heavens and the studies of the stars and zodiacal signs, he sets up his trap in the skies to bring them to him. Their fascination with the firmament makes it an appropriate snare. It is precisely there, among the celestial bodies, where the Lord lay in wait. "The True One set an ambush, hid among the zodiacal signs, caught Magianism thence and guided it to him."<sup>23</sup> Thus, Jesus Christ is the *par excellence*.

The shining star the Magi followed westward is the fitting lure. Their examination of the heavenly bodies leads them to learn about the newborn King, for “The news of the Son shone to [them] out of [the zodiacal signs] that [they] might see his face.”<sup>24</sup> For this reason, they undergo the journey seeking the Incarnate Word, whom they finally worship. What is intriguing is that Jacob of Sarug accentuates the Magi’s ability to recognize the face of the Son of God in their craft!

### 3.1.2 The Samaritan Woman and the Samaritans

The Lord was successful in luring the Magi into coming to him, for he employed the suitable bait for them. Nevertheless, what is appropriate to catch the Magi would not be fitting to capture the Samaritan woman whom the Lord set out to meet at the well. Therefore, he must set a different trap and use the proper bait to capture her and her co-villagers. Jacob describes this

22. *Ibid.*, 90:16-91:2.

لَا مَحْصِلَ فِيهِ إِلَّا مَحْفُوفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَفْئِدَةً :  
 مَحْفُوفَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ كَمَا أَنَّهَا أَيْ كُنْ هَقْفًا :  
 كَذِبُهُ إِلَّا وَحْفَهُ كَذِبُهُ وَرَحْمَتُهُ :  
 إِلَّا كَمَا فِيهِ أَوْ كَمَا فِيهِ كَمَا وَرَحْمَتُهُ :

أَفْئِدَةً أَيْ كَمَا أَنَّهَا أَفْئِدَةً :  
 وَلَا مَحْصِلَ فِيهِ إِلَّا مَحْفُوفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَفْئِدَةً :  
 كَذِبُهُ إِلَّا وَحْفَهُ كَذِبُهُ وَرَحْمَتُهُ :  
 وَلَا مَحْصِلَ فِيهِ إِلَّا مَحْفُوفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَفْئِدَةً :

23. *Ibid.*, 90:2-3.

مَعْنَاهُ حَدِّثْ يَا هَؤُلَاءِ كَقَوْلِهِمْ : يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأَةُ أَصَحَّحْ كَقَوْلِهِمْ :

24. *Ibid.*, 91:10.

هَدَاهُ وَبَسَّطَ لَهُ مَخْرَجَهُ وَبَدَّلَ لَهُ أَمْرَهُ وَتَوَلَّى أَمْرَهُ وَأَفْقَهُ ۖ

lure in his *mimro* entitled *On the Samaritan Woman* (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܡܝܢܐ ܕܫܡܪܝܬܐ),<sup>25</sup> a commentary on Jn 4:1-42.

Being the good Shepherd (Jn 10:11), who goes after that one lost sheep (Mt 18:12-14; Lk 15:3-7), i.e. Adam, Jesus moved by love goes to Samaria, for its inhabitants had entered into error.

Love was the reason that summoned him to Earth to walk on it.  
He set forward looking for Adam, the lost sheep.  
After the good Shepherd had set out after his sheep,  
the journey directed him to the Samaritans to care for them.  
It made him pass through there, as it is written,  
that he find them, for they had gone astray.<sup>26</sup>

Jesus goes straight to the well to set his trap there, for the ~~fo~~<sup>fo</sup> knows that the road leads the prey there. After setting the trap, he lies in wait.

At the beginning of his journey, as a wise man,  
he directed his course he had taken to the water well.  
As a  $\text{J}_{\text{w}}^{\text{pp}}$  he hurried to the spring to set a trap,  
for he knew that the road of the prey [leads] there.  
He saw the water and wisely hid his snare.  
He lay in wait, watching as a  $\text{J}_{\text{w}}^{\text{pp}}$  full of foreknowledge.<sup>27</sup>

Tired of walking, the Lord sat at the well to rest. His exhaustion was only a means to achieve his goal to eradicate Adam's weariness.

He (Jesus) was wearied by labor, for he wanted to be weary as a stratagem.  
Tired is the One who eradicated the weariness of smitten Adam.  
The One who made straight paths in the desert was weary and sat down,  
and endured exertion and weariness of the road he was traveling.  
The reason for his weariness was Adam's body which he had put on,  
for unless he had willed to become one of us, he would not have been weary.  
The One who bestrides the cherubim, and whose path is loftier than that of  
the spiritual beings,

25. See "HSJS II," 281-312.

26. *Ibid.*, 283:18-284:2.

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو يَزِيدَ مَوْلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَهَبُ بْنُ حَبِيبٍ :  
 حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ حَبِيبٍ :  
 حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو يَزِيدَ مَوْلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَهَبُ بْنُ حَبِيبٍ :

27. *Ibid.*, 284:3-8.

وَتَحِبُّهُ ۖ هُوَ أَهْلُ الْوَيْسَةِ ۚ أَمْ سَمِعْتُمْ  
 أَمْ نَبِيًّا ۚ وَهُوَ كَصَحَابِنَا ۚ يَلَا قُلُومًا ۚ  
 سَأَلَ هُوَ أَهْلَهُمْ تَحِيَّةً ۚ فَهَمَلُوا ۚ



The woman went out to draw water and was unaware that the great Sea of New Life was about to meet her. While she was seeking to fill her water jug, a deluge gushed out, and the Sea, who was sent to irrigate the entire world, encompassed her. She began to draw [water] from the deep well, and the anointed Sea opened himself to her that she drink from him. While she was gazing at the water in the bottom [of the well] to draw it up, Heavenly Waters came down and surrounded her from every side. The heavenly Flood overcame the waters down below and drew the woman that she draw from him and leave them behind.<sup>31</sup>

Jesus initiated the conversation with the Samaritan woman by asking her to give him to drink. This image is paradoxical in itself, for the Lord himself, who bears the worlds, is the source of all waters and they belong to him,<sup>33</sup> yet he is asking someone to quench his thirst.

He (Jesus) asked the Samaritan [woman] for water meagerly,  
and deluges gush out abundantly from springs?  
Do I reckon him thirsty? All the seas are his.  
Do I proclaim him wearied? He carries the worlds by his might.<sup>34</sup>

تَعْقِدَ أَيْدِيَهُمَا وَأَمْلَأَا خُتْمًا وَلَا وَكُفُّهُمَا بِوَدَّهِ :  
 وَحَبَّ حُبًّا بِوَدَّهِ وَأَمْلَأَا مَقَادِيرَ قُلُوبِهِمَا مَعْقُولًا :  
 هَذَا هَذَا وَأَمْلَأَا قُلُوبَهُمَا قُلُوبًا وَأَمْلَأَا قُلُوبَهُمَا :  
 حَبَّ سُبُلًا بِوَدَّهِ حَقَّقْنَا وَحَدَّسْنَا وَأَهْمَمْنَا أَيْدِيَهُمَا :  
 وَأَمْلَأَا مَعْقُولًا بِوَدَّهِ حَقَّقْنَا حَقَّقْنَا وَحَدَّسْنَا :

مَحْمَدٌ: مُحَمَّدٌ: وَلَا تَحْتِ حَافَا حَكَا :

مَحْتَا اسْتَلَا مَعَكَ حَمَدٌ: مَحْ حُكَا :

Although being the Rest of all labors, he (the Lord) was weary by the labor of the journey. Although being the Spring that quenches thirstiness, he thirsted and asked for water to drink.

96

It is truly surprising that the Lord of the seas<sup>35</sup> is now asking to be given a drink.

Along with his Father did he gather the waters into a basin.  
Now, that he has become one of us, he asks for water, and will it not be given to him?  
By his command does the earth bring forth springs and rivers.  
It is astonishing that he said, "Give me to drink!"<sup>36</sup>

Engaging the Samaritan woman in a conversation was the trap Jesus set to catch her, and the water for which he asked was the bait. His thirst was nothing but a pretext that opened the door to Jesus's teaching. He did not, in fact, want to drink, but to quench her thirst with the Water of life.

The Lord began talking to her [saying], "Give me to drink."  
It was this pretext that opened the door to the teaching.  
Through the subject of water does the Lord open the door for dialogue.  
Indeed, he did not seek her out to drink, for he did not even drink.  
To the woman who was drawing water did he plan to talk.  
What would one say except "Give me water to drink?"<sup>37</sup>

Jacob reasons that Jesus did not want to drink in reality, for the biblical story does not state that he drank.

Furthermore, the Apostles were not present, for Jesus wanted to be alone with the woman. How many would it have taken to purchase food for thirteen men? Was it necessary for the twelve apostles to go to acquire something to eat? One would have been enough for that task.

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| <p>35. <i>Ibid.</i>, 283:16-17.</p>    | <p>             ܠܐܠܐ ܐܡܢܐ ܝܗܘܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ<br/>             ܠܐܠܐ ܐܡܢܐ ܝܗܘܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ           </p> |
| <p>36. <i>Ibid.</i>, 283:12-15.</p>    | <p>             ܠܐܠܐ ܐܡܢܐ ܝܗܘܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ<br/>             ܠܐܠܐ ܐܡܢܐ ܝܗܘܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ           </p> |
| <p>37. <i>Ibid.</i>, 286:17-287:1.</p> | <p>             ܠܐܠܐ ܐܡܢܐ ܝܗܘܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ<br/>             ܠܐܠܐ ܐܡܢܐ ܝܗܘܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܝܬܐ           </p> |



Was he asking to drink water in reality,  
or did he plan to give away Water of Life?  
Was he truly longing for a drink? Did he ask for water because he thirsted,  
or he was not thirsty but wanted to quench the thirst of the thirsty [woman]?  
It was not written that he drank or that she gave him that for which he had  
asked.  
He said, “Give me to drink,” yet did not drink.  
Notwithstanding that there is a reason to be thirsty,  
it is easy to learn that he did not ask for water because he thirsted.  
It is not necessary for a person to drink water before a meal,  
and, behold, the disciples went to buy food!  
It is evident that the Lord did not thirst for water,  
but he had planned to give the Water of life.  
He, therefore, fabricated this cause for the discussion as we have said.  
He began to ask the woman for water as you have heard.  
He fabricated a cause to talk to her as a someone who is needy  
that a gift may be taken from him, for he is rich.<sup>40</sup>

[The Lord] ensnared the woman with the love of the water he possesses. Although she did not know what this water is, she loved it. She began asking him for the water he promised, "Lord, give me Water of life that I may never again thirst."<sup>41</sup>

[illegible]

هَكَذَا لِلْمُحَا، وَهَلْ أَيْ، وَفَسَّحَ أَيْ، ❖

أَهْـؤَہْ لِّلْأَیْمَانِۖ حَسْبُکُمْ مَّا مَلَکَتْهُمۡ :

[The Lord] was saying everywhere that no one should reveal that he is Christ yet openly revealed himself at that place. He saw that the woman was enlightened about everything and nothing lacked her soul except him. He offered her himself to fill her need that she might be made perfect in everything by the revelations.<sup>43</sup>

Jacob of Sarug seems to have imitated Ephrem's thoughts as found in his commentary on the Diatessaron. One could also conjecture that theologians came up with the same imagery. This conjecture is based on the fact that the bishop of Batnan did contemplate the Lord as a  $\text{ܕܝܡܝܬܐ}$  and tried to portray him as such. Beck doubts that this section of the diatessaron commentary belongs to the authentic writings of Ephrem and suggests that

<p>42. <i>Ibid.</i>, 299:4-5.</p> <p>43. <i>Ibid.</i>, 299:10-13.</p> <p>44. <i>Ibid.</i>, 299:18-19.</p>	<p>مَعْدًا أَحَدًا حَتَّىٰ قَتَلَهُ أَسْرَافًا ۖ</p> <p>أَخَذَ مِنْهُ إِنَّا أَنَا مُعَسِّلٌ لَهُ</p> <p>وَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا أَنَّهُ لَا يَحْكُمُ وَلَا يَحْكُمُ لَهُ</p> <p>وَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا أَنَّهُ لَا يَحْكُمُ لَهُ وَلَا يَحْكُمُ لَهُ</p>
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Our Lord poured the Water of life and filled the woman with it  
and sent her to return to her walled [city] that was smitten and to irrigate it.  
She left her water jug behind, filled her soul with faith,  
carried the Water of life, and returned unashamed.<sup>48</sup>

She did not take her flagon with her, for it was too small to contain the  
river that is now flowing from the true Well to water the town.

She let flow a river to reach the entire city.  
Since her flagon was small, she left it behind wisely.  
She went out under the pretext of water and became aware of the Water of  
life.  
She returned hurriedly to irrigate the land with inundating water.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, “For this reason, she left her water jug behind and hurried  
to return to prepare a place for the Water of life in the entire walled [city].”<sup>50</sup>  
The Samaritan woman returned to the city to her co-villagers about Jesus.

The woman returned to the walled [city] and cried out with a loud voice,  
“O, all those who thirst, come, go to the Water of which I became aware.  
Come out, Samaritans, accept the Irrigation of the Water of life,  
for, behold, he opened up his spring at the well to water our walled [city].”<sup>51</sup>

Filled with the Water of life, she was eager to share it with her people.  
“The woman with a loud voice cried out in the streets [of the city] because she  
was in a hurry to give the Water of life to her people.”<sup>52</sup> Therefore, she began

48. *Ibid.*, 302:6-9.

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49. *Ibid.*, 302:20-303:2.

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50. *Ibid.*, 304:6-15.

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51. *Ibid.*, 304:16-19.

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52. *Ibid.*, 305:19-20.

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proclaiming in its midst that Jesus is the awaited Christ. “A man chanced upon if it right for me to call him a man, for I say that truly he is Christ.”<sup>53</sup> He is God, who revealed himself to her that she might proclaim him to them. Moreover, she exhorted the inhabitants of the city to go to him, for he is the Son of the Father, through whom the Father sent them the Water of life.

Come, Samaritans, reject the idols of your forefathers,  
for, behold, God has revealed himself to me that I might bring you tidings.  
The thirsty, who surround us, come and drink the Water of life  
which the Father sent at the hand of his Son to delight you.  
He revealed to me himself, a great treasure. Come, you who are poor,  
be consumed with his riches and fill up your needs from it.  
The Light came to me in the likeness of man. As he was talking to me,  
I shined on account of him, dissipate darkness and shine like me!  
The Sun of Righteousness appeared at the well.  
The shadows of darkness fled from our midst, for he shined upon us.<sup>54</sup>

Heeding her proclamation, the Samaritans came to Jesus.

The Samaritan woman came to the Savior, along with the crowd,  
after her mouth profusely proclaimed the tidings.  
Darknesses came out and saw the Sun of Righteousness  
whose light shined and dispersed darkness from the regions.<sup>55</sup>

They hear his teaching and believe in the One, who captured them at the hand of the Samaritan woman. “At the hand of the Samaritan woman [our Lord] caught the Samaritans who had shunned the divine doctrine and teaching.”<sup>56</sup>

53. *Ibid.*, 304:20-21.

54. *Ibid.*, 305:3-12.

55. *Ibid.*, 308:15-19.

56. *Ibid.*, 310:6-7.





They lived [together] at peace with this unfathomable wickedness  
to afflict [him] together, for [they were] many.<sup>63</sup>

Not only do these evil spirits hate humankind but abhor each other as well. They are bad and filled with deceit. Furthermore, there is not even a glimpse of love in them. When they hate God, who created them, they will certainly despise human beings made in the image and likeness of the Creator. Although they hate one another, they still found a way to be in accord to dwell in this man. What is horrifying is that they united to devastate him.

The evil spirits have always hated each other,  
for love does not exist in an evil-filled will.  
The Evil Ones hate. They are full of guile and deceit,  
calumny and great deception of all sorts.  
It is not possible for an evil spirit to love another evil spirit,  
or for love for and peace toward its neighbor to exist in it.  
The deceitful [demons] are lovers of falsehood and rulership.  
They are highly arrogant, whose pride, nevertheless, overthrew them.  
They are wrathful, perturbed, troubled, and thirsty for blood.  
They are forever deceivers, for they do not even know what love is.  
Behold! They have never loved God, who created them.  
How then could they love their companions?  
They hated God and human beings, for they are his image.  
They even hate each other tremendously, as we have [already] said.  
When they are ready to do harm by their wickedness,  
they come together in one will to annihilate [a person].  
You ought to learn [this] from that wretched [man]  
who was for a long time a squashed nest for a multitude of evil spirits.  
They were together to destroy one soul.  
They unite to annihilate. Otherwise, there is no unity [among them],  
for they come together only to do harm in one soul.  
Since two thousand [evil spirits] entered into [this] man and dwelt in him,  
you ought to learn how diligent they are about doing harm.<sup>64</sup>

63. *Ibid.*, 687:18-688:5.

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64. *Ibid.*, 688:6-689:7.

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These demons come together only when they want to bring destruction to a human being. The death of humanity is their ultimate goal. They love cemeteries, the places of the dead, where they mock Adam and his children. They learned this from Satan, who deceived human beings and caused their death.

[The possessed man's] habitation was in the mountains among the tombs.  
 This [living situation] is also a significant investigation for the discerners.  
 Now, why do evil spirits love tombs more than the inhabited land,  
 and the places of the dead more than settled areas where life exists?  
 Since the death of human beings came from Satan,  
 the Evil One loves to dwell in the place of the dead.  
 The transgression of the commandment and the deception that was from  
 Satan  
 are the reason that caused humankind to die from the beginning.  
 Therefore, the powers of the Evil One love graves,  
 in which they live and rest, as you have [already] heard.  
 That is to say, they brought death unto humanity  
 and are proud to have been the cause with great guile.  
 They frequent cemeteries filled with the dead:  
 to mock the human race [with] how low it had been degraded;  
 not only to laugh at, but also to deride the noble race  
 who became wretched, reached destruction and did not let go of dust;  
 to destroy there the images of human beings.  
 Therefore, the evil spirits hasten to see the destruction they love.  
 In their haughtiness, they laugh at and deride the corpses  
 collected in Sheol like towering heaps and hills.  
 The evil spirits would say at the place of perdition something to the effect of,  
 "Our war caused this situation for human beings.  
 These bodies collected here in hills and hills  
 are due to the teaching that the Evil One, our lord, taught Eve.  
 This destruction, the raised arm, and the famed name  
 run after us, for death and slaughter are his.  
 The serpent remembered to go down and do as commanded.  
 Therefore, it was the cause of this destruction on the entire earth.  
 For this reason, the evil spirits always frequent the graves,

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They tied him up with fetters and shackles, and he did not stay  
in the inhabited land of man, for the evil spirits do not love the inhabited  
land.

The wretched man was bound up and kept in chains.  
He cut off his bonds and did not remain [in the inhabited land].  
He broke his fetters, cut off his shackles and went out.  
He became a neighbor of the dead and lived among them in the place of  
perdition.

Whenever friends, loved ones, and kindred took pains  
to clothe [him] to teach him to be chaste, he would rend his garment and  
strip himself naked.

Whenever they asked him to remain with his relatives,  
he would not consent to stay [with them] and would not [consent to] be  
sheltered.

He was squashed, lacerated, afflicted, driven away and filled with woes.  
He mingled with the dead, endured dreadful things among the graves every  
day.

65. *Ibid.*, 689:16-691:6.

[illegible]



He forgot his family. They lost hope over the one driven away.  
 His loved ones left him, for he had become a companion of the dead.  
 His beautiful image was also corrupted  
 because of the cold and heat which squashed him with [their] variations:  
 rain, ice and snow, light winds and storm;  
 thirst in the summer, at noon and hot winds.  
 All the seasons changed in turn for this squashed [person].  
 They also changed him, who became in his entirety as a dead person.  
 What a fearful, hideous and terrible sight  
 that this man possessed! He terrified anyone who saw him.  
 He was feared and roamed among the graves like visions.  
 Wayfarers were afraid of him and feared [even] looking at him.<sup>66</sup>

What a horrible situation this wretched man finds himself in! No one can help him out of this misery; not his friends; not his loved ones; not his family. Only the Lord is capable of rescuing him and breaking his bonds. When others feared to look at this miserable man and were even afraid to pass by the place where he dwelt, the compassionate and loving Lord sought him out and caught this devastated human being, and freed him from his fetters and shackles. For this reason, Jesus deliberately journeys to the place where he can find his lost sheep. "Our Lord then set out compassionately toward him, to pass through the place where the feeble man lived."<sup>67</sup>

66. *Ibid.*, 691:7-692:10.

<p>           حَمَلْنَا وَإِنَّمَا وَلَا وَسَجَّيْ بَعْدَ وَتَقَالِ هَمَلْنَا            دَمَقَقَم بَعْدَ إِهْمَقَقَم وَهَمَلْنَا وَلَا مَقَقَقَالِ بَعْدَ            مَحَلَّ حَمَلْنَا دَمَقَقَم وَهَمَلْنَا وَلَا مَحَلَّ            كَلَمَم بَعْدَ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            وَلَا مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ         </p>	<p>           أَمَلْنَا بَعْدَ كَمَلْنَا مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ            مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ مَحَلَّ         </p>
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67. *Ibid.*, 692:11-693:8.

<p>           وَتَحَدَّ كَلَامًا وَتَحَدَّ بَعْدَ كَلَامًا            وَتَحَدَّ كَلَامًا وَتَحَدَّ بَعْدَ كَلَامًا         </p>	<p>           وَتَحَدَّ كَلَامًا وَتَحَدَّ بَعْدَ كَلَامًا            وَتَحَدَّ كَلَامًا وَتَحَدَّ بَعْدَ كَلَامًا         </p>
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In contrast to the evil spirits, Jesus desires to heal people and bring them out of their wretchedness:

The matter of the Son of God occurs [at a place] loftier than a word [could express]  
 and [at a location] where there is no room for a scribe to interpret.  
 He came down like rain on desolate lands [see Ps 72:6],  
 and healing sprouted like flowers in the entire world [see Is 55:20-11].  
 He revealed himself as a day [breaking] on regions  
 and sicknesses ran away like shadows from his comeliness.  
 By his teaching was enlightened the soul that was in darkness  
 and by his healing he made the wounded body resplendent.  
 He gave life to the soul and healing to the body.  
 He restored, forgave and healed the troubled world.  
 When he saw the body smitten with sores,  
 he cured and strengthened it and then moved on.  
 If he met a soul whom great iniquity had devastated,  
 he made it whole, cured it and then left it.  
 He shored up the paralytic with forgiveness of sins and healing.<sup>68</sup>  
 He justified the publican and reclined with him at his table.<sup>69</sup>  
 He opened the eyes of the blind<sup>70</sup> and forgave the sins of the sinful woman.<sup>71</sup>  
 He allowed the hemorrhaging woman to take the appropriate strength from him [see Mt 9:20-22; Mk 5:25-34; Lk 8:43-48].  
 With mud, he gave light to the eyes of the blind man, for they were in darkness [see Jn 9].  
 With his fingers, he opened the closed ears [see Mk 7:31-37].  
 He cleansed the lepers<sup>72</sup> and gave light to Bartimaeus [see Mk 10:46-52],  
 for he was rich and his door was open to partakers.  
 With his word he drove out evil spirits from souls [see Mt 8:28-34; Mk 5:1-20]  
 and with his commandment, he banished the demons from humanity.  
 As a plowman who uprooted thorns from the fields,  
 he cast out evil spirits from souls, which they belong to him.<sup>73</sup>

68. See Mt 9:1-8; Mk 2:3-12; Lk 5:18-26.

69. See Lk 19:1-10.

70. See Mt 12:22.

71. See Lk 7:36-50.

72. See Mt 8:1-4; Mk 1:40-45; Lk 17:11-19.

73. "HSJS IV," 686:3-687:7.

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The Lord catches human beings for their salvation. The good ܡܠܝܚܐ does not seek to ensnare healthy people but rather the afflicted ones. The ones he wants to capture are those whom the Evil One crushed to the point of death. The Lord catches the possessed man by snatching him from between the talons of the demons and rescues this soul from them.

All these wolves tore to pieces a ewe.  
 The Shepherd hereupon arose and snatched the weary [ewe] from among them.  
 Two thousand hawks tore up a weak dove to pieces.  
 The ܡܠܝܚܐ rose, stretched down his arms, and pick it up to him.  
 The pure soul is an image of the King, filled with beauties.  
 The evil spirits abducted it to corrupt it, behold, that it might perish.  
 The evil spirits abducted this human being and dwelt in him while altering and buffeting him a long time.<sup>74</sup>

When the true ܡܠܝܚܐ is present, the miscreant, evil ܡܠܝܚܐ runs away. Mercy came down to care for the squashed and wearied souls.

For his sake, the way of the Son of God came down,  
 that when he would meet him, he would drive the demons and evil spirits out of him.  
 The good Shepherd remembered the sheep torn to pieces  
 by a group of wolves, and he came to set him free from ravenous [wolves].  
 The evil spirits saw the Son of God, and the wretched quivered.  
 The day dawned, and the many shadows disappeared.  
 A young Stag stood opposite a nest of animals,  
 spoke to them, terrified, petrified and banished them.  
 Mercy cared for the squashed and wearied soul  
 that it might escape from the abductors who governed it.  
 The Mighty One shined upon the thieves, and they cried out because of him  
 with a horrendous terror, for he frightened them into leaving.  
 The hidden power of the Son of God terrified them,  
 and they began to flee like smoke from a whirlwind.

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74. *Ibid.*, 689:8-15.

<p>ܕܠܗܘܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ          ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ          ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ          ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ          ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ</p>	<p>ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ          ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ          ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ          ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ          ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ</p>
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### 3.2.2 The Sinful Woman

This section provides another example of the Evil One as a cunning ܡܕܝܝܬܐ whose purpose is to destroy humanity. This illustration draws on Jacob's interpretation of the biblical story of the sinful woman (see Lk 7:36-50). This miserable person is in the grip of the Evil One. Seeing the horrifying state in which the sinful woman finds herself, Jesus, the true ܡܕܝܝܬܐ comes to liberate her from her captor. This topic is related to the Church in that she should avoid the traps of the Evil One and be an instrument of Salvation following in the footsteps of her Lord.

Just as the Samaritan woman is like a lure to entice the Samaritans to come to Jesus, another woman, a prostitute, is similar to bait the Evil One uses to entrap other human beings. She is the devil's prisoner and in need of freedom. Therefore, Christ goes to her to release her from her imprisonment. Although the Evil One had caught her, the benevolent Lord sets up his trap and uses mercy as bait to free her from her captivity and bring her to him. Water is the lure Jesus uses to capture the Samaritan woman thirsty for water and mercy is his bait to capture the prostitute thirsty for forgiveness. The bishop of Batnan provides these images in his *mimro* entitled *On the Sinful Woman Whose Sins Our Lord Forgave* (ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܢ ܡܢܝܢ ܕܡܢܝܢ ܕܡܢܝܢ ܕܡܢܝܢ).<sup>77</sup>

The Devil captures the sinful woman and uses her as bait to ensnare men, cause divisions in their homes, and eventually destroy them. Although none of the Gospel accounts of the sinful woman describes her as such, the sinful woman is, according to Jacob of Sarug, a prostitute possessed with seven evil spirits.

Simon invited [Jesus] to supper, and [Jesus] went with him.  
The sinful woman desired forgiveness for her sins and received it from him.  
This [woman], a snare for men with her manner of walking,  
caught them as if with snares to corrupt them.  
This [woman], the Slanderer's preferred bow:

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77. See "SM," 402-428. For an English translation, see Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, "The Sinful Woman: A Memra By Jacob of Serugh," *ECR*, 24:1, (2002): 56-88.





He spread before her the great net of repentance,  
 and she crept entering its great womb due to its extensiveness.<sup>81</sup>  
 The tidings of redemption were the bait for the wild woman,  
 who, occupied with it, entered the net of the House of God.  
 Jesus's renown was scattered before and assuaged her,  
 who, feeding off it, was ensnared to become his.<sup>82</sup>

### 3.3 The Church, Life-Giving Fishnet

The Lord, the ܐܠܗܐ “cast his net here and there in the whole world that the entire creation might be gathered in the life-giving net [see Lk 5:10].”<sup>83</sup> Jacob of Sarug portrays Jesus as a fisherman, who uses his net to capture the whole world. This net symbolizes the Church, whom the Son casts into the sea of life to catch all human beings.

“The Church is Simon’s net (ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ),”<sup>84</sup> wrote Jacob of Sarug. The New Testament accounts of Peter dragging a net full of 153 fish in Jn 21:1–14 and of his call to be a fisherman in Lk 5:1–11 provide the background for the net as a symbol of the Church. Murray shows that Ephrem, Cyrillona, and Marutha interpret the title ܣܝܝܐܕܐ (ܣܝܝܐܕܐ) as referring to

81. Johnson translated ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ with *in naïveté*. “He was spreading out a great net of repentance before her. And she slithered and entered its great womb *in naïveté* (ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ).” See Johnson, “Sinful Woman,” 65. Another reading, however, is possible and could better fit the context of the verse. The Syriac feminine noun ܡܨܝܬܐ is a derivative of the verb ܡܨܝܬܐ, which in its transitive uses could mean *to stretch out, extend, reach out*. It is in this sense that one could also understand the noun ܡܨܝܬܐ, i.e., *extensiveness*. One could have the following image in their mind: the net of repentance was so *extended*, that it was able to catch even this sinful woman. Therefore, the following translation is in order: “He spread before her the great net of repentance, and she crept entering its great womb due to its [the net’s] *extensiveness* (ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ).”

82. “HSJS II,” 409:9-410:1.

ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ
ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ
ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ
ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ
ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ
ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ
ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ
ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ
ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ
ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ
ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ

83. “HSJS I,” 139:2-3.

ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ
ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ	ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ ܡܨܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܥܝܐ

84. “HSJS V,” 701:9.











He possessed nothing during the time he accompanied our Lord.<sup>98</sup>

and likewise all his companions with him in great pain.<sup>100</sup>

وَكَفَّ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُونَ ۖ وَكَفَّ عَمَّا يَصْنَعُونَ ۚ فَهَلْ مَحْصُلٌ :  
 لَكَ ۚ وَكُلُّهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَبْقَىٰ ۖ وَهَلْ :  
 وَتَعْلَمُ ۚ وَأَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتُ لَئِيْلَ مَا يَصْنَعُونَ ۚ وَهَلْ :  
 أَهْلًا ۚ سَتَأْتِ الْآيَةُ الْخَالِفَةُ ۚ وَكَفَّ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُونَ ۚ وَهَلْ :  
 حَتَّىٰ وَتَعْلَمُ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَبْقَىٰ ۚ وَهَلْ :





for the Lord of the sea had commanded it to hide its fish  
from the disciples who abandoned the path of the Son of God.  
The disciples toiled the whole night in vain,  
for there was no gain by the hard work which they undertook.  
The net went down empty and went up in vain  
the whole night, for no fish approached it.  
The sea did not wish to admit that there was fish in it  
lest it be a breathing space to Simon, who had forgotten himself.  
It hid all its creatures in the deepest part of its seabed  
that the path of Simon, the master of fishermen, might be empty.  
This disciple was instructed to fish for man.  
Since he returned to fish for fish, he sought [fish] and did not find [any].  
The sea condemned the one who cleansed lepers a day before.  
[Now] since he hungered a little bit, he left the path of apostleship!  
The man who drove out evil spirits [while journeying] on the path of the Son  
yesterday  
came to the sea to catch fish if he could find [any].  
He, however, could not find [any fish], for the sea would not give him a  
[helping] hand,  
for the sea had been ordered by its Lord to hide its fish.  
Simon toiled the whole night and did not know  
that the fish were running away from him (*lacuna*)  
(*lacuna*)  
[The fish] were lying in the deepest part of the sea because of him.<sup>104</sup>

فَقَبَّ يَوْمَ أَن كُنَّ يُدْعَىٰ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةُ فَلَمْ يَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا مِّمَّا بُدِعُوا لِلْخَلْقِ وَلَئِيْكَ يَرْجِعُونَ ۝١٠  
 وَكُنَّا فَجْءًا لَّهُمْ لَمَّا أَحْكَمَتَا فَجَعَلْنَا ۝١١  
 مِّنْ بَيْنِهِمَا سُلَاطِينَ لَّيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمَا كَلِمَةٌ شَيْءٌ وَاتَّخَذَا  
 لِكُلِّ جُنْدٍ أَجْرًا جَدِيدًا ۝١٢  
 فَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْوَادِيَّ سَآخِلًا فَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُم سَبِيلًا ۝١٣  
 فَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْوَادِيَّ سَآخِلًا فَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُم سَبِيلًا ۝١٤  
 فَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْوَادِيَّ سَآخِلًا فَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُم سَبِيلًا ۝١٥  
 فَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْوَادِيَّ سَآخِلًا فَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُم سَبِيلًا ۝١٦  
 فَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْوَادِيَّ سَآخِلًا فَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُم سَبِيلًا ۝١٧  
 فَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْوَادِيَّ سَآخِلًا فَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُم سَبِيلًا ۝١٨  
 فَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْوَادِيَّ سَآخِلًا فَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُم سَبِيلًا ۝١٩  
 فَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْوَادِيَّ سَآخِلًا فَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُم سَبِيلًا ۝٢٠



Apostleship and being fishers of men are intertwined in the theological understanding of Jacob of Sarug. Peter, the holder of the keys, and the disciples could never go back to their previous trades, for they are no longer fishers, but apostles. Jesus chose and transformed them from fishermen into fishers of men.

Go [back] Peter to the apostleship of the Son of God  
and abandon fishing, for the sea will not give you its fish.  
Are you staying here and it is written that you are one of the disciples?  
The sea will not recognize you as one of the fishermen.  
An apostle is an apostle, and a fisherman, behold, is a fisherman.  
You are not a fisherman, but an apostle. Depart from here!  
You are holding the keys, abandon the net, for it does not belong to you.  
Go, [instead,] fish for men, for if would fish for fish, they would not be given  
to you.  
The Son of God ordered the sea, that belongs to him,  
not to recognize this disciple as a fisherman.  
He put to flight the fish from him, and will not find  
a breathing space in the sea that he might not return to his trade.  
Simon toiled away the whole night and did not catch anything  
and was condemned because he was anxious about what to eat.<sup>105</sup>

The disciples acted like children when they returned to fishing for fish, for this reason, Jesus called them children. The disciples deserved this appellation, for they exchanged apostleship for fishing.

“When the entire night came to an end in that weariness [see Jn 3:21], Christ, the Light [see Jn 8:12], dawned with the light, to care for them. He approached and stood on the shore near the disciples [see Jn 21:4] to reprove them while they did not know who he is. He said to them, ‘Children, have you [caught] anything [see Jn 21:5]?’ They told him, ‘No [see Jn 21:5],’ and the entire fishing was ashamed. He called men “children” to reprove [them] for they erred in their judgment. He called out “children” to show them that they lacked the instruction of the great Teacher.

105. *Ibid.*, 694:9-22.

❖ ܐܘܠܐ ܕܢܝܒܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ	ܐܠܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ
❖ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ	ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ
❖ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ	ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ
❖ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ	ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ
❖ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ	ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ
❖ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ	ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ
❖ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ	ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ
❖ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ	ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܬܐܢܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܐ ܕܚܝ



The water was even and the fish were even in the entire sea,  
and the boat was even on the right and left.<sup>107</sup>

Just as it is impossible for a net to cast itself into the sea to catch fish, so it is not possible for the fishing net that catches human beings, i.e., the Church, to throw itself into the sea of this world as well. Casting the net on the right side of the boat and catching the fish is a metaphor for the disciples catching the Nations by their discipleship and teachings.

There is a right and left for the Son God,  
and he offered his disciples to go to the right.  
He called them to his kingdom and right  
that they might toil in the labor of righteousness,  
and they might bring the Nations by their discipleship and teaching,  
that all of them might enter his kingdom from the right.<sup>108</sup>

Furthermore,

Since the toil of the world is on the left [side],  
and since the Apostle Simon returned to the toil of the world,  
lead his companions, and toiled in the world the whole night,  
- as it has [already] been mentioned that there is no gain on the left [side],  
our Lord, who is also Light, appeared in the morning,  
and called them Children, and asked about [their] gain.  
“Do you have anything [to eat]?” They said to him, “No.” He condemned  
them then,

107. *Ibid.*, 695:19-696:22.

[illegible]

أَمَّا كَقِصِّ قَوْمِ إِسْحَاقَ ۖ أَنذَرْنَاهُ إِذْ كُنَّا قَوْمَهُ  
فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمُ الْجَهَنَّمَ وَأَنَّا فِيهَا  
حَمِيمٌ ۖ ذَوَّاهُ نَارًا ۖ تَتَنَبَّأُ ۖ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ ۖ  
كَلِمًا ۖ وَهُوَ يُخَلِّصُ أَهْلَهُ مِنْ هَذِهِ ۖ فَهُوَ  
مُتَّقِدٌ ۖ فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَنَّهُ أَخْلَصَ لِقَوْمٍ أَكْثَرُ  
مِنْهُ ۖ أَنذَرْنَاهُ وَمَنْ عَصَى ۖ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمَرْغُوبِ  
فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمُ الْجَهَنَّمَ وَأَنَّا فِيهَا  
حَمِيمٌ ۖ ذَوَّاهُ نَارًا ۖ تَتَنَبَّأُ ۖ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ ۖ  
كَلِمًا ۖ وَهُوَ يُخَلِّصُ أَهْلَهُ مِنْ هَذِهِ ۖ فَهُوَ  
مُتَّقِدٌ ۖ فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَنَّهُ أَخْلَصَ لِقَوْمٍ أَكْثَرُ

108. *Ibid.*, 697:1-697:6.

[illegible]

حَبِّ الْكَلْبِ أَكْبَرُ حَبِّ الْبَعِثِ وَأَكْبَرُ حَبِّ الْفَعْلِ :  
 وَحَبِّ الْبَعِثِ أَكْبَرُ حَبِّ الْفَعْلِ وَأَكْبَرُ حَبِّ الْبَعِثِ :  
 وَحَبِّ الْفَعْلِ أَكْبَرُ حَبِّ الْبَعِثِ وَأَكْبَرُ حَبِّ الْفَعْلِ :





poorest of the poor. It is by trusting the Lord that the Church becomes richest of the rich. The ultimate paradox! By dying to the world, the Church lives in her Lord and becomes the fisher of man for his sake.

The Son of God taught the children of his mystery  
to labor by day and on the right.  
Our Lord is light, and his way is set up with light,  
whereas the world is an utterly darkened night, along with its affairs.  
The fishing net on the left at night is the anxiety of the world.  
The Light came and filled it with the catch of the one on the right.  
The fish of the sea were wise in comparison with the disciples,  
for the Lord of the seas enabled them to be wise.  
The dawning of the morning stirred them up (*Lacuna*)  
They got into the fishing net depicted by the Church, that loves the Light.  
The catch of Simon, the head of the disciples, is not that of an evil doer.  
He captured in the morning the one who loves the Light (*Lacuna*)  
The apostle cast the fishing net by night and it did not make a catch,  
for the whole fishing of apostleship is a child of the day.  
However, the fish that became new mysteries were the children of the light,  
hastened to the fishing net as soon as it fell on the right.  
When the disciples felt the fishing net, they recognized him immediately,  
for they [already] knew how the sea had obeyed the Son.<sup>114</sup>

Finally, the disciples fully accepted their role as fishers for men. Peter's actions make this outcome clear. When the beloved disciple recognized Jesus and told Peter that that is the Lord, Peter left behind forever the fishing boat, the fishing net, and even his friends to hasten to the Jesus.

Immediately, Simon, as the foundation, as the steward of the house,  
and as the first among his companions, hastened to our Savior.  
He immediately renounced fishing and fishnets,  
and the naked one abandoned the boat to come to our Savior.  
He loved him, and upon seeing him, treated everything else with contempt.  
He launched himself toward him to rejoice in him, for he loved him.

114. *Ibid.*, 699:1-18.

<p>         ❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ       </p>	<p>         ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ :          ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ :          ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ :          ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ :          ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ :          ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ :          ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ :          ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ :       </p>
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His love did not wait for his friends to come with him  
nor for the boat to approach and reach the shore.  
Simon swam [ashore], whereas all of his brothers came by boat.  
The sheep surrounded the good Shepherd, who cared for them.<sup>115</sup>

### 3.4.2 Paul, Caught for the Service of the Gospel

To bring this section to completion, the following expounds on the Lord using Paul's zeal not only to catch him but to put him at the service of his Gospel as well. It is not to insinuate that the Lord forced Paul into his service, but that Paul freely accepted the Gospel message and willingly followed Jesus Christ even unto death. Let the reader now turn their attention to Jacob of Sarug's first *mimro* entitled *on the Apostle Paul* (ܡܝܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ),<sup>116</sup> a commentary on Acts 9:1-22.

At the beginning of the *mimro*, Jacob of Sarug states that the Lord does not force human beings to come to him. He gently and kindly attracts them to him. With humility, he conquers the world to the extent that those he attracts are willing to offer even their lives for his sake. Paul is a case in point.

Jesus's humility caught the entire earth  
and without compulsion, drew the world [to him] by his Gospel.  
By the crucifixion, a shameful sign, he triumphed.  
As much as he was not honored, he bestowed honor on the needy.  
By the sufferings he endured, the world was moved to believe in him,  
and by his afflictions, he stripped the mighty of their power.  
By his weakness, his deeds happened swiftly.  
Humanity did not see his glory yet bent down to him.  
While being reviled, he snatched the crown of lordship,  
and by his buffeting, his glory shone brightly upon creation.  
By the thing which causes others to suffer humiliation, he obtains honor.  
Death is the humiliation of the mighty, yet by it, he acted mightily.  
The crucified one carried a lame mount (the cross) full of suffering  
and left behind him the lightning [chariots] of kings and their swiftness.  
By the crucifixion, he stripped the gods of worship.

115. *Ibid.*, 700:9-18.

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116. See "HSJS II," 717-747.

Paul's strong adherence to the Pharisaic tradition and his zeal for Yahweh are no secrets. For a new sect to emerge in his stronghold and to claim a Lord other than Adonai was for Paul the catalyst that compelled him to persecute the disciples of Jesus and his young fledgling emerging Church. Unbeknownst to him, Paul was also persecuting Adonai's Son.

117. *Ibid.*, 717:4-718:10.

مَصْفَعَةٌ أَوْ نَعْمَ لَا أَرَاهُ فَكَيْفَ :  
 دَامِعَةٌ أَلَا وَشِعْرُ حَبِّ نَبِيٍّ :  
 حَسْبُ وَهَذَا الْمُنْحَنُ لِحَبْلٍ وَبَعْضُ دِه :  
 حَسْبُ دِهْ أَوْ هَلْ هَكَذَا دِهْ سَعْلَانِ :  
 دَبَّ مَدَسَّ حَبِّ أَلَا وَدَعْرُ :  
 حَصَافٌ وَاسْتَأْذَنَ لِحَبِّ دِهْ أَلَسَ دِهْ :  
 أَمْعُ حَقٌّ دِهْ وَدَعْلُ حَبْلٍ وَدَعْلُ سَعْلَانِ :  
 دَامِعَةٌ أَلَا حَقٌّ هَبِّ أَلَا مَحْ كَلَّةُ :  
 حَصْفَةٌ أَوْ هَقٌّ وَنَا وَخَانِ دِهْ :  
 دِيْعَةٌ أَوْ أَوْ وَهَقٌّ أَمْدَحِبْ دِهْ :  
 كَحْبُ حَقَّةٍ دِهْ حَصْفَةٌ أَوْ أَلَا أَسْ :  
 أَلَا حَبْ دِهْ وَنَا حَبِّ حَصْلَفَةٍ :

حَسْمٌ ۚ هَؤُلَاءِ هُمُ الْمُتَعَدُّونَ ۚ لَكُمُ الْحِكْمَةُ :  
 حَسْمٌ ۚ هَؤُلَاءِ هُمُ الْمُتَعَدُّونَ ۚ لَكُمُ الْحِكْمَةُ :  
 حَسْمٌ ۚ هَؤُلَاءِ هُمُ الْمُتَعَدُّونَ ۚ لَكُمُ الْحِكْمَةُ :  
 حَسْمٌ ۚ هَؤُلَاءِ هُمُ الْمُتَعَدُّونَ ۚ لَكُمُ الْحِكْمَةُ :



Paul's confusion stems from the way the Son of the King, who did not look as such, was dressed. Instead of wearing the majestic clothes of a sovereign ruler, the Son had put on the garment of disdain. Ironically, by persecuting the Church Paul had proved his wholehearted allegiance to Yahweh.

He was watchful of the camp of the Lord of Sabaoth daily,  
and since he spied him in a different attire, he showed that he was ready.  
The Son of the King put on the garment of disdain and went to check on  
the warrior, who should be watching the wall lest he sleep.  
When the watchman saw him in a weak and despised attire,  
he pursued him, for he was not sleeping at his post.<sup>119</sup>

At this juncture, the Lord catches Paul, who bit the bait placed before him. Jesus Christ "wisely caught the hawk and turned him into a dove to show that he was able to subdue wild ones."<sup>120</sup> Pursuing the Lord made Paul weary. It was then when the Lord made his move to catch his prey.

Since [Paul] was overcome with weariness and did not apprehend him, [the  
Lord] spared [him] from his toil,  
and the splendor of his glory shone, appeared to and thrust him on the  
ground.  
The light of the King's crown beamed down on the persecutor  
and threw him down upon earth, and terror gripped the persecutor.<sup>121</sup>

The Lord catching Paul put an end to Paul persecuting the Church. "The zealot of the house of Adonai went out by the fury of killing, and light and a voice bound him that he may no longer persecute [the Church]."<sup>122</sup> It also placed him at the service of the Gospel of the resurrected Lord. His

119. *Ibid.*, 719:13-18.

<p>         * חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ          * כְּחַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ          * חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ       </p>	<p>         * חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ          * חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ          * חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ       </p>
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120. *Ibid.*, 719:3-4.

<p>* יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל</p>	<p>* יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל</p>
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121. *Ibid.*, 719:19-720:2.

<p>* חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ          * חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ       </p>	<p>* חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ          * חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ       </p>
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122. *Ibid.*, 731:15-16.

<p>* חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ</p>	<p>* חַסְדָּא דְּיִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּכֹחַ</p>
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persecution days are behind him, and Paul is now a full member of the Church and a disciple. “He (Paul) was caught wisely for [the sake of] the Gospel to be a fellow of the inexperienced company of discipleship.”<sup>123</sup> That does not mean, however, that his zeal for God abated. On the contrary, it increased, and the persecutor ended up being one of the persecuted. “By the apparition that happened to Saul as he was persecuting [the Church], he learned to become persecuted for the sake of Jesus.”<sup>124</sup>

The Truth wisely subdued and then caught him (Paul).  
 When he has become a hater, he would then bring him in [for the sake of] the Gospel.  
 Everyone was aware that he was an enemy of Jesus.  
 Thereafter, he called him to witness to his coming.  
 He set him out, for he had become renowned by persecutors.  
 He then showed him his glory and called him to belong to him.  
 He left him be, that the entire world might know that he was his hater  
 that when he would be his witness, he would stand firm in the Truth.<sup>125</sup>

### 3.5 Conclusion

The image of a ṣayādā (ܣܝܝܕܐ) referring to either the Lord or the Evil One entered the Syriac theological tradition which Jacob of Sarug inherited. Jacob of Sarug compares Jesus Christ to a ṣayādā (ܣܝܝܕܐ), for the Lord went from one place to another to catch people. The Son of God is the ṣayādā par excellence, for he adjusted his techniques based on the needs of the human beings he drew to him. His aim is to give life to all. To capture humanity also means to save it from the grip of the Evil One, who is a different kind of ṣayādā insofar as he wills to destroy humanity just as he had done in the Garden of Eden. He had tricked Adam and Eve into submission, and he continues to scheme against

123. *Ibid.*, 720:19-20.

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124. *Ibid.*, 731:13-14.

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125. *Ibid.*, 723:4-13.

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their progenies. Moreover, the stratagems he employs to capture human beings are diverse. Once caught, he uses them as bait to catch others. The sinful woman is a case in point. The annihilation of humankind is his goal. That is to say, that sin abounds in the world and destroys humankind. The Word of God is the savior of all. He became incarnate to redeem humanity, free it from sin, and bring it back to its proper abode, the Garden of Eden. He frees the woeful captors from the firm grip of sin with his words and deeds.

After his return to the Father, Jesus continues to catch people as if with a net. This net cast by him is a symbol of the Church, whom he established and entrusted with his Gospel. Although he is physically no longer on earth, he remains the Fisher of Men, and as such, he made the Church the life-giving fishnet. She continues to be the Lord's instrument of catching people. She is not a mere tool in Christ's hand but also an active agent, a co-fisher of men. The fishnet and fisherman imageries highlight the Church's redemptive and missionary responsibility.

The image of the Church as a life-giving net shows that she plays an integral role in redemption. As the Lord's life-giving net, the Church is the instrument by which the Lord continues to execute his plan of salvation. Indeed, she is the Son of God's choicest instrument of conversion. Through her, human beings become free from their sins and find everlasting life.

The Church also shares the title *ἡ ἐκκλησία* with Christ Jesus. In his physical absence, she follows her Lord's footsteps and employs every tool available at her disposal to offer human beings salvation, yet it is important to keep in mind that Jesus never forced anyone to follow him. The Son of God employs different tactics to achieve his goal of bringing people to him. He takes the initiative in meeting them, goes to them wherever they are in life, and engages them in conversation. The Son of God draws the Magi to him with their love of the cosmos, uses water to bring the Samaritan woman, and through her, leads the Samaritans to him. Also, he employs Paul's zeal as bait to make him a believer. Consequently, Paul, the Lord's persecutor, willingly

accepted the Gospel message. The Church should emulate the Lord and go out into the world and meet human beings where they are on their life journeys. She should never be afraid to engage individuals at their intellectual or/and spiritual levels nor enter into ecumenical and inter-religious dialogues. Would the Son of God be lying hidden in their spiritual cognizance and religious books as he concealed himself in the skies waiting to reveal himself to the Magi?

The Church is made up of her members, whose types are the Magi, the Samaritan woman, the man possessed with Legion, Peter, the disciples, and Paul. These personalities also represent the pagans in the East, the Samaritans in Samaria, the Jews in the Holy land and everywhere else, and the Greeks, in brief, the whole human race. Once Jesus brings them into his fold, they proclaim him to be the giver of life in their communities. They immediately become both the life-giving fishnet the Lord casts into the sea of the world and fishers of men.

The call to become fishers of men epitomize the missionary role of the Church. The Lord puts the Gospel message in her care, calls her to leave behind all worldly worries and put her entire trust in him, and go into the world to proclaim to all nations and races, to all human beings regardless of their social standing. This vocation is not reserved for the few but is intertwined with baptism, thus making all believers in Christ fishers of men led by the bishops of the Church. Evangelization is an indispensable role of the Church and her faithful. How does one go about it? Jacob of Sarug is silent on this subject.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CHURCH, GARDEN OF EDEN ON EARTH IN WHOSE MIDST IS THE TREE OF LIFE

The fruit of the Tree of Life, that is the middle of the Garden of Eden (see Gn 2:9), grants its partaker everlasting life (see Gn 3:22). By disobeying God's commandment (see Gn 3:6), Adam denied himself access to this life-giving tree and, thereby, condemned himself to death.<sup>1</sup> Redemption, according to Jacob of Sarug, occurs when Adam returns to the Garden of Eden to eat from the Tree of Life. Since fallen Adam cannot accomplish this on his own, for the gate to Paradise is locked, and the cherubim with a fiery revolving sword guard the way to the Tree of Life to prevent Adam from coming back, the Tree of Life descended to him to bring back to his original inheritance. Accordingly, the Tree of Life symbolizes the Son of God, its descent depicts his incarnation, and its fruit the Eucharist, that makes the Church the Garden of Eden as will be shown below.

The objective of this chapter is to explore the notion of the Church as the Garden of Eden and expound on plantation symbolism which depict Christ, and the Church.

#### 4.1 The Vineyard, Fig Tree, and Olive Tree

Vine-imagery symbolizing and signifying both the call and rejection of Israel captivated the mind of the Syriac Fathers such as Aphrahat, Ephrem,

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1. On whether Adam was mortal or immortal before the Fall, see Alwan Khalil, "L'homme, Était-Il Mortel ou Immortel avant le Péch , pour Jacques de Saroug?," *OCP*, 55, no. 1 (1989): 5-31; James Stephen Olikal, "Adam – Mortal or Immortal?," *TH*, 22, (2007): 151-156.



By his fall and consequent expulsion from the Garden of Eden (see Gn 3), Adam brought about the destruction of this vine-plant. This devastation, however, was not complete. Despite this unfortunate event, the vine still bore pleasing grape clusters such as Elijah. Adam's destruction of the vine-plant also points to human beings choosing Baal over Yahweh at the time of the prophet (see 1 Kgs 18).

The multitudes on high shall remember me because of you (Elijah):  
 "The earth grew and sent this fruit to our place."  
 This grape cluster is from the vine-plant which Adam laid to waste.  
 It collected sweet wine from among thorns to delight us."<sup>9</sup>

Before Elijah, Adam's descendants include Noah, the "One small grape cluster found among wild grapes (see Is 5:2), and their bitterness did not diffuse into its sweetness."<sup>10</sup> The wild grapes depict those who did not belong to Noah's household. As will become clearer later, wild grapes and their bitterness correspond to wickedness and disbelief, whereas harvested grapes and their sweetness to righteousness and faith. These are the fruits produced by Israel and the Church respectively, and the flood account in Gn hints at their fates.

The vine-plant, Adam, bore copious grape clusters, his offsprings, by Noah's time. Alas, since it yielded wild grapes (see Gn 6:5-7) instead of harvested ones, a deluge destroyed it except for a small bunch of grapes (see Gn 7:6-24). This little grape cluster, Noah, survived this cataclysmic event (see Gn 8) because of its sweet taste—that is to say, Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation (see Gn 6:8-9) and remained faithful to God.

Jacob of Sarug switches imageries to depict Noah as the sucker of the vine, Adam, that replenishes the entire earth. What started with Adam as a

9. "HSJS IV," 253:11-14.

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10. *Ibid.*, 18:16-17.

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planted.<sup>16</sup> He is both the “beloved / friend” (سَاحِبٌ) in Is 5:1<sup>17</sup> and the heir to the vineyard in Mt 21:38.

What is the vineyard and who is the owner of the vineyard?

## The tower, fence, and winepress: what are they?

The vineyard is the chosen plant of the house of Abraham,  
and its shoots are the Israelite tribes.

The owner of the vineyard is God, to whom everything belongs, and the corner of the fertile region is the land of Canaan.

The high tower is the law and the city of the fortress [see 2 Sm 5:7-9], which protects human beings from harm.

The vineyard's fence is all the commandments and rites,  
which God gave to the entire Nation at the hands of Moses.

Also, the winepress is all the sacrifices, drink-offerings and washing [rituals], which cleansed the Nation.

God thus took care of the children of Jacob  
and planted them in the land of blessedness and promises.

He gave [them] the law, commandments, rites,  
priests and sacrifices that they be for the pardon of the Nation.

He elected them to be his Nation from among all the nations  
and took care of them as a small vineyard.

Then, through the prophets, like by imposing clouds,  
he poured rain on the Vineyard and let it grow.

He poured forth his teaching in the likeness of rain on souls  
and sent down his discourse, [which is] better than dew, on the chosen  
Vineyard.

The prophets of the Spirit were to it clouds, and every divine sprinkling was growing the Vineyard that it take root [see Is 45:8].<sup>18</sup>

16. *Ibid.*, 751:8-9.

هَمْزٌ تَكُنَا وَبَحَّةٌ أَلْفٌ مَسَدٌ كَ أَيْدٍ : وَنَ كَلَمَا يَهْ مَن وَنَ مَا أَوْ نُبُودَ ♦

You recognize from the revelations of prophecy

that the Lord of the vineyard and its vinedresser is the Son of God.

17. *Ibid.*, 751:4-5.

مَنْ سَخَّطَ اللَّهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَكُونُ فِي أَيْدِي الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءِ :  
 وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَارُ مَا يَشَاءُ لِمَنْ يَخْلُقُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُخَوِّلُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِمَنْ يُشَاءُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَالِمٌ ۖ

Who is [this] beloved about whom you say he owns the vineyard

except for your Lord, who is a beloved Son to the Father?

18. *Ibid.*, 754:1-755:3.

مُتَلِّيًا لَهُ مِثْلَ أُتْرُجٍ أَتَتْهَا أَسْفَادٌ مِّنْ أَسْفَادٍ ۖ وَتَطْرِخُ الْوِطْرُ ۚ

ذٰلِكَ اَنْزَلْنَاهُ - نَزْلًا حَصِيًّا وَحِشًّا اَذْهَبَ : هُوَ كَيْفَ مَقْتُلًا مَهْكُمًا ❖

مِنْهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرًا ۖ فَاسْمَعْ فَكُنْ مِنَ الْمَعْبُودِينَ ۝۱۰۰

مَجْلًا؛ وَهَذَا هُوَ نُسْخَتُهَا مَعَهُ وَمَا جَاءَ مِنْهَا :  
وَمِنْهُمُ الَّذِي كَتَبْنَا لَهُمْ هَذِهِ الْقُرْآنَ

مَعَهُ وَبِذُنْجُلٍ ۖ فَتَقَبَّلْنَا رُسُلَهُ ۚ وَآلَ :

وَبِهِدِ الْآلُ حَاتِبٌ مَعَهَا حَكْمَةٌ حَمَلٌ ۖ

مَحْرُومًا أَوْ كَادَةً أَوْ خَسًا أَوْ تَقْصِيرًا :

مَحْرُومًا أَوْ كَادَةً أَوْ خَسًا أَوْ تَقْصِيرًا :

هَؤُلَاءِ سَوَاءٌ أَعْلَمُوا خَطِيئَتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ يَعْلَمُوا خَطِيئَتَهُمْ وَهُمْ حَاظُوا بِهَا ۚ

هَـيْـوِىْ يُعْـمَـلُا هَـيْـوِىْ فَعَقِبْـلَا هَـيْـوِىْ ۚ  
وَعَقِبْـلَا هَـيْـوِىْ فَعَقِبْـلَا هَـيْـوِىْ ۚ

هَذَا أَتَى خَطُّهُ وَكَانَ مَعَهُ خَلْقٌ كَثِيرٌ :

هَذَا أَتَى خَطُّهُ وَكَانَ مَعَهُ خَلْقٌ كَثِيرٌ ۖ



In another *mimro*, Jacob of Sarug quotes Ps 80:9-20 to describe how this Vine, Israel, whose roots are in Sion, Jerusalem, greatly flourished to the point that it overshadowed mountains! The illustration of a majestic vine emphasizes and shows how numerous the chosen Nation had become due to the favors God bestowed upon it.

Any gardener hopes for a choice produce of his garden especially after having toiled to look after it. When applied to God, this image means that he expects the fruit of the faithfulness of his people. However, what kind of fruit did Israel produce? The word “fruit” is unmistakably meant in a rhetorical sense. The

[illegible]

crux of the matter is that God's Israel, the chosen Vineyard, blasphemed against him, which led to its rejection.

The Lord expected them to give fruits of faith,  
but the children of Abraham offered blasphemy instead of praise.  
Instead of thanksgiving, for they were indebted [to him], they budded dishonor  
according to what it had been said, "instead of grapes they yielded wild grapes" [see Is 5:2,4].  
They led the owner of the vineyard to Golgotha and crucified him,  
and gave him vinegar from their bitter grapes [see Dt 32:32; Mt 27:34].  
As it was decreed against it in prophecy, he uprooted the vineyard  
and no longer maintained it, nor pruned it, nor took care of it.  
He uprooted Jerusalem, the tower of sacrifices. Behold it is destroyed!  
He delivered it to the spoiling and trampling of the nations of the earth [see Lk 21:20].  
He tore asunder the vineyard, scattered the Nation over the whole earth.  
Behold! All nations and their governments trample on it!  
He denied the vineyard prophets that they not prophesy,  
and that they not bring down to it prophecy which is rain [see Is 5:6].  
No seers, nor teachers, nor even priests  
he left for the Nation that they serve it spiritually.  
Behold he denied it blessed rain he had poured on it,  
the teaching of prophecy which had irrigated it.  
Behold its winepress is destroyed so as to say  
that its sacrifices, drink-offerings, and pardons came to naught.<sup>23</sup>

The intermingling between the pericopes of Isaiah and Matthew becomes here evident. The children of Abraham are both the vineyard portrayed in Isaiah, that does not bear good fruit, and the tenants in Matthew, who kill the heir to the vineyard. Accordingly, the vineyard and its workers are one and the same. The son of the vineyard's owner is identified as the

23. "HSJS IV," 755:4-756:2.

❖ תַּבְּ אֲבִיבִים וְסִכּוּ מַעֲכָסָא בְּיָדֵיהֶם חֶלְוָא	וְהָיָה מִזֶּה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל :
❖ אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל :
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל :
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל :
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל :
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל :
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל :
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל :
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל :

crucified Son of God. (Jacob had already established that God is the owner of the vineyard) Although the pericope in Matthew does not state how the tenants killed the heir to the vineyard, Jacob claims by crucifixion.<sup>24</sup> Abraham's progenies led Jesus Christ, their Lord, God's Son, to be lifted up on Golgotha. He came to his own (Jn 1:11a), yet the servants of his Father (Mt 21:38-39) did not only reject him (Jn 1:11b) but also prepared for him a mixture of bitterness and vinegar (Dt 32:32; Mt 27:34).<sup>25</sup> By crucifying the Son of God, the Nation blasphemed against God. Wild bitter grapes, the fruit of the vineyard symbolizes blasphemy. Bitter grapes are the vinegar given to Jesus on the cross. Rather than accepting Christ in thanksgiving for what God had done for them, the chosen Nation killed him. Consequently, the Lord uproots the vineyard, an image of God rejecting Israel. Perhaps Jacob of Sarug hints here at the destruction of Jerusalem (see Lk 19:41-44), occurred at the hands of the Romans in A.D. 70. Represented by all the nations, the soldiers devastated the Holy City and ruined the temple. They destroyed the winepress means that all priestly services came to an end, including sacrifices and cleansing rituals used for the pardon of the people. Rain stopped to water the vineyard is an allusion that Israel lost its prophetic privileges. In fact, at the time of Jesus, Israel had not had a prophet for a long time, and Malachi (B.C. 5<sup>th</sup> c.) was its last. God completely stopped his care for this thankless vineyard. God spurned the ungrateful Nation, for it repaid him by rejecting his Only-Begotten. "The Vineyard of the Beloved [see Is 5:1] crucified the Beloved [...],"<sup>26</sup> "denied its Lord and was uprooted because it crucified him."<sup>27</sup>

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ : اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ

The laborers of iniquity took him outside and crucified him that he not inherit.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ قُلُوْبًا قَاطِعَةً وَ اَبْصَارًا مُّخْلِطَةً : اَللّٰهُمَّ

but the children of Abraham prepared for him a mixture of bitterness and vinegar.

حُذِرْهُ، وَحُذِرْهُ اِمْفِءَ حَسْبُكَ ...

The destruction of God's beloved Vineyard because it denied him fruits<sup>28</sup> illustrates his rejection of Israel, who killed his Son.<sup>29</sup>

So after [it was gifted with] all its spiritual beauties,  
the heir came and tasted its grapes, but behold they were bitter!  
He sought wine in it, but instead of wine, he found vinegar.  
He drank vinegar and uprooted the chosen Vine-Plant he planted.  
Its grape clusters are bitter, its grapes thorns, and its wine vinegar.  
Lest the land be of no use, he uprooted it, and behold it is destroyed.  
He pulled down its fence, marred its beauty, and scattered its fruits.  
Since it yielded no [sweet] fruits, he tossed it out and deprived it of yields.<sup>30</sup>

The bishop of Batnan introduces the theme of a new vineyard, a symbol of the Church when the king in Matthew's pericope takes the vineyard away from the tenants and gives it to other vinedressers (see Mt 21:41).

By the fact that they said, "This is the heir" [see Mt 21:38], you should understand that they had known that the Son was Christ when they crucified him. They both recognized and crucified him. The Father was angry, dispersed them, took the vineyard away [from them] and gave it to other vinedressers. Behold all the Nations give the Father fruits instead of the vinedressers who killed the heir as they were raging. The Nations, who laid hold of your vineyard, beloved, cultivated it from the time you took it from the Jews and bore you fruits. The Nations of the earth laid hold of the spear, nails and your cross, and they cultivated the vineyard using them. The vineyard was sound and bore you fruits. Your name is myrrh oil. Behold it perfumes the congregations.

[illegible]

The young love your sweet scent and adore it.  
 Behold the congregations! Their offerings [are uttered] with their tongues  
 that they offer you every thanksgiving dear to you.  
 Your sweet wine moves the lips (*lit.* the teeth) of the virgins [see Ps 51:17],  
 and all your churches in the regions sing your glory.<sup>31</sup>  
 [...]  
 Behold the other vinedressers who received the vineyard from you.  
 All of them bear the sweet fruits of your faith.  
 The Cross cultivated the Church of the Nations, the vine of the Son.  
 Behold she offers you sweet wine with a new praise.  
 She surpassed in fruits the Vine that went out of Egypt [see Ps 80:9]  
 and was uprooted because of its bitter grapes [see Dt 32:32].  
 Behold your vineyard, [O] Beloved, bearing fruits among the Nations.  
 All of them give praise to your Father and thanksgiving to you.<sup>32</sup>

The vineyard's owner reclaims his vineyard and gives it to new vinedressers. These vinedressers are the Nations, who completely constitute the Church. Just as the Jews were the vineyard and vinedressers, so the Nations are the new vineyard and vinedressers. "They bore fruits" refers to their faith. The spear, nails, and the cross are the tools they used to maintain the vineyard. Jacob of Sarug does not explain how these tools were used. However, one could surmise they are a reference to the mysteries of the Church and its missionary activities. The spear that opened up the side of Christ (see Jn 19:34) pertains to baptism and the Eucharist in particular, and the sacramental mysteries of the Church in general. The nails and cross could be in line with Paul's saying, "For Jews demand signs and Greeks look for

31. "HSJS IV," 760:7-761:1.

<p>✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ</p>	<p>ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :</p>
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32. *Ibid.*, 766:5-12.

<p>✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ</p>	<p>ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ :</p>
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The bishop of Batnan, however, brings explicitly the image of the vine and branches of Jn 15:1-17 to the fore and interprets it in reference to the Church replacing Israel in another *mimro* entitled *On the Crucifixion - Part Five for Friday Night* (ܐܡܥܬܐ ܕܠܝܠܐ ܫܒܬܐ ܕܚܘܕܝܢܐ . ܕܟܠܬܐ ܕܗܝܘܪܝܢܐ).<sup>33</sup>

33. See "HSJS II," 522-554.
34. See Is 4:2, 11:1, 53:2; Jer 23:5-6, 33:14-16; Zec 3:8, 6:12.
35. "HSJS II," 579:4-19.

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The vine as an image of the Church can be likewise found in Jacob's *minro* entitled *On Hosannas, on the Donkey, on Sending the Disciples, and on the City That Is in Opposition, and on the Rest* (ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ),<sup>37</sup> a commentary on Jesus entering Jerusalem (see Mt 21:1-11; Mk 11:1-11; Lk 19:28-38; Jn 12:12-15). Reading Mt 21:2, Jacob of Sarug states that two animals a colt and a donkey were tied up to a vine.<sup>38</sup> The image of the two tied animals is the fulfillment of Gn 49:11, "He tethers his colt to the vine, his donkey's foal to a stem [...]"<sup>39</sup> According to Ephrem, the vine is the synagogue and the foal kingship.<sup>40</sup> Whereas Ephrem does not interpret this verse in relation to the Church, Isaac of Antioch interprets the image of the colt tied to the vine in Gn 49:11 as Jesus leaving Israel to stay with the Gentiles.<sup>41</sup> The bishop of Batnan sees here an image of the Church.

37. "HSJS V," 613-631.

38. *Ibid.*, 619:16.

ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ

The colt bound next to the donkey: unbound it and bring it to me.

39. *Ibid.*, 619:19-20.

ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ

40. See "In Genesim II," 97 (Latin); "In Genesim I," 114 (ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ). ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ; Murray, "Symbols," 103.

41. See Murray, "Symbols," 104. For the Syriac text and an English translation, see Stanley Kazan, "Isaac of Antioch's Homily Against the Jews," *OrChr*, 45, (1961), 40:191-204 (Syriac and English).

ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ  
ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ  
ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ  
ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ  
ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ  
ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ  
ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ  
ܡܢܪܐ ܕܗܘܫܢܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܕܢܝܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ, ܕܡܢܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ

Not only does the vine symbolize the law, but also Christ and his Church.

42. "HSJS V," 619:1.

43. *Ibid.*, 619:5-6.

44. *Ibid.*, 619:9-10.

45. *Ibid.*, 621:1-2.

46. *Ibid.*, 621:13-14.

47. *Ibid.*, 619:11-12.

48. *Ibid.*, 621:15-16.

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The Son of God lamented over it<sup>49</sup> from the beginning,  
and it was laid bare by his goodness at the end.  
It came to an end there because the Lord of the heights said to her,  
“Behold your house shall henceforth remain desolate [see Jer 12:7; Mt 23:38].”  
The Church, who loved him dearly, clung to him,  
and got ready to sing his praise at the entrance [to the city].<sup>50</sup>

The vine is clearly a type of Christ. Here this image is sacramentally related to the Church. The Lord prepares his precious blood from this vine and gives it to his Church. The vine is also a symbol of the Church, who has loved and cleaved to Jesus. This symbolism refers to the vine and branches of Jn 15:5, and the relationship of Christ to his Church. The abandonment, rejection, and destruction of Israel are repeated and signified in the images of the vine that was laid bare and came to an end, and the desolate house. Nevertheless, Israel, in this quotation, is not depicted as the vine but as the donkey that remained bound to the law, and the two apostles Jesus sent did not untie.

To bring this section to a close, it is worth mentioning that the vine is also an image of prayers such as in the case of Jonah praying inside the big fish (see Jon 2). Jacob depicts this prayer as a grape cluster at whose taste the angels marvel. “A grape cluster of praise Jonah picked from inside the fish and sent it [upwards]. The angels on high marveled at its sweet taste.”<sup>51</sup>

49. See Mt 23:37–39; Lk 13:34–35, 19:41–44.

50. “HSJS V,” 621:21–622:15.

<p>         ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ       </p>	<p>         ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ       </p>
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51. “HSJS IV,” 430:12–13.

<p>         ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ❖ ܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ       </p>	<p>         ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ          ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܠܝܢ       </p>
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### 4.1.2 The Church, Fig Tree

In the realm of plantation symbolism discovered in the writings of the Jacob of Sarug, the fig tree is likewise a symbol of Israel rejected by God and the Church replacing it. This imagery find its roots already in the Old Testament. It symbolizes not only Israel (see Hos 9:10) and its prosperity and peace (1Kgs 5:5; Mi 4:4; Zec 3:10) but also its destruction like a withered fig tree (Jer 8:13). By all accounts, such an image is found neither in Aphrahat nor Ephrem.<sup>52</sup> In the *mimro* *On the Fig Tree Our Lord Cursed and It Withered* (ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ) (see Mt 21:18-22; Mk 11:12-14; Mk 11:20-25), Jacob of Sarug presents the symbols of a vineyard and a fig tree in parallel, and both signify Israel. The worthless, vain, fruitless fig tree, according to him, is a type of the Nation,<sup>54</sup> i.e., Israel, and a depiction of Sion.<sup>55</sup> The Lord made the fig tree into an example for Israel.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the bishop of Batnan interprets the cursing words as addressed to Jerusalem,<sup>57</sup> with which Jesus was angry for not listening to him.<sup>58</sup>

52. See Murray, "Symbols," 256, especially footnote 2.

53. See "HSJS IV," 724-739.

54. *Ibid.*, 734:21-735:1.

ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ : ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
That worthless, vain, fruitless [fig] tree  
is clearly a type of the Nation as you have heard.

55. *Ibid.*, 731:13-16.

ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ : ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ : ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
The Son of God sought these fruits from it (the Synagogue of the Nation).  
Since he sought [fruits] from it and did not find [any], he made it an example.  
He depicted it as a fig tree. Since he sought fruits on it and did not find [any] on it,  
he cursed it, and it withered that Sion learn when it happens to it.

56. *Ibid.*, 732:13-14.

ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ : ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ : ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
He was not upset with the tree, that did not have liberty,  
but that it be an example for the Nation that refused him fruits.

57. *Ibid.*, 735:6-7.

ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ : ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ : ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
He directed his word at Jerusalem when saying,  
"No fruits shall ever be on you from this time forward."

58. *Ibid.*, 732:17-18.



and bitter grapes, the fig tree did not bear any fruit. Both denied their owner the appropriate fruit, which is a symbol of faith. Both crucified him.<sup>60</sup> Accordingly, they were destroyed: the vineyard uprooted, and the fig tree cursed and dried out. Just as the Father rejected the vine he brought out of Egypt, so the Son spurns the fig tree as well. Therefore, both Father and Son reject Israel.

The fig tree as an image of the Church can be implicitly drawn from Jacob's *mimro* *On Zacchaeus, the Tax-Collector* (ܟܬܒܐ ܕܐܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܩܒ ܕܝܥܩܒܐ ܕܝܥܩܒܐ),<sup>61</sup> a commentary on Lk 19:1-10. Following the reading in the *Peshitta*, the bishop of Batnan presumes that Zacchaeus climbs a fig tree<sup>62</sup> to be able to see Jesus. Both Zacchaeus and the tree bore fruits. The fruit of the former is repentance, and that of the latter is Zacchaeus.

The fruit of this insipid fig tree looked appetizing (*lit.* was pleasing),  
and Jesus, passing by, plucked it from its branches.  
He saw Zacchaeus as a first-ripe on the [fig] tree,  
and quickly plucked it to use its sweet taste.  
Not even in Eden did he ever happen on such a fruit  
which he, passing by [on his way] to Jericho, plucked from this fig tree.<sup>63</sup>

By climbing the fig tree to see Jesus, Zacchaeus demonstrated his faith in Christ. Therefore, Jacob of Sarug likens him to a delicious fruit which the Son of God plucks. Zacchaeus became the first-ripe of the fig tree. This fig tree will bear many more sweet fruits, which makes it a symbol of the Church. Moreover, an orchard of fig trees could symbolize the Church. Jacob of Sarug exhorts his audience not to be like fruitless fig trees, lest their fate be similar

60. *Ibid.*, 733:7.

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61. See "HSJS I," 344-364; Zeki Aydin, "Jacob of Serugh's *Mimro* on Zakai the Tax Collector: A Literary and Theological Analysis," *Pdel'O*, 35, (2010): 74-94.

62. In the Greek text, Zacchaeus climbs a sycamore tree (συκομορέαν), see *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1999), 222.

63. "HSJS I," 355:13-18.

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Therefore, the wild olive tree entered and stood instead of the cultivated olive tree.

Behold it is grafted onto and is comely on the trunk of the house of Abraham.

It bears daily sweet fruits of a new praise

instead of the tree which removed itself from its trunk.

The Nations recognized the faith of the house of God.

Behold they abide by it that they become the scions of the children of the promise.

It is not the law that brought them to God,

but [they came] through the gate of faith without the law.<sup>69</sup>

The trunk of the olive tree is Abraham declared righteous on account of his faith and Israel's ancestors, yet the cultivated olive tree, stemming from this trunk, i.e. Israel, was destroyed, for it bore the fruit of impiety rather than the fruit of Abraham, faith. Paul speaks of this destruction using the language of pruning a tree. The cultivated olive tree signifies Jerusalem, and its destruction points to God rejecting Israel. Here is one of the rare instances where Jacob of Sarug explicitly reveals the kind<sup>70</sup> of the tree of life: it is an olive tree, a supposition already existing in the Syriac literature that pre-dates Jacob's time. St. Ephrem, for example, interprets the olive as a symbol of Christ. This olive gave water, blood, and oil in his death.<sup>71</sup> Thus, he associates the olive tree with the Tree of Life.

In contrast to Jerusalem, Edessa, representing the Church of the Nations, believed without the advantage of having the law. Edessa is the wild

69. "HSJS V," 741:19-742:14.

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70. Since the fig tree discussed in the previous section does not symbolize Jesus Christ, it cannot be an image of the Tree of Life.

71. See "Saint Éphrem Commentaire De L'évangile Concordant Version Arménienne," 318 (Armenian); "Saint Éphrem Commentaire De L'évangile Concordant," 227 (Latin); Murray, "Symbols," 125; Lange, "Kommentar zum Diatessaron II," 594-595 (German).



like its Lord who is all among all that all should have profit.  
 [It is] a lovely sight: oil glorified the chrism,  
 who blots out the debts of human beings with oil.  
 He cleanses with oil, purges away with oil, purifies with oil  
 the one who comes to baptism to be pardoned by it.<sup>78</sup>

The palm and the olive trees are the two trees that came out to meet Jesus. The former is a symbol of the Son of God and his exaltedness, and the latter praising him represents the Church. This image of the Church carries a sacred symbolism linked to the Chrism oil used in the celebration of the Mystery of Chrismation. Christ, the true Chrism, gives this religious rite its power of purification and forgiveness of sins to the mundane olive oil and water used for baptism, thus making the Church merciful just as he is.

## 4.2 Christ, Grape Cluster, Olive Tree, and Tree of Life

Jacob of Sarug uses plantation-imagery to refer not only to the Church but also to Christ. This symbolism is related to the Church, inasmuch as it presents Christ as the source of the Church's life. From the vine Israel a grape cluster sprouts and becomes the source of the Church's life. In this context, this section presents the themes of a grape cluster and the tree of life as symbols of Christ.

### 4.2.1 Christ, Grape Cluster

On account of eating a bitter fruit, God bans Adam and Eve (see Gn 3:23-24). Their return to Paradise, nonetheless, takes place when they partake of the sweet fruit.

The fruit that came to redeem Adam is sublime and lofty,  
 and the fruit that gave praise to his Lord is greatly splendid.  
 The Lord of the fruits came to sweeten Adam's palate:

78. *Ibid.*, 626:13-627:2.

<p>           ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ            ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ            ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ            ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ            ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ         </p>	<p>           ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ            ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ            ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ            ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ            ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ         </p>
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cluster born of the Virgin Vine. This symbol also insinuates that the Tree of Life is a grapevine. The irrigation of the nations by the beloved grape cluster connotes once more the transfixing of the side of Jesus. Jacob of Sarug presents this image as a grape cluster pressed on Golgotha.

Sweet grape cluster (ܥܥܝܬܐ), they squeezed you with a spear [see Jn 19:34],  
and behold the world absorbs your blood like a medicine of life.  
Your Church knelt on your wounds to drink your blood,  
and behold it is painted on her lips like a scarlet thread [see Sg 4:3].<sup>93</sup>

The reference to the Johannine scene of the crucifixion with the soldier transfixing the side of Jesus is unmistakable. Just as the rock struck by Moses gushed out waters to satiate the thirst of the Hebrews (see Nm 20:11), so the pierced side of Jesus, the sweet grape cluster, burst water and blood, the medicine of life, to irrigate the entire world. Consequently, the Church bent down and drank from the wounds of Jesus, the source of her sacramental life. Jacob's poetic prowess provides his audience with the image of a scarlet thread on the lips of the Church. This illustration is an account of her drinking his Eucharistic blood, the medicine of life, a favorite image for the Eucharist in the Syriac tradition.<sup>94</sup>

The guests are waiting to drink life from your wine vessel [see Jn 2:1-12].  
Your life-giving cup quenches the multitude longing for you.  
Your good wine showered down over Creation at the end of time  
for your Father preserved you that you be the consolation of the world.  
Your taste is sweet. Behold my tongue is moved! I shall shout praise  
to the Father, who sent you, that all the bitter ones become sweetened by  
you.  
Jesus, the honey from the skeleton of the dead lion [see Jgs 14:18],  
came out to sweeten the taste of the world, which was bitter.<sup>95</sup>

93. "HSJS IV," 761:2-5.

ܐܘܠܐ ܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܗ ܪܫܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ  
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94. See Murray, "Symbols," 120.

95. "HSJS I," 320:16-321:4.

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Jesus changing water into wine in Cana (Jn 2:1-12) occasioned another reference to the Eucharistic wine that quenches the thirst of the Church. His life-giving cup is also an image of the Church's consecrated wine. This sweet wine is the Father's gifts to humanity that its taste be changed from bitterness to sweetness. Humanity's fate is no longer to die but to inherit eternal life due to Jesus's martyrdom on the cross. This road of self-denial traveled by the Lord becomes the way of the Church's martyrs. Once more the transfixed side of the Jesus provides the martyred Church with life.

Life-giving grape cluster (ܡܫܝܚܐ), whom the Jews pressed with a spear [Jn 19:34],

intoxicated with its wine the martyrs, and they forgot their tribulations.

They drank so much from the new wine (*lit.* must) of the crucifixion that they did not even feel the fire to complain.

The seething of the wine that rushed forth on Golgotha overwhelmed the branding-irons lest they be numbered among branding-irons.

They were drunk on its drinking and forgot the pain of their members, for the drunk does not know to complain of his affliction.

The wine they drank urged them on until they held the burning coals of fire while they were laughing at the flame.

Since their heart[s] were captivated by the drinking, they were not terrified while their members were burning up by the flame.

The blood of the Crucified, which they quaffed from that life-giving cup, provided them with a brave (*lit.* proud, exalted) heart before the judges.

The new wine whose seething was great made them so hot [with zeal] that they ran to the sword and the flame.

They unclothed in the tribunal. Since they were drunk, they were not disturbed,

for the drunk is unaware of having been stripped naked on account of their wine.

The chaste ones stood stripped naked before the licentious ones and were unaware of [their] nakedness, that was by reason of the wine.

In the midst of a struggle, the one who is naked is not bare, for the one fighting for victory is unashamed.

They waged war against the ruler guarding the air [see Eph 2:2] and fought undressed with evil doers.

They anointed themselves with the blood of the side of the Son of God in the struggle,

and the hand of their adversaries slid away from them.<sup>96</sup>

96. "HSJS II," 641:4-642:9.

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and oil,<sup>98</sup> nevertheless, draw their importance and meaning exactly from this title, and not the other way around, for “Christ (ܡܫܝܚܐ) is the cause of all types of anointing.”<sup>99</sup> For that reason, the olive tree and, by extension, oil, is related to the Church insofar as it is an image of the Son of God, the source of the Church’s sacramental life.

The rare image of oil as a Eucharistic symbol in the *mimre* of the bishop of Batnan is depicted in Elisha’s miracle. Elijah’s successor transforms water into oil for a prophet’s widow that she and her children be able to survive (see 2 Kgs 4:1-7).

She (the widow) depicted certainly the image of the Church,  
for she entered, along with her children, and closed the door on them.  
The Father sent to her the [Holy] Spirit instead of Elisha.  
By his descent, he sanctifies the bread, and it becomes the body [of Christ].  
He dwells in the wine and also makes it the innocent blood [of Christ].  
He fills her children life as the empty vessels.<sup>100</sup>

The widow signifies the Church, her children the Christian faithful, and the oil the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Just as the change of the water into oil was due not to Elisha’s action, but to divine intervention, so the transformation of the bread and wine at a liturgical service is caused by the Holy Spirit as well. The body and blood of Christ grant life to those who partake of them. In this Eucharistic sense, the Oil, an image of Christ, can be understood as a source of the Church’s Eucharistic mystery.

Baptism, more than the Eucharist, however, finds its roots in the olive tree and oil symbolism. For example, the olive leaf the dove carried back to Noah (see Gn 8:11) already represents Christ.

98. Since the oil in question is a product of the olive fruit, both the olive tree and its oil are examined together in this section.

99. “HSJS IV,” 801:12.

ܡܫܝܚܐ ܝܗܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܠܥܡܠܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ :

100. *Ibid.*, 279:9-14.

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(The dove) hastened to the olive tree, which carries mysteries,  
to receive from it riches in plenty and to bring them back with it.  
The mystery seethed in the leaves of the olive tree of anointing,  
cut a leaf and gave it to the dove that it carry it back to Noah.  
Christ (ܡܫܚܐ) and oil (ܚܡܠܐ) were depicted there symbolically,  
and the Holy Spirit and baptism by an unambiguous type.  
Was there no other leaf except an olive,  
and no other bird to bring it back other than a dove?<sup>101</sup>

The dove is an obvious allusion to the Holy Spirit (see Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22; Jn 1:32). The olive leaf as a symbol of baptism can be understood through oil, thus identifying the baptismal anointing with baptism. This close interrelation between baptism and oil becomes more apparent when one considers the following citation, “He instructed them, ‘Go, teach and baptize [all] the nations in the name of the Father, and in the name of the Son, and in the name of the [Holy] Spirit’ (see Mt 28:19)... He gave them the Trinity and oil (ܚܡܠܐ) from the Mount of Olives: the oil for signing and the Trinity for salvation.”<sup>102</sup> Although the emphasis seems to be placed on the act of anointing, water is not absent from the baptismal service. The deed of the sinful woman in Lk 7:36-50, for example, depicts baptism. “By the oil and tears which she poured there on our Savior (see Lk 7:37-38), she symbolically depicted the baptism of the world forever.”<sup>103</sup> The mystery seething in the leaves points to Christ (ܡܫܚܐ). Moreover, using a vocabulary reminiscent of the angels singing on the day Jesus was born (see Lk 2:14), Jacob reveals that

101. *Ibid.*, 49:12-19.

<p>ܡܫܚܐ ܠܡܕܐ ܚܡܠܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ</p>	<p>ܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ</p>
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102. “SM,” 819:2-3, 6-7.

<p>ܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ</p>	<p>ܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ ܕܚܡܠܐ</p>
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103. “HSJS II,” 422:19-20.

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the Olive Tree and Oil are symbols of Christ. “The sign of the oil showed the peace of the world and the leaf of the olive tree carried back good hope.”<sup>104</sup>

The fact that Jesus in connection to the olive tree is the source of baptism can also be deduced from Jacob’s recount of the Visitation (see Lk 1:39-45). During the encounter between the two infants while still in their respective mothers’ wombs, Jesus hands the faculty of baptism to John. “He anointed the infant [John] in his mother’s womb by the Holy Spirit, and gave him baptism in the womb before being born.”<sup>105</sup> Anointing refers to oil and therefore to the olive tree. The mystery of anointing is effected by Christ, the Anointed One, through the Holy Spirit.

The mysteries hidden in the olive leaf the dove brought back to Noah (see above), mainly Christ (ܡܫܝܚܐ) and oil (ܚܡܐ), are now revealed on the Mount of Olives, which is also a symbol of anointing.

He gathered the Children of his Mystery on the Mount of Olives [see Acts 1:12],

for the Mount of Olives (ܡܬܢܐ ܕܗܝܐ) is a symbol of anointing,

that oil (ܚܡܐ) for baptism be from the Mount of Olives

and Christ (ܡܫܝܚܐ) be raised up to his Father’s place from it.

The treasure of oil (ܚܡܐ) on the Mount of Olives is for anointing,

for Christ (ܡܫܝܚܐ) ascended to his Father from it.

Therefore, he gathered them to that mountain

to provided them with oil for the signing of the whole earth.<sup>106</sup>

On Mount of Olives, the Anointed One (ܡܫܝܚܐ) gives the Apostles oil (ܚܡܐ) to anoint the entire world. He commissions them to baptize all the nations (see Mt 28:19) with his oil. The Mount of Olives, like the olive tree, finds its roots and draws its significance from the true Olive Tree and the true

104. “HSJS IV,” 50:17-18.

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105. “SM,” 646:10-11.

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106. *Ibid.*, 816:9-16.

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Oil, Christ. This true Olive Tree gladdens the Church and provides her with his oil.

#### 4.2.3 Christ, Tree of Life

The book of Revelation (2:7, 22:2) presented the Christians of the west with the springboard to contemplate the topic of the Tree of Life, whereas Genesis (2-3) was the impetus for the same subject on which the early Syriac Fathers<sup>107</sup> including Jacob of Sarug mused. One must also keep in mind that the book of Revelation was unknown to the bishop of Batnan. Even if the Tree of Life symbolizes Christ but not the Church, it is closely intertwined with the subject of the Church, for just as the grape cluster and the Olive Tree are sources of the Church's sacramental life so too is the Tree of Life. Before proceeding, it is interesting to state that Jacob of Sarug uses the symbolism of a tree to describe how God is three persons, and yet one. "The Father is the root, the Son is the fruit, and the Holy Spirit is the branches: one Tree who is life in its entirety to the one who approaches it."<sup>108</sup> Just like the Tree of life, this Tree, a symbol of the Trinity, is completely life and life-giving to the one who comes near it.

The Tree of life stood in the midst of the Garden of Eden (see Gn 2:9). After the Fall, God expelled Adam from Paradise and placed an angel with a fiery revolving sword to protect the Tree of life (Gn 3), thus making it impossible for Adam and his children to partake of it. However, the soteriological implication of the Incarnation is that the Tree of life uprooted the tree of knowledge once and for all,<sup>109</sup> and made possible Adam's return to

107. See Murray, "Symbols," 124.

108. "SM," 852:14-15.

109. "HSJS II," 821:19-822:4.

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The Good One had pity on our humanity and sent his Son  
that he cut the roots of that tree that devastated the earth.

the Garden of Eden, where the Tree of Life presents its fruits to his delight and that of his progenies. In line with Aphrahat and Ephrem, Jacob of Sarug identifies the Tree of life and its fruits with the Lord Jesus.

“I am life, and the one who receives me finds life” [see Jn 11:25, 14:6],  
the blessed Tree, our Lord, says.  
“I am life, and the one who eats my fruits lives forever [see Jn 11:25, 14:6],  
departs from the place filled with death and climbs over its wall.”  
Righteousness, holiness, and justice,  
mercy, gladness, and serenity [see Gal 5:22-23],  
peace, tranquility, love of all virtues:  
these are the good fruits of the tree of life.  
When a person plants it in their minds, they become paradises  
and bear the fruits that are life to those who partake of them.  
When they possess it, it is well established in them, and they absorb its taste,  
they become springs gushing out water of life.<sup>110</sup>

Christ is the Fruit of Life sent down to human beings by the Father,<sup>111</sup>  
and the sweet fruit to be enjoyed.<sup>112</sup> In the language of Jn 6:35 and Jn 11:25, the  
blessed Tree,<sup>113</sup> i.e. the Tree of life, declares itself to be life, offers its fruits for  
consumption, and promises life to those who partake of it. The fruits of the

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He ordered and warned Adam in Eden, “Do not eat  
from the tree, for it imposes death upon him who tastes it.”  
Our Lord taught his hearers at the end of times,  
“Do not even fix the eye on the desire of the tree.”  
The Father is one, his Begotten, the faithful Son, is one,  
and one is the commandment, “Do not eat from the tree.”

110. *Ibid.*, 818:5-14.

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111. See “HSJS I,” 350:14.

[...] ܐܘܬܝܪ ܐܘܬܝܪ ܐܘܬܝܪ ܐܘܬܝܪ ܐܘܬܝܪ ܐܘܬܝܪ

[...] the Fruit of life sent down to us by the Exalted One.

112. *Ibid.*, 353:13.

[...] ܐܘܬܝܪ ܐܘܬܝܪ ܐܘܬܝܪ ܐܘܬܝܪ ܐܘܬܝܪ ܐܘܬܝܪ

[...] that he [Zacchaeus] alone take delight in the sweet fruit.

113. A tree brought about Adam’s demise, and its antitype reverses that curse by giving him life. See Murray, “Symbols,” 127.

Tree of life bestow life on those consuming them, and their sharers inherit eternal life. Moreover, they become themselves both paradises and trees of life. These are the followers of Jesus, the Christians embodying the Church. Accordingly, one can already conclude that the Church is, according to Jacob of Sarug, paradise on earth in whose midst is the Tree of life, a theme further explored below.

The crucifixion scene plays a central role in this tree-symbolism, for it is precisely on Golgotha where the Tree of Life sprouted. “Where Sion set the wood to crucify the Son is where the Tree bearing the mysteries sprung.”<sup>114</sup> Moreover, the soldier’s lance piercing the side of the Crucified opened the door back to Paradise. Jesus sends away the angel with the fiery revolving sword and makes Eden once again fully accessible to Adam.

He dismissed the Cherub guarding the Tree of Life,  
and received the spear into his side that the heirs who had left might enter.  
He opened Paradise, that was inaccessible (*lit.* closed) before those entering  
and brought back those who had been expelled to their inheritance and  
domain.<sup>115</sup>

On the cross, the Son of God calls everyone to his vineyard. “Behold his hands are extended. He is on Golgotha and calls everyone to come to the vineyard of righteousness.”<sup>116</sup> Accordingly, Golgotha becomes Eden in the view of Jacob of Sarug, for the Tree of Life stands in its midst. From Golgotha the teaching of the Son of God issues forth and irrigates the whole Creation, thereby making the earth like Paradise. Once again the reference to the side of Christ split open is explicit with the irrigation imagery, which refers to both the Eucharist and baptism.

You (Jesus) are living water. Everyone who desired and drank from you

114. “HSJS IV,” 76:6-7.

ⲁⲙⲉ ⲕⲁ ⲉⲃⲉ ⲁⲩⲕⲏⲁ ⲛⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲓⲁ : ⲁⲩⲁ ⲛⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲓⲁ ⲛⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲓⲁ ⲛⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲓⲁ :

115. “HSJS II,” 194:19-22.

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116. “HSJS I,” 343:5-6.

ⲉⲙⲕⲉⲃⲉ ⲛⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲓⲁ ⲛⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲓⲁ ⲛⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲓⲁ : ⲁⲩⲁ ⲛⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲓⲁ ⲛⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲓⲁ ⲛⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲓⲁ :





Christ is the water flowing out from the temple,  
and every tree irrigated by it lives  
[...]  
The Father sent Living Waters to a dead world,  
and the world lived by the Waters which flowed from his temple.<sup>120</sup>

The Gospel (إنجيل) went out throughout the regions and to the ends of the earth  
and gathered together human beings before God.  
From every region, every jurisdiction, every government,  
every land beyond, every border, every place,  
every generation, every nation, [and] every race  
it (the Gospel) assembled and made [them] a large congregation for the  
Godhead  
[...]  
It gathered them like raindrops from every mountain  
and made of them one immense deluge of glory  
like the prophet saw: A torrent that cannot be waded across  
and cannot be measured because of a high amount of water in it [Ez 47:5].  
The nations became one great people singing glory,  
a large congregation, a torrent beyond measurements [see Jn 11:52].<sup>121</sup>

[illegible]

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The torrent and the Gospel can also typify the Church, whose priests baptize people and bring them to God. The vision of Ezekiel speaks of many trees along the bank of the river (Ez 47:7) bearing every kind of fruit (Ez 47:12). This “revelation represented human beings as trees.”<sup>122</sup> The kind of these trees is not clear. Nevertheless, one finds a reference to John the Baptist depicted as an olive tree planted along the torrent of baptism. John is a “Glorious olive tree which sprung along the stream of baptism.”<sup>123</sup> These trees depict those who accepted the Gospel, i.e. Jesus Christ, including John the Baptist. However, those who rejected the Good News are spoken of as ingresses (ܡܬܟܢܐ) and egresses (ܡܬܦܢܐ)<sup>124</sup> that were left salty (Ez 47:11), and identified with the Nation—that is to say, Israel. According to Jacob of Sarug, Ezekiel “names the Nation ingress and egress,”<sup>125</sup> for the Son of God entered and exited the house of the Jews, who remained as they were. Therefore, Jacob concludes that “The Nation is those waters that did not become fresh [Ez 47:11],”<sup>126</sup> and the trees the baptized. Jesus Christ plants the baptized along this stream like the Creator planted Adam, the Vine, in the Garden of Delights.

Behold the trees full of spiritual beauties  
sprung on this and on that side through the baptismal font.  
Behold the Creation is full of fishers and castings of nets,  
and the catch is abundant inside the churches.  
The net of Simon caught the sea and the entire land,  
and he brought the innumerable catch to the Church of the Son.<sup>127</sup>

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122. *Ibid.*, 442:9.
123. “*HSJS III*,” 684:17.
124. Following the *Peshitta*, which differs from the Hebrew text.
125. “*HSJS V*,” 443:16.
126. *Ibid.*, 443:17-18.
127. See Jn 21:11. “*HSJS V*,” 444:7-12.

The torrent flowing out the Son of God becomes the font of Baptism, thus underlying that Christ is the source of the mystery of baptism administrated by the Church's ministers. These ministers are portrayed as fishers with fishing nets at whose head is Simon Peter and the Apostles. To emphasize the universal message of salvation, Jacob of Sarug portrays Simon's fishing net catching the entire earth. The catch refers to those who hear the Gospel's message and accept baptism, thus becoming members of the Church.

Every Tree absorbing water from the torrent  
is glorious and filled with fruits of life daily [see Ez 47:12],  
and human beings who are at the stream of baptism  
exist spiritually in a new life daily.<sup>128</sup>

Just as the waters of the torrent freshens the polluted waters of the sea (Ez 47:8), the waters of baptism bestow a new life on human beings likened to the stinking waters. "The sea is the world, and the stinking water is Adam's race [...] the Son of God, the water that flowed from the temple, his Father mixed him with the stinking water and freshened them."<sup>129</sup> Moreover, "The Torrent of Life, baptism, poured forth in the world, and human beings like trees bore through it fruits."<sup>130</sup> Accordingly, the baptismal water draws their effectiveness from Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is the source of the Church's sacramental life.

Ezekiel portrayed a magnificent beauty for baptism  
in that glorious vision he saw in Chaldea (*lit.* the house of Chaldeans).  
The Tree of Life made for himself siblings through baptism,

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| <p>128. <i>Ibid.</i>, 444:17-20.</p> <p>✦ مَحَلًا دَبْلًا هَصَّيْ رِبْلًا جَّهْ تَبْلًا ✦<br/>         ✦ دَامْلًا رِبْلًا وَلَا تَبْلًا حَكْبْلًا هَدْلًا ✦</p>                       | <p>هَلْ رِبْلًا هَلْ مَحَلَّشْ تَبْلًا وَجَبْلًا :<br/>         مَحْبْلًا هَمَصَّةً شَحْفًا تَحْلًا هَحْلًا كَحْلًا :</p>  |
| <p>129. <i>Ibid.</i>, 443:3, 7-8.</p> <p>✦ مَحَلَّشْ أَيْ هَمَصَّةً قَلْبًا وَتَبْلًا كَحْلًا ✦<br/>         ✦ حَسْبًا تَبْلًا مَحْبَلَّ كَحْلًا هَمَصَّةً ✦</p>                      | <p>كَلَّ أَتَكَلَّ هَمَلَّ حَسْبًا هَمَّ وَجَحْلًا :<br/>         هَمَصَّةً هَمَلَّ كَلَّ أَلَّا وَحَصَّةً هَمَلَّ :</p>   |
| <p>130. <i>Ibid.</i>, 445:16-17.</p> <p>✦ حَسْبًا هَمَلَّ مَحَلَّ هَمَصَّةً هَمَلَّ هَمَصَّةً هَمَلَّ ✦<br/>         ✦ هَمَصَّةً هَمَلَّ أَيْ أَتَكَلَّ لَحْنًا هَمَلَّ قَلْبًا ✦</p> | <p>هَمَلَّ حَحْلًا هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ :<br/>         [...] هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ :<br/>         هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ هَمَلَّ :</p> |



This rather lengthy citation is rather rich in sacramental imagery. The Tree of Life making siblings for himself through baptism indicates that those who accept the Church's baptism become Jesus Christ's siblings, symbolically become trees of life, and bear life-giving, healing fruits and leaves. Neither the fruits nor the leaves ever wither. The Church partaking of their fruits brings to mind that those who are working in the vineyard also from the vineyard as discussed above. The faithful, therefore, are identified with the Church, and the symbols applied to them also refer to the Church. The Eucharistic connotations are clear with the expressions of the divine food and medicine of life. One can also infer the mystery of the priesthood in this text. The expression "all the trees of baptism" implies that Jacob is referring to all the baptized. They are the children of light who like trees bear "fruits" and have "leaves." The fruits are symbols of faith, worship, and the Eucharist. Phrases such as praise and sing symbolize worship. Food- and healing-imagery denote the Eucharist, that is life, heavenly food, the medicine of life and bread of life for the Church. The leaves represent the Word of God in the midst of the Church, for they are the Church's teachings and sayings, i.e., scriptures and preaching. The Church can confer the mysteries on human beings and preach in the world, for she drinks from the Torrent's waters. Consequently, she can offer life to those who come to her. Her preaching and food are life-giving medicine to those who seek them. The source of it all is Jesus Christ, the water flowing down from the temple of the Godhead. Along with baptism and the Eucharist, this passage also highlights the preaching of the Word of God, thus providing a segue to the topic of Scriptures.

The Scriptures, which also contain the fruits of life, are another source of the life of the Church. This theme connects appropriately with the previous section.

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ܡܠܟܐ ܡܬܠܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܡܬܠܐ :  
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 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܬܠܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܡܬܠܐ :

The Good News is that spiritual Paradise,  
in which the prophets and the apostles are like trees.  
Pick and eat the fruits of life, their sayings,  
for your mouth will become sweet<sup>132</sup> by meditating on and studying them.<sup>133</sup>

The Holy Bible is Paradise in a spiritual sense, in which there are many trees, each of which is a tree of life. These are the prophets and the apostles, whose fruits are their sayings, the pronouncements of God. Adam and Eve should have rejected the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and should have fed on his fruit, the Word of God, i.e., his commandment. Accordingly, the Church feasts on the fruits, the Word of God, provided by the prophets and apostles.

The Gospel of the Son is the ax to that tree [of knowledge].  
It cuts and discards it that no one eat from its fruit.  
Behold the commandments are portrayed in it in the likeness of a sickle,  
by which all the poison producing fruits are cut down.  
The Envious One holds out daily the fruits of death.  
Observe the commandments, and the evil fruits will not hurt you.  
When it holds out to you the fruit of death, the desire of adultery,  
respond to it with the commandment, "Do not commit adultery."<sup>134</sup>  
When it lets creep into and introduces [you] to the habit of loving money,  
- this is the origin of all wickedness - [see 1 Tim 6:10]  
offer it the teaching full of life,  
"I have heard I should not possess anything in the world" [see Mt 6:19,  
19:21].  
When it wheedles, making come the sweetness of gluttony,  
mock it while reproving its boldness,  
"The Son of Man does not live by bread alone  
but by the Word of God, whose mouth lets out" [see Dt 8:3 ; Mt 4:4; Lk 4:4].  
When the soul seethes with fury, that begets wrath,  
invoke the commandment that is mentioned and indicated by "Do not be  
angry" [see Mt 5:22].  
When it sows in you the evil passions of haughtiness,  
imagine that everyone is better than you.  
When it is persuading you to hate or kill someone,

132. Reading 𐤌𐤋 instead of 𐤌𐤋 as shown in Bedjan.

133. "HSJS II," 825:12-15.

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134. See Ex 20:14; Lv 18:20; Mt 5:27-28. The fruit of committing adultery is stoning. See Lv 20:10; Dt 22:22. Adultery is meant in the wider sense of the word, and does not pertain only to married people.

you ought to love God and your neighbor,<sup>135</sup> and confound its will. There is no time that it does not throw at you enkindled arrows take up the buckler of faith and extinguish them [see Ep 6:16]. Take hold of the sword of the Spirit, the Word of life, shatter, and shoot down the slingstones of the slanderer. Fence yourself with the cherub's spear of fire [see Gn 3:24], a watchful guardian, the perfection of every commandment. You were brought inside the door of Paradise, anchor your feet in the land of life lest you fall.<sup>136</sup>

Scriptures provide the Church, represented by her members collectively, with the needed ax (see Mt 3:10) to cut down the tree of knowledge and reject its fruits. The tree of knowledge is a resilient poisonous tree, whose antidote are the scriptures. They are the expanded version of God's commandment in Eden and provide the Church with the necessary tools to uproot the tree of knowledge from its midst. The individuals in the Church will be able to overcome their sins with the Fruit of life, the Word of God in the Bible. If their weakness is fornication or adultery, a fruit of the tree of knowledge, they should remember the passage in the scriptures that speaks against it. Is it the love of money? "Sell all your possessions and follow me." Could it be gluttony? "The Son of Man does not live by bread alone." What is also interesting is that Jacob of Sarug calls on his hearers to imitate

135. See Lv 19:18; Dt 6:5, 4:29, 10:12, 11:13, 13:4, 26:16, 30:2, 10; 1 Sm 7:3; 2 Kgs 23:3, 25; Mt 22:37-40; Mk 12:30-31; Lk 10:27; Jas 2:8.

136. "HSJS II," 824:1-825:9.

مَعْدَاةٍ وَدَا أَلَمَ نَبِيٍّ وَهَ أَكُنَا :  
 وَأَ فَتَقَبَلْنَا وَنَهَضَ دَهْ دَمْعَا مَعْلَا :  
 وَهَ سَمْعَا كَحَمَ عَمْعِي قَاوَا وَهَدَا :  
 دَبَّ تَهْمِي كَبِ قَاوَا وَهَدَا وَنَسَخَا رَهْ وَأَ :  
 مَنَسَبَ مَحَا مَنَسَا وَنَسَخَا مَعْلَا :  
 أَهْنَسَ نَاوَهْ مَحْفَعَا وَكَدَسَا سَنَا :  
 مَعْرَمِي مَعْلَا مَنَسَا وَنَسَخَا مَعْلَا :  
 وَدَبْعَا مَسَا لَا يَدَا كَحَسَا سَنَا كَحَسَا :  
 دَبَّ مَعْدَا نَا تَعْلَا حَسْعَا وَأَدَا وَدَعْلَا :  
 دَبَّ أَوَّيْ حِي سَعَا مَعْلَا وَحَمَحَمَعْلَا :  
 مَعْلَا إِنْعَا مَعْلَا إِنْعَا مَعْفَا كَبِ وَأَمَدَا :  
 كَدَسَا حَبْلَا وَلَا مَعْرَا حِي كَاوَهْ سَقَبْلَا :  
 أَسَا وَهَدَا وَنَسَا وَأَمَدَهْ مَحْلَا وَسَنَا :  
 أَذْهَرَا أَيْدَا كَبِ وَهَمَسَا وَهَدَا وَدَعْلَا :  
 كَحَلَا أَيْدَا وَهَ حَرَّ مَبِ أَوَّحَا وَهَ فَوَيْهَا :



the way Christ responded when he was tempted in the desert. Jesus used relevant scriptural passages to reject the evil lures of his tempter (see Mt 4:1-11). Consequently, the Church imitates her Lord by arming herself with his Word that the Scriptures she proclaims preserves.

### 4.3 The Church, Garden of Eden on Earth

Murray's statement, "Paradise is the type, as well as the eschatological goal, of the Church,"<sup>137</sup> rings true in the poetry of Jacob of Sarug. Jesus's redeeming deeds achieve this eschatological dimension, which Adam's return to the Garden of Delights implies. Jacob's development of this paradisiacal return is independent of the book of Revelation, for it was not part of the *Peshitta* canon at the time of the bishop of Batnan. Moreover, it was not until the sixth century that it were translated into Syriac.<sup>138</sup> Through his death and resurrection, the Son of God "opens the doors to the Garden [of Eden] for those expelled that they might return"<sup>139</sup> to their inheritance. "He (Peter) perceived that the road to Eden is opened to her (the Church), and is restored that Adam might return to his inheritance."<sup>140</sup>

The cherub fled and is no [longer] assigned to guard the Garden.  
The Garden is open. Come, mortals, enter the resurrection.  
Behold there are neither gates nor guardians of the Tree of Life.  
The thief had entered. Who would not be beautiful like the killer?  
The good and the bad, come, enter and eat from the Tree  
which scatters its fruits on those who are far and those who are near.<sup>141</sup>

The fiery angel guarding the gate and protecting the Tree of Life is no longer there, for the Lord restored and reopened the road back to Paradise,

137. Murray, "Symbols," 125.

138. See Sebastian P. Brock, "The Bridal Chamber of Light: A Distinctive Feature of the Syriac Liturgical Tradition," *TH*, 18, (2005), 181.

139. "HSJS II," 316:9.

140. "HSJS I," 488:13-14.

141. "HSJS II," 313:15-20.

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whose gate is now wide open. The Garden points to the resurrection, and all have now access to the Tree of Life. That is to say, all are called to the Church, for the Tree of Life and its fruits are now within her.

The Son of God founds the Church on earth instead of Paradise and reveals himself to be the true Tree of Life in her midst, thus making her the Garden of Eden on Earth.

He established on earth the holy Church instead of Paradise.  
and appointed priests to his service without [animal] sacrifices.  
He revealed himself to be the Tree of Life that was hidden  
and let his fruits drop on those who are near and those who are far.  
Behold! Priests surround him, pick fruits from him  
and give life to human beings from him daily.<sup>142</sup>

All those who are far and those who are near are invited to eat of the fruits of the Tree of Life and live. As shown above, the Tree of Life is Jesus Christ. The fact that the fruits refer his body and blood becomes obvious in this citation. The priests surround the Tree of Life, pick its fruits, and gives them to human beings.

Come, let us delight in the Word of the Son, which is full of life,  
for its taste is better than honey in the comb.  
The Tree of Life is our Lord, and it is bearing fruit.  
Let us pick and eat from it a choice fruit.  
We have eaten more than enough from the tree of knowledge.  
The Tree of Life came to us, so let us eat of it.  
Behold the sacred Paradise is the Church,  
and the Tree full of life is the Holy Altar.<sup>143</sup>

The sacerdotal service can only be the Eucharistic celebration because the Altar is the Tree of Life, and the Divine Liturgy takes place on it. This

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142. Micheline Albert, "Mimro Inédit de Jacques de Saroug sur le Sacerdoce et l'Autel," *Pdel'O*, 10, (1981-1982), 59 (French), 71:81-86 (Syriac).

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143. "HSJS II," 312:16-313:6.

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Altar is also the good soil of Paradise, which sprouts the Tree of Life. Jesus commissions his Apostles and, accordingly, the priests coming after his first followers to serve the altar, celebrate on it the holy, angelic service,<sup>144</sup> and distribute the fruits of the Tree for the salvation of humanity.

Christ, the benevolent Heir, who is altogether light, came  
and restored what was corrupted from the beginning.  
He granted the priesthood to his Twelve with the laying of his hands  
and appointed priests to the service of the tree of life.  
In splendor, with the gentle waving of the hands, and in holiness,  
behold, they (the priests) surround the tree of life at the Holy Altar.  
Priests were appointed to the office of the spiritual Seraphim,  
to which it had been proper to appoint Adam.<sup>145</sup>

The Church learned this mystery neither from Melchizedek, who was the first and only one in the Old Testament to offer bread and wine as a sacrifice nor from anyone else but the Lord himself during the Last Supper. She was present at the table with him the night before his life-giving offering. Accordingly, she imitates him daily in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

The Daughter of the King did not receive types from the ancients,  
and it is [not because of them] that she breaks the bread of mysteries daily.  
In the upper room, she saw her Lord, who broke his body,  
and learned from him to do so daily as he showed her.  
Melchizedek did not teach the Church what to do,  
for she gazed at his Lord and daily does what he did.  
She did not receive the type from Moses, who was a man,  
but Jesus, who was God, taught her the mystery.  
Behold she is watchful over, carries it and glorifies in it,  
for it is the great sacrifice, which perfects the living and the dead.<sup>146</sup>

144. The heavenly, angelic service of the angels is an image of the Eucharistic service in the Church.

145. Albert, *"Mimro Inédit,"* 61 (French), 72:101-73:108 (Syriac).

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146. *"HSJS I,"* 538:6-15.

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The Son of God brings Adam and Eve to the Church, back to Paradise, and makes her priests responsible for their welfare and providing them the fruits of life. Jacob of Sarug supplies this image in his *mimro* on *The One Who Was Coming down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and Thieves Attacked Him* (ܦܨܡ ܕܥܝܕܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ),<sup>147</sup> a commentary on the parable of the Good Samaritan (see Lk 10:25-37). Jacob interprets the man falling victim to robbers as Adam, i.e., humankind,<sup>148</sup> and the robbers as Satan and death.<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, the priest and the Levite in the parable represent Moses and the prophets who could not help Adam out of his demise.<sup>150</sup> Only the good One was able to heal humanity and bandage its wounds through oil and wine. Oil, a symbol of baptism, and wine, a symbol of blood,<sup>151</sup> are applied by Christ,

147. See "HSJS II," 312-333.

148. *Ibid.*, 325:13-16.

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Someone was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho.

Who could he be except Adam if you would ponder [over it]?

He was going down from the awesome Garden of Eden

to the earth, which is accursed like Jericho, to those who ponder over it.

149. *Ibid.*, 325:21-326:3.

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As Adam was coming down from Paradise to the world,

behold Satan and Death came upon him like thieves,

attacked him, struck him with their blows, thrust him down

on the road of the world, and he became wounded, dead, and cast out.

150. *Ibid.*, 326:6-13.

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Then Moses, the great prophet, came, saw Adam,

left him wounded, passed by without bandaging him.

After Moses, all the prophets as well as the Levites,

saw him, passed by, and did not raise him.

Neither Moses raised him by his sacrifices and offerings

nor the prophets by their revelations and vision.

The righteous prophets and the priests passed by and did not raise

Adam, who had been struck on the road of the word while traveling on it.

151. *Ibid.*, 327:17-20.

the Good Samaritan,<sup>152</sup> to the wounds of humanity. Jacob of Sarug's answer to "who is my neighbor?" is clear. My neighbor is Jesus Christ. Loving God means to love God the Father, and loving your neighbor denotes loving Jesus.<sup>153</sup> Finally, the Good Samaritan takes the smitten man to the inn, i.e., the Church, that the innkeeper, the Church's priests, continue caring for fallen Adam. Accordingly, Jesus Christ leads Adam and Eve to the Church, back to Paradise, that they might partake of the fruit of the Tree of Life.

The benevolent Physician made him a remedy of oil and wine,  
bandaged him with anointing and his blood, and the weak one got up.  
He carried the cast out, brought and placed him in the holy Church,  
the house of the community, in which every wounded is bandaged up.  
He gave the priest [his] body and blood that he would place [them]  
on his injuries, would provide for him who belongs to him, and he will heal  
him.<sup>154</sup>

Baptism and the Eucharist are the means by which God makes present the deeds Christ accomplished on the cross. Furthermore, he heals humanity

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He bandaged him up with ointment, an image of baptism,  
and poured wine, the chalice of his blood, on his wounds.  
The good physician prepared a remedy of ointment and wine for him,  
bandaged him with chrism and his blood, and the weak [Adam] arose.

152. *Ibid.*, 326:14, 327:15-16.

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Christ came after all of them [prophets]  
[...]

He came down from his place on high to Adam who had been severely wounded,  
had mercy [on him], and attended to his many injuries.

153. *Ibid.*, 325:7-10.

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Let us love the Father, who willed to send his Only-Begotten,  
and the Son, who endured suffering for our sake.  
Thus it was written, "Love God and your neighbor."

Your virtues comprise [the love of] the Father and the Son.

154. *Ibid.*, 327:21-328:3.

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through them, for Christ himself is their source. The Good Samaritan prepared the ointment on Golgotha symbolized here by baptism (oil/water) and blood. Jesus makes them available in the Church to smitten humanity. The priests are God's stewards whose task is to continue the healing actions of Christ by providing God's children with baptism and the Eucharist.

One leaving the Church is akin to Adam leaving Paradise. Jacob of Sarug exhorts his audience to run away from the tree of knowledge, and to eat from the Tree of Life, the Lord,<sup>155</sup> thereby cautioning them against committing the error of Adam, who shunned Eden and enjoining them to stay within the walls of Paradise, the Church. The Son of God is the source of the mysteries of the Church.

Christ is the blessed fountainhead of Eden,  
along which all the teachers of the mysteries of the Church are planted [see  
Ez 47:12].

Take and eat the desired fruits from their branches.  
Nourish yourself with their sayings and leafs.  
The spear opened the well of life on Golgotha,  
and rivers flowed out of it to the whole world.  
Blessed streams which flowed out irrigated the entire earth  
that it yield fruits, for it had been laid waste for a long time.  
Be a planted tree standing along their streams  
and drink life and produce spiritual fruits.  
You are inside the gate of that Paradise.  
Do not go out outside, for death is [there] waiting for you.  
The snake that killed Adam outside of the gate [of Paradise]  
is holding [out] the desire of this world in the likeness of fruits.<sup>156</sup>

155. *Ibid.*, 314:13-14.

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Let everyone flee the tree of knowledge  
and eat from the Tree of Life, our Lord.

ܐܬܬܬܝܬܝ ܠܡܬܬܝܬܝ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ :

156. *Ibid.*, 825:16-826:7.

✦ ܐܬܬܬܝܬܝ ܠܡܬܬܝܬܝ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ  
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ܐܬܬܬܝܬܝ ܠܡܬܬܝܬܝ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ :  
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ܐܬܬܬܝܬܝ ܠܡܬܬܝܬܝ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ :  
ܐܬܬܬܝܬܝ ܠܡܬܬܝܬܝ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ :  
ܐܬܬܬܝܬܝ ܠܡܬܬܝܬܝ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ :

Where the Tree of Life is, there is Paradise. The tree of knowledge and its fruit, the poison of the snake, are outside the Church, while the Tree of Life and its life-giving choice produce, the body and blood of the Son of God, are within the sanctuary of the Church. Jesus is the Tree of Life, his body and his blood are its fruits, and these are made available to all those within the Church. Therefore, the Church is the Garden of Eden, in whose midst the Tree of Life.

Behold our Lord, the Tree of Life carrying fruits.  
Come, let us pluck and eat from it the choice yield.  
More than enough have we eaten from the tree of knowledge.  
The tree of life came to us that we might eat from it.  
Behold the sacred Paradise is the Church,  
and the tree filled with life is the holy altar.  
The tree of knowledge is outside its gate,  
and the lovers of the world are daily plucking fruits from it.<sup>157</sup>

#### 4.4 The Chariot in Ezekiel's Vision

In the *mimro* *On the Chariot That the Prophet Isaiah Saw* (ܡܝܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܝܫܐܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝܫܐܝܐ) Jacob of Sarug interprets the chariot in Ezekiel's vision (see Ez 1, 10), upon which the Son of the Creator reigns,<sup>159</sup> to be the place where Adam was and from which he fell.<sup>160</sup> Furthermore, the event taking place around and inside the chariot is an image of the Divine Liturgy the Church celebrates, the burning coals refer to the Eucharistic species on the altar, the fruits of the

157. *Ibid.*, 313:1-8.

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158. See "HSJS IV," 543-610; Golitzin, "Image and Glory"; Golitzin, "Chariot".

159. See "HSJS IV," 558:20.

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The Son of the Creator, sitting in his place on high [...]

160. *Ibid.*, 559:7-8.

ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝܫܐܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝܫܐܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝܫܐܝܐ	ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝܫܐܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝܫܐܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝܫܐܝܐ
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The mind does not seek to contain but to marvel  
at the place on high, whose beauty Adam abandoned.





and engulfed in flames. The burning coals could not just mean what the name implies. Hence, they must carry a hidden meaning.

That chariot was altogether fire, along with its components.  
Therefore, why were they known as burning coals of a different fire?  
Furthermore, when the fiery angel was able to drop burning coals from his  
fingers,  
how was it necessary  
that he would stretch out [his hands], take burning coals with the fiery  
palms,  
go out and scatter [them] as the Majesty commanded him?<sup>164</sup>

This manifestation to the prophet would have been incomprehensible and devoid of meaning<sup>165</sup> unless one interprets it in view of the Son of God.<sup>166</sup> Accordingly, Jacob of Sarug proclaims that the entire scene of the chariot is a reflection of the divine liturgy celebrated by the Church on earth. The chariot is a representation of the sanctuary, in which the altar stands. Further, upon

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He (Ezekiel) saw there the appearance of linen in the form of a man  
because he (the man) and his clothes entirely were of hot-burning coal by nature.

164. *Ibid.*, 595:3-8.

✦ مَرَبَّ حَمْدًا وَبُؤًا إِسْلَامًا مَدْبُوحًا بِوَتَّ	وَمَنْ حَمْدًا وَبُؤًا بِوَدَّ حَمْدًا وَتَحْدًا :
✦ هَوَّ حَلَاظًا وَبُؤًا بِوَدَّ أَسْبَ كَلْبًا	هَوَّ حَمْدًا وَبُؤًا وَبُؤًا حَمْدًا وَتَحْدًا :
✦ هَوَّ حَمْدًا وَبُؤًا أَسْبَ وَبُؤًا هَوَّ حَمْدًا وَتَحْدًا	وَلَاذَ تَحْمَدًا وَبُؤًا هَوَّ حَمْدًا وَتَحْدًا وَبُؤًا :

165. *Ibid.*, 584:7-14.

✦ هَلَا سَامْعِيَا حَمْدًا وَبُؤًا حَمْدًا وَتَحْدًا	هَلَا لَا حَمْدًا وَبُؤًا أَسْبَ كَلْبًا :
✦ هَلَا أَسْبَ وَبُؤًا حَمْدًا وَتَحْدًا وَبُؤًا	هَلَا أَسْبَ وَبُؤًا وَبُؤًا حَمْدًا وَتَحْدًا :
✦ هَلَا حَمْدًا وَبُؤًا حَمْدًا وَتَحْدًا وَبُؤًا	هَلَا حَمْدًا وَبُؤًا وَبُؤًا حَمْدًا وَتَحْدًا :
✦ هَلَا حَمْدًا وَبُؤًا حَمْدًا وَتَحْدًا وَبُؤًا	هَلَا حَمْدًا وَبُؤًا وَبُؤًا حَمْدًا وَتَحْدًا :

However, if God had not appeared as a man,  
Ezekiel would not have been renowned for these riches.  
They would not have said he had been allowed [access] to hidden [realities],  
nations would not have comprehended the scroll of his prophecy,  
his account would not have been spoken to the peoples of the world,  
and his vision would not have been praised in all ends [of the world].  
Now, since the Son of God came into the world,  
behold Ezekiel is also praised because he had seen his mystery.

166. *Ibid.*, 596:2-3.

✦ هَوَّ حَمْدًا وَبُؤًا لَا حَمْدًا وَلَا حَمْدًا	هَوَّ حَمْدًا وَبُؤًا وَبُؤًا حَمْدًا وَتَحْدًا :
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The whole beauty of prophecy is the Son of God,  
and neither prophecy nor revelations are without him.

this altar is the body of the Son, also called pearls, depicted as burning coals used for both retribution and forgiveness.

The pearls of his body are depicted as the burning coals of fire,  
the Godhead's sanctuary, as the chariot.

[...]

The burning coals in the chariot depict his body  
and were set for retribution and forgiveness.<sup>167</sup>

The unique mystery of the Son brings heaven and earth together and allows for the interpretation of the chariot as the Church's sanctuary and the events taking place in it as the Church's liturgy.

[There are] holy burning coals of fire inside the chariot,  
and priceless pearls in the sanctuary.  
The body is on the altar, and a fire dwells on the chariot,  
for the mystery of the Only-Begotten is one above and below.<sup>168</sup>

Furthermore, the angel wearing linen entering the chariot is a type of the priest of the Church wearing the image of the Son of God accessing the altar area. The cherub giving the burning coal to the man in linen (see Ez 10:7) depicts the Holy Spirit, who, sent by God the Father, plays the intermediary between his sender and the priest. It is not the priest, but the Holy Spirit who sacrifices the Son on the altar, who breaks the body of the Son, and who distributes it to the whole world for the forgiveness of sins. Thus, the priest is the Holy Spirit's hands on earth. Through the priest, the minister of the Church, God continues to offer this most precious fruit to the world. That speaks directly to the role of the second person of the Trinity in the Divine Liturgy. He is the one who transforms the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ and gives them to the priest. Moreover, just as the

167. *Ibid.*, 596:4-5, 8-9.

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168. *Ibid.*, 596:12-15.

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[...]

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burning coal purified Isaiah<sup>169</sup> (see Is 6:7), the burning coals extracted from the chariot, i.e., the body of the Son, and distributed by the priest remove the wickedness of the entire world. In the following quote, Jacob of Sarug expounds his interpretation on the interaction between the cherub and the angel in linen and on the meaning of the burning coals.

The angel wearing linen in the vision is  
a type of a priest putting on the image of the Son of God.  
“He entered inside the chariot among the wheels,”  
that is [an image] of a priest entering and singing the Trisagion in the Holy of  
Holies.  
“The cherub handing out burning coals to the one outside:”  
[that is meant] to let the priest know he is not in charge of the mercy-seat  
but the Holy Spirit. He exists between him and the Father,  
breaks, and gives the body of the Son to the priest that he go out  
and scatter it in the assembly on the righteous and sinners [see Mt 5:45]  
to judge and forgive the iniquity of the whole world.  
The cherub inside of the chariot extended his hand  
and gave burning coals to the one there wearing linen.  
Hence, he taught there that the Spirit is the one standing in the Holy of  
Holies,  
handing out the body to the priest that he distribute it.  
The priest does not have the power to sacrifice the Only-Begotten  
and raise him, a sacrifice for sinners, before his (the Only-Begotten) Father.  
However, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father,  
descends, overshadows, and dwells in the bread, makes it the body [of the  
Only-Begotten],  
makes out of it precious pearls  
and dresses the souls betrothed to him (the Only-Begotten) in riches.  
He (the Holy Spirit) allows the priest to break, then he (the priest) breaks it  
(the body)  
and goes out sprinkling them (the precious pearls) upon the sinners to justify  
them.  
It is the Spirit inside who extends them (the precious pearls) to the priest  
outside  
like the cherub who extended them (the burning coals) to the man in his  
linen.  
He takes from him the forgiving fire in the palms  
and goes out giving riches that set free the whole world.  
These burning coals in the core of the chariot  
are the fire that was kindled to set on fire the briar of the earth.  
For this reason, the angel was dressed in linen  
to depict one of our priests in his functions.

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169. *Ibid.*, 596:10.



Moses, before Ezekiel, saw and depicted these same mysteries of the Church manifested in the vision of the chariot. They predate both prophets because they are eternal.<sup>171</sup> The reference in the case of the Moses is to the descent of the Almighty on Mount Sinai (see Ex 19), the altar of sacrifice (see Ex 20:24-26), and the tabernacle set up in the middle of the Israelites (see Ex 25:8, 26:1-30, 36:8-38). These are also reflected in the scene of the chariot. The chariot represents the altar of sacrifice, which is the main point of contact between the heavenly and terrestrial beings. The chariot on high is the meeting-place where the angels contemplate the ever invisible God, and the altar in the Church's sanctuary is where humanity finds refuge and access to the heavenly mysteries through the slain lamb. The body of the Son of God found on the altar in the form of the burning coals above or in the bread and wine on the altar below gives life to both heavenly and earthly beings. It is the principle of life of all rational beings.

The chariot in which there are burning coals depicted the altar,  
and these burning coals are the forgiving body of the Son of God.<sup>172</sup>  
The mysteries of the Lord were administered among the heavenly beings,  
and they descended through grace to be offered to earthly beings.

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171. *Ibid.*, 599:3-12.

<p>ⲉⲥⲉⲛ ⲛⲓⲙⲉⲛⲉⲛ</p>	<p>ⲛⲓⲙⲉⲛⲉⲛ ⲛⲓⲙⲉⲛⲉⲛ</p>
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Moses saw the complete image of these mysteries,  
descended, and depicted it as the tabernacle and its furnishings.  
Just as Moses saw them, so too Ezekiel saw  
these mysteries signified through the companions of the angels.  
The mystery of the Church precedes both Moses and Ezekiel,  
and the angels yearned to gaze at it.  
This deed which our Lord brought down to and performed on earth  
had been forever administered among the heavenly beings.  
They desired to gaze at these mysteries  
like the prophets who yearned to see the day of the Only-Begotten.

172. Ephrem also interprets the coal as Christ and the Eucharist, see Sebastian P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of St. Ephrem*, Placid Lectures (Rome: C. I. I. S. Publication, 1985), 81-83.





Do not seek him above, sinner, whensoever you search for him.  
He has come to you. Gaze at him in your place, for, behold, he is with you.  
He invited you to the altar that you see him, for he rests upon the table,  
and from the crumbs of his body the whole creation is sated.<sup>183</sup>

The real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharistic species is what makes the Church the actual meeting place between God and human beings. The angels in Ezekiel's vision are a reflection of the earthly angels, i.e., God's people on earth. The body and blood of the Son contain the entire wealth of heaven, for Jesus Christ dwells in the bread and wine offered at the altar.

The entire heavenly riches came down to earth  
in Immanuel, who is with us, our God.  
Behold the hidden altar, which was mysteriously served,  
appeared and exists among earthly angels.  
The body of the Son of God is arrayed against our iniquity  
and is nigh to heal all our ulcers and sores.  
Moreover, behold all the heavenly mysteries, types and beauties  
are in it. No human could desire more!<sup>184</sup>

183. *Ibid.*, 606:3-6.

لَا حَوْلَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۖ أُوْهُ سُلْهُمًا مَّا وَجَدْنَا آيَةً :  
حَقِّقْ حَالَهُ حُبْرًا ۖ وَاسْمَاعِي ۖ وَجَدْنَا خَلْفَهُ قُلُوبًا :

سُئِلَ عَنْهُ لَأَوْحَا صَلَّاهُ حَقًّا وَبَحْتْنَا :  
مَجِبًا صَعْلًا ، وَهُوَ إِذَا جَعَلَ الْوُجُوهَ :  
مَعْبُورًا فَهُوَ وَدَّ الْوُجُوهَ لَمْ يَصْلَحْ :  
مَعْلُومٌ ، الْوُجُوهَ مَعْلُومًا مَعْلُومًا وَبَحْتْنَا :







understanding of the keys. In the *mimro* on *The Transfiguration of Our Lord on Mount Tabor and on Moses and Elijah, Who Were Conversing with Him* (ܡܝܡܪܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܥܡ ܡܘܨܝ ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ) <sup>191</sup> the bishop of Batnan portrays the prophets, Moses and Elijah, as key-bearers passing the keys to the apostles, John and Peter, respectively.

Now, why was it necessary for these servants of the King to come to talk to him? How and why did they come?  
 He (Jesus) wanted to join to the first the second to make them equal that the Gospel mingle with the Torah and prevail on earth.  
 He wanted to assign the keys of Moses to John to allow him (John) to write “in the beginning” [see Gn 1:1; Jn 1:1] spiritually.  
 The son of Zebedee <sup>192</sup> substituted the son of Amram <sup>193</sup> that he too become a great scribe for the hidden mysteries of the Godhead.  
 He gave the power that Elijah had to Simon that he “loose and bind” [see Mt 16:19] in a solemn manner as a steward.  
 He joined to the followers of Moses those of Simon to make the latter together with the former worthy of his message.  
 He wanted to change stewards. Therefore, he summoned them that the old [stewards] give the keys to the young [stewards].  
 He wanted to honor those who properly labored with him and give the others an exalted position and work of righteousness.  
 He relieved Mose, put John to work, set free Elijah and summoned Simon to “loose and bind” [see Mt 16:19].  
 He wanted to confirm his New Testament.  
 Thus, he summoned his Father’s old servants that they subscribe [it].  
 He called the apostles and summoned the prophets, [thus] making them equal to manifest the one teaching of truth to the whole world.  
 He mingled the latter with the former that the earth might be aware that he is the Lord of both the last and first [stewards].  
 He summoned the wisest, choicest, and most exalted [figures] from the Old Testament that they witness to the teaching of the New Testament.  
 He wanted to retire the law that was in the hand of Moses, so he called him that he entrust the truth to Simon and then leave. <sup>194</sup>

191. See “*HSJS II*,” 347-375.

192. Zebedee was the father of James and John (see Mt 20:20; Mk 10:35).

193. Amram was the father of Aaron, Moses and Miriam (see Ex 6:20; Nm 26:59; 1 Chr 23:13).

194. “*HSJS II*,” 357:12-358:18.

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܥܡ ܡܘܨܝ ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ	ܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܥܡ ܡܘܨܝ ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ
ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܥܡ ܡܘܨܝ ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ	ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܥܡ ܡܘܨܝ ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ
ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܥܡ ܡܘܨܝ ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ	ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܥܡ ܡܘܨܝ ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ
ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܥܡ ܡܘܨܝ ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ	ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܥܡ ܡܘܨܝ ܕܡܬܬܬܬܐܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܢܚܝܐ

The keys are also a symbol of authority and transmission of that authority. The keys in Moses's possession authorized him to write down the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. Moses passing down his keys to John is Jacob of Sarug's way of showing the transmission of the scribal authority from Moses to John. Owing to the keys he received from Moses, John becomes a scribe for the house of God and writes in the manner of Moses, i.e., authoritatively. The phrase "In the beginning" found at the start of both Genesis (see Gn 1:1), ascribed to Moses, and the Gospel according to John (see Jn 1:1), ascribed to John, allowed the bishop of Batnan to make this

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That the keys stand for the message, its continuity and unicity, and for authority and its transfer can also be drawn from Jacob's exegesis of the Biblical account of the Visitation (see Lk 1:39-45). He presents an old, feeble Elisabeth transferring her keys to a young, vibrant Mary.

195. *Ibid.*, 362:17-18.

196. On the role of Scriptures in the writing of Jacob of Sarug, see Bou Mansour, "Théologie I," 197-201.

هَمْزٌ هَذَا مَكْتُبٌ، وَهَؤُلَاءِ خَصْمٌ : وَأَهْدُ أُنْثَى، حَكَمٌ أَوْ كَسْ حَتَبٌ أَوْ

The Good News approaching the Torah makes Mary and Elizabeth representatives of the New and Old Testaments respectively, and the wife of the priest Zechariah symbolizes the prophets, while the mother of Jesus the apostles, the Church. Luke does not mention a key in his account of the Visitation (see Lk 1:39-45), yet Jacob of Sarug imagines a transfer of a key to highlight also the end of the old and beginning of the new. This handing down is shown by the Gospel relieving the Torah of its burden. The Good News replaces the Law. That is to say that the Law does not save, but the Good News does. The trustworthy, exalted prophets transfer a great treasure, i.e., the veiled mystery of the Lord, to the apostles, who, in turn, share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the nations. Prophecy and apostleship preach the one and same truth: the Son of God, Jesus Christ, shines in and enlightens the world. The transfer of the keys also means the transmission of authority from the prophets to the apostles, both of whom are key-holders and have the power to preach the message entrusted to them.

وَأَمَّا حَقٌّ أُولَٰئِكَ فَمَتَىٰ هُنَا وَمَتَىٰ هُنَا ۖ  
 بَحْثًا لِلنَّاسِ وَبَحْثًا لِّمَنْ هُنَا وَمَتَىٰ هُنَا  
 أَسْ كَلْعَانًا وَهَلَّا هُنَا حَقٌّ ۖ هَعْبَدُ  
 حَقًّا أَوْ حَقِّقْنَا هَعْبَدُ فَكَيْفَ كَلَامُهُ ۚ  
 وَسُبَّاحٌ أَسْمَاءُ كَلَامُهُ ۚ تِلْكَ أَمْرٌ ۖ  
 ذَٰلِكَ كَلَامٌ مِّنْ حَقِّقْنَا وَنَحْنُ ۚ  
 صَحْبُهُ ۚ هَعْبَدُهُ ۚ وَلَا هَعْبَدُهُ ۚ

the great key to the entire Creation (ܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ) was placed in his hands.”<sup>198</sup>

In the sense of “loosing (ܡܠܝܬܐ) and binding (ܥܒܕܬܐ)” Jacob also uses the expression “opening (ܦܬܝܬܐ) and closing (ܥܡܝܬܐ).” The latter expression is synonymous with the former. The key-holder has the authority to control the Creation as in the case of Elijah and Elisha. The master passes his key to his apprentice.

He (Elisha) was shining on account of the Lord who dwelt in him  
and did not stumble because he was journeying as if during the day.  
The man was exalted in the sacred riches  
from the treasure which his master (Elijah) gave him while he was ascending.  
The great key (ܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ) that opens (ܦܬܝܬܐ) and closes (ܥܡܝܬܐ) the Creation  
he (Elisha) took to be a steward of the house of God.<sup>199</sup>

While ascending into heaven, Elijah drops his mantel, which Elisha picks up as a symbol of transfer and reception of authority from the teacher to the disciple. Using this mantel, both Elijah and Elisha were able to strike and divide water (see 2 Kgs 2:1-14) just as Moses did before them (see Ex 14:10-22). The key symbolizes the mantel transferred from Elijah to Elisha. It grants its holders power over the Creation and makes them stewards of the house of God. Elisha’s oil miracle (see 2 Kgs 4:1-7) is a case in point. The key does not make its holder a supreme sovereign over the Creation but its steward. Created things obey the key-holder according to its nature.

Elisha received the great key (ܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ)<sup>200</sup> of Elijah  
to open (ܦܬܝܬܐ) and close (ܥܡܝܬܐ) the Creation as a steward,  
By that power by which the horn welled up in the house of the widow,

198. “HSJS IV,” 109:18.

ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ

199. *Ibid.*, 271:22-272:5.

ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ	ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ
ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ	ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ
ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ	ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܕܡܟܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ

200. According to the biblical story of 1 Kgs 2:8-14, Elijah does not give a key to Elisha. The latter picked up the mantle which had fallen as Elijah was taken up to heaven. The mantle, to which Jacob of Sarug refers as the great key of Elijah, gave Elisha power to divide the water, which is an example of what the bishop of Batnan calls to open and close the Creation.

the jug of oil was blessed that its oil increase [see 2 Kgs 4:1-7].  
His master taught him, and the Lord granted him to command  
the Creation, which obeys him according to its nature.<sup>201</sup>

The saying “to loose and to bind” also refers to having access to God’s treasury of blessings, which Jacob of Sarug’s interpretation of the account of Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau (see Gn 27) shows. Again, the biblical account lacks the mentioning of keys.

The old man (Isaac) was contented and began blessing fervently.  
He opened his treasury to distribute out of it all treasures.  
He laid hold of God, the great key of the entire Creation,  
to open with it the height and depth to give the blessing.<sup>202</sup>

Esau, cheated of his rightful inheritance, recognizes the meaning of the key in his father’s possession and begs his father to give him the same share of blessings he granted his brother, Jacob. Unable to do so, Isaac uses the key to open the treasury of mercy through which Esau entered.

He (Esau) cried before his father while saying to him “Bless me, father,  
for you do not just have one blessing. Father, if you wish,  
your word contains great riches. Wish and bless me.  
There is [enough] in your treasury to give me also just like [you gave] Jacob.  
The key of [the treasury of] all blessings (مَكْبِلُ كُلِّ بَرَكَاتٍ) is in your  
possession. If you desire,  
open [it], bring me out riches found in you.”  
Isaac saw that Esau was painfully supplicating.  
Therefore, he opened the door of mercy that he (Esau) might enter through  
it.<sup>203</sup>

201. “HSJS IV,” 276:19-277:2.

✦ وَحَتُّنَا تَعْلَمُ ثَلَاثَةً أَسَى وَحَتُّنَا  
✦ دَهْ أَلَا تَدْرِكُ مَهْمَةً سَلَا وَتَعْلَمُ مَعْمَةً  
✦ تَهْمَةً فَكَمْ مَهْمَةً تَعْلَمُ كَمْ حَقَّتْ مَهْمَةً

مَكْبِلُ كُلِّ بَرَكَاتٍ هُوَ كَلِمَةُ الْكَلِمَةِ :  
دَهْ هُوَ سَلَا وَتَحْتَهُ مَكْبِلُ كُلِّ بَرَكَاتٍ :  
وَدَهْ كَلِمَةُ مَكْبِلُ كُلِّ بَرَكَاتٍ هُوَ كَلِمَةُ الْكَلِمَةِ :

202. “HSJS III,” 182:14-17.

✦ فَكَلِمَةُ كَلِمَةٍ وَتَعْلَمُ مَهْمَةً كَلِمَةً فَكَلِمَةُ كَلِمَةٍ  
✦ وَدَهْ تَعْلَمُ مَهْمَةً وَدَهْ مَهْمَةً مَهْمَةً كَلِمَةً فَكَلِمَةُ كَلِمَةٍ

أَلَا تَدْرِكُ مَهْمَةً مَهْمَةً مَهْمَةً مَهْمَةً :  
إِسْرَافُ الْكَلِمَةِ مَكْبِلُ كُلِّ بَرَكَاتٍ هُوَ كَلِمَةُ الْكَلِمَةِ :

203. *Ibid.*, 190:1-8.

✦ وَلَا يَدْرِكُ سَلَا وَدَهْ كَلِمَةُ كَلِمَةٍ أَلَا تَدْرِكُ أَلَا  
✦ أَلَا يَدْرِكُ كَلِمَةً وَدَهْ كَلِمَةً أَلَا تَدْرِكُ كَلِمَةً  
✦ فَكَلِمَةُ كَلِمَةٍ كَلِمَةً أَلَا تَدْرِكُ كَلِمَةً وَدَهْ كَلِمَةً  
✦ فَكَلِمَةُ كَلِمَةٍ كَلِمَةً أَلَا تَدْرِكُ كَلِمَةً وَدَهْ كَلِمَةً

كَلِمَةُ مَكْبِلُ كُلِّ بَرَكَاتٍ هُوَ كَلِمَةُ الْكَلِمَةِ :  
كَلِمَةُ كَلِمَةٍ كَلِمَةً وَدَهْ كَلِمَةً وَدَهْ كَلِمَةً :  
حَكْمُ يَدْرِكُ مَكْبِلُ كُلِّ بَرَكَاتٍ هُوَ كَلِمَةُ الْكَلِمَةِ :  
سَلَا يَدْرِكُ مَكْبِلُ كُلِّ بَرَكَاتٍ هُوَ كَلِمَةُ الْكَلِمَةِ :

















Jacob identifies the key with the mystery of the Lord, which opened a road in the sea, brought forth torrents of rivers out of the rock, and sent down food to feed the multitudes.

Your mystery, [O] Lord, split open opaque things  
and demands praise from the mute creation.  
It is the key that split open a road in the sea for the multitudes  
and made a pass through the raging sea for the great Nation.<sup>226</sup>  
It (the key) split the rock, brought forth torrents of rivers,<sup>227</sup>  
and sent down food from the clouds to the crowds [see Ex 16:4-36].<sup>228</sup>

Furthermore, the bishop of Batnan identifies the Lord as the Key that satisfied the thirst of the Nation in the wilderness, provided Samson with a drink out of dried up bones, fed the widow at the time of famine. The same Key granted sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf and speech to the mute, for he is the Lord of the Creation and it obeys him.

Who, [O] Lord, made an opening in the rock in the wastes,  
and from it gushed out rivers to the great Nation [see Ex 17:1-7]?  
Who [broke] open the dried bone which Samson held,  
and brought out of it fresh drink for the thirsty [see Jgs 15:19]?  
Who opened the jug and the horn in the widow's house,  
and they gave miraculously aplenty at a time of famine [see 1 Kgs 17]?  
You open all closed doors:  
they eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf, and the mouth of the mute.  
The blind that he see, the deaf that he hear, and the mute that he speaks  
[...]  
because you are the Key which opens the whole Creation.<sup>229</sup>

226. See Ex 14:21, 15:19; Ps 66:6, 78:13, 136:13-14; Wis 10:18, 19:7-8; Is 63:12-13; Heb 11:29.

227. See Ex 17:1-7; Nm 20:11; Ps 78:15-16; Wis 11:4; 1 Cor 10:4.

228. "HSJS III," 564:14-565:2.

<p>         ❖ ܡܚܝ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܡܠܬܦܬܐ ܐܚܝ ܠܡܚܬܐ          ❖ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ          ❖ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ       </p>	<p>         ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܡܚܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :       </p>
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229. "HSJS I," 213:19, 214:1.

<p>         ❖ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ          ❖ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ          ❖ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ          ❖ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ          [...]       </p>	<p>         ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :       </p>
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and it becomes blood to pardon the entire world.<sup>237</sup>

Christ's presence is not wishful thinking but a reality. He is fully present in the bread that becomes the Immolated Body and in the wine that becomes blood. By giving her his Eucharistic body, he gives her his entire self. His Eucharistic blood means that he is alive in her midst although she saw him hung on a tree. They satiate the Church and quench her thirst for life, since Jesus Christ, the crucified Son of God, is wholly in the midst of the Church and fully alive.

#### 4.5.4 The Good Thief and the Key

With God's banishment of Adam and Eve from his garden the gate to Eden was permanently closed (see Gn 3:23-24) — or at least it seemed so. Adam transgressed God's commandment, left Paradise and locked the gate behind him. The cherubim and the fiery revolving sword were placed to guard the Tree of Life and to hinder Adam's return if he tries. Unless the Son of God opens the gate to Eden, no power on earth or in heaven could even come near it. For this reason, the Cherub was surprised to see the repentant thief attempting to enter Paradise, a theme found in Jacob's *mimro* on *The Cherub and the Thief* (ܕܢܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ).<sup>238</sup>

and suggested that it should be read as either ܕܚܪܒܐ (absolute state) or ܕܚܪܒܐ (emphatic state), which mean: price, hire, or ransom. See "TS II," 915-916; "CSD," 94. Accordingly, she translates the verse as follows, "Au temple, le vin des vignes, dans des coupes de prix (ܕܚܪܒܐ or ܕܚܪܒܐ), [emphasis mine] Deviendra du sang, pour que par lui, soit purifié le monde entier." See Albert, "Mimro Inédit," 63:133 and footnote 81. There is, however, another more fitting reading. By changing ܕܚܪܒܐ for ܕܚܪܒܐ, the syllable count is preserved and a verb, which the first hemistich seems to lack and need, provides an appropriate context. Therefore, the suggested alteration reads, "They pour wine of vines in chalices in the Holy of Holies and it becomes blood that the entire world be pardoned by it."

237. *Ibid.*, 62-63 (French), 74:125-134 (Syriac).

ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ	ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ
ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ	ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ
ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ	ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ
ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ	ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ
ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ	ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ ܕܚܪܒܐ

238. See "HSJS V," 658-687.

The angel said, "Until he comes, you shall not enter,  
and the road of life shall not be trodden unless I see him.  
Adam left, and the lock he fastened cannot be opened  
until the Lord of Adam comes, for he can open it.  
You, a man of blood, are not able to enter Eden,  
for the place is pure and shall not be defiled by your footsteps.  
How is it that the angels do not see him, for is hidden from all,  
yet he sends you, a man, to a pure place?"<sup>239</sup>

Jacob of Sarug imagines a fiery fortification built around the garden of Eden. The fiery guard at the gate is fearful looking and warns the thief from attempting to enter. Unaware of the conversation between Jesus and the thief crucified at his right, the angel further instructs the intruder that the gate is locked and no one except the king can get the key which is inside and without which it is impossible to get in.

Eden's wall is of fire [see Gn 3:24] and cannot be broken through.  
The King sealed the strong lock, so it cannot be opened.  
Behold the key is inside of the kingdom, and who can bring it out?  
Moreover, the fortification is of fire, and you cannot make an opening  
through the wall.  
The tooth of fire is blazing and dreadful. If you dare [to break through],  
a weak chip [this tooth] will consume your feebleness.<sup>240</sup>

The Evangelist Luke narrates of a thief crucified on the right of Jesus who repents. In contrast to Jesus's disciples who abandoned their master at the cross,<sup>241</sup> the robber clung to him and professed his belief in Christ. "And when the disciples avoided the Master, and he remained by himself, this one

239. *Ibid.*, 676:20-677:5.

<p>         ܐܠܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ       </p>	<p>         ܐܠܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ       </p>
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240. *Ibid.*, 674:1-6.

<p>         ܐܠܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ       </p>	<p>         ܐܠܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ          ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ       </p>
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241. See *Ibid.*, 677:10-680:17. Jacob of Sarug portrays the repentant thief as the only person who professed his faith in Christ on the cross, whereas everyone else, including all his disciples and all the angels, abandoned him. No one dared to come near him, not even Mary, his mother. Trembling and afraid, they all watched from afar this horrible event.



Not only does Jesus welcome the thief into his kingdom but also sends him on a mission. He instructs him to deliver the Good News, greet the angels with peace, and announce the return of Adam to Eden. Once counted among the evil doers, this criminal was transformed by Jesus into an apostle.

The evil ones numbered him (the thief) Among wicked men.  
He (Jesus) captured one [of them],  
gave him the keys, and made him an apostle inside of Paradise.  
Where it was necessary, he transformed water into wine,  
and where he desired, [he made of] a thief an heir of Eden.<sup>245</sup>

Jesus gives the thief the key of light (مَكْبِلُ، بَيْزُ) or key of fire (مَكْبِلُ، بَيْزُ), which he will need to open the lock of fire of the gate to Eden. “He received the key, the word of the Son, to the lock of fire, and an imperial rescript which he wrote in his (the Son’s) life-giving blood was in his right hand.”<sup>246</sup> Armed with this key and an imperial rescript, the criminal heads to heaven. Blocked by the cherub, the penitent robber shows the angel what Jesus gave him on the cross, his pass into Paradise.

Behold, O angel, the key of fire (مَكْبِلُ، بَيْزُ) to the lock of fire,  
which the King sent from the top of the cross (*lit.* wood). See if it opens [the lock].  
He gave me the key, the imperial rescript, and life. Then I came to Eden.  
Since I am armed with the mysteries of the Lord, I am not afraid.<sup>247</sup>

It is only when the repentant thief presents to the angel “... the key, the imperial rescript of life, which the King gave me and the garments which baptism in his life-giving blood weaved,”<sup>248</sup> does the fiery cherub welcome

245. “HSJS IV,” 167:15-18.

✦ ܡܝܝܘܬ ܕܗ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ	ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ
✦ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ	ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ

246. “HSJS V,” 670:15-16.

✦ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ	ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ
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247. *Ibid.*, 676:16-19.

✦ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ	ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ
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248. *Ibid.*, 680:16-17.

✦ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ	ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ
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him in Eden. The thief becomes an heir of the kingdom, the murderer takes delight in life, and Adam finally returns to Eden.

The child of fire saw the imperial rescript of his Lord, bowed down before it,  
and received it with the blazing wing while marveling.  
Come, enter Eden, the place of light, which Adam deserted.  
Enter and join the glorious company of the children of light.  
Come, thief, be comforted in the place of light,  
and desirable waves shall wash away dust and weariness from you.  
A splendid sun befits you that you might be comforted by it,  
for behold heaven and earth are stupefied at your courage.  
There, [you were] a thief, but here, [you are] an heir of the Kingdom.  
There, [you were] a murderer, but here, you take delight in life.<sup>249</sup>

## 4.6 Conclusion

Jacob of Sarug usage of plantation imagery in connection with the Church is in line with the Christian Syriac tradition he inherited. The symbols of a vineyard, a fig tree, and an olive tree represent both Israel and the Church.

Jacob of Sarug uses the image of a vine-plant to represent humanity, whose representative is Adam. His use of this symbolism is in line with Old Testament vineyard imagery and the Johannine Vine. He likens God to a gardener and Adam to a vine-plant planted in the Eden. This grapevine grew and became a vineyard with many vine-plants. That presents an image of the true Vine, Jesus Christ, whose vineyard is the Church, and whose branches are her members.

Jesus Christ is the source of the sacramental life of the Church. For Jacob of Sarug, both an olive tree and a grape cluster represent Christ. Just as the olive tree and the grape cluster are the sources of oil used in baptisms and wine needed for the celebration of the Eucharist respectively, so the Lord is

249. *Ibid.*, 680:18-681:6.

[illegible]

the sources of all the mysteries of the Church. Golgotha plays a major role in imagery. On the cross, Jesus revealed himself to be the fountainhead of these mysteries when water and blood gushed out of his side. The Crucified is the Tree of Life planted in the middle of paradise. By his crucifixion, the Tree of Life uprooted the tree of knowledge and presented its fruits for the salvation of humanity.

The Tree of Life plants itself in the sanctuary of the Church, and grants priests its fruits to distribute to the congregation. The fruits are a symbol of the Eucharistic species, which means that Jesus Christ, the Lord, is wholly in the midst of the Church, which makes her Eden on earth.

Ezekiel's vision of the fiery Chariot mimics the Church's celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The Chariot symbolizes the sanctuary in which the altar stands. The burning coals point to the Eucharistic species. It is not the priest, but the Holy Spirit who transforms the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The Chariot reflects the Church, the Garden of Eden on earth in whose midst is the Son of God.

The keys Peter received from Christ present the continuity of God's message and redemptive plan through sacred history. They accompanied humanity since the beginning. They were in Israel's possession, and Israel handed them to the Church. The keys are Jesus Christ himself. He accompanied Israel on its journey out of slavery to freedom. It lost its privilege when it crucified him and passed the torch to the younger Church who accepted him on the cross.

Jacob of Sarug does not understand the key in a juridical sense. He understands them as a symbol of authority and of transferring this power. Peter does not have exclusive control of the keys, for all the Apostles have them in their possessions, and priests also hold the keys of Peter to celebrate the mysteries of the Church. The key is a symbol of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the key-holder uses them for the benefit of God's people. Surprisingly, the key makes an apostle of a thief and grant him entrance into paradise.





wedding ceremony. Notwithstanding her betrothal to her Liberator, she commits adultery with a golden calf on her wedding night. In consequence of this abominable act, God repudiates her and ultimately chooses the Church in her stead.<sup>4</sup> This espousal scenario Ephrem envisioned could have been the source of Jacob's *minro* entitled *On the Descent of the Most High on Mt. Sinai and the Mystery of the Church* (ܡܝܨܪܝܢ ܕܡܬܝܢ ܥܠ ܡܬܢ ܫܝܢܐܝܝܐ : ܡܬܝܢ ܥܠ ܡܬܝܢ ܕܡܝܨܪܝܢ).<sup>5</sup>

The biblical event of God coming down on Mt. Sinai (see Ex 19) begs the question why the Almighty chose to descend. Jacob of Sarug explains that the Mighty One intends to marry humanity.

Consider the Mighty One, who contains the uttermost edges [of the universe].

What reason called him to come down on Mt. Sinai?

His compassion attracted him to humanity that he be allied to it in marriage.

He came in his love to betroth and take [in marriage] the daughter of earthly beings.

He desired the synagogue, the Daughter of the Just, because of her race that he wed the stock of the house of Abraham.

He saw the little girl when the Egyptians were mocking her —the Holy One has not abhorred the harlot [yet].

He sent after the abused one to return her to him that, by his intimacy [with her], the Daughter of the Righteous be sanctified.

He appointed Moses as a marriage broker and sent him to her that he, as a mediator, descend [to and] make a covenant with her.

He gave him strength and might [see Sir 45:2] when he (Moses) descended that he (Moses) entice her with wondrous [deeds] to ascend with him.

The Levite descended, performed stupendous [feats],<sup>6</sup> led her away and ascended.<sup>7</sup>

He placed on her finger<sup>8</sup> the ring he received from the [burning] bush.<sup>9</sup>

He betrothed her to the Name of the Holy One and left Egypt.

Entrusted with the household of God, he guarded her.

He placed on her head the crown of salvation, left [Egypt] with her, and called on the creatures to extol her with their harps.<sup>10</sup>

4. See *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Paschahymnen*, ed. Edmund Beck, CSCO, vol. 248-249, *Scriptores Syri* 108-109 (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1964), 85-89 (Syriac), 68-70 (German).

5. See "HSJS I," 3-38.

6. See Ex 7-11; 14:10-31.

7. See Ex 12:31-42.

8. *Lit. hand.*

9. See Ex 3:2-3.

10. "HSJS I," 6:13-7:13.



the woman is the one who is bought or <sup>12</sup>ܡܚܬܒܐ in Syriac. However, by the time of the Jacob of Sarug, the Syriac noun <sup>13</sup>ܡܚܬܒܐ was used exclusively in the sense of betrothing and marrying. The betrothed or bride was also called <sup>14</sup>ܡܚܬܒܐ in reference to the crowning or marriage ceremony.<sup>13</sup> The marriage broker (ܡܚܬܒܐ) is the matchmaker, the one who introduces the bridegroom to the bride and her family.

The marriage broker's mission is to guide God's people, the Betrothed, to him, her Fiancé - the offensive title harlot or adulteress (ܡܚܬܒܐ) anticipates the Bride's rejection of her Bridegroom and the kind of the revolting transgression she will have committed. Moses, additionally, presents her with a ring from the burning bush (see Ex 3) and places on her head a crown of salvation, an image reflecting the wedding ceremony. Despite the fact that the biblical event of the burning bush does not refer to a ring nor a crown, they are, according to the reckoning of Jacob of Sarug, God's gifts to his Bride, and symbolize betrothal, marriage, fidelity and the promise of salvation. The bishop of Batnan further employs these nuptial tropes to speak of Christ and his Church, the Daughter of the Nations, thus describing Christ Jesus's redemptive deeds for the sake of the entire human race.

The Bridegroom sends Moses down to the land of the Pharaohs to betroth and bring the Bride, the Hebrew Nation, to him to Sinai, the place where the wedding shall occur. Jacob of Sarug envisions the Israelites' journey to Sinai as a grand bridal procession, during which creation as a whole ministers and joyously and joyfully accompanies the Bride to her Beloved, the Holy One.

Horeb [see Ex 3:1] received her (the Bride) and brought forth unusual gifts.  
The desert bowed down to her, along with its offerings, when she entered it.  
The entire creation was aware of [the One] to whom she was betrothed.  
Also, creatures of every kind came to join it in celebrating.  
Every element bore wedding gifts and came before her.

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12. It is the passive participle of the verb <sup>15</sup>ܡܚܬܒܐ.

13. On the different Syriac terms referring to bridal imagery and employed by the Syriac Fathers, see *Ibid.*, 7-8, 11-12; Murray, "Symbols," 132.

All the while they were crowding together to go with her to the Holy One.  
 A formidable column of light<sup>14</sup> hastened to shine brightly before her,  
 and, like a lamp for a bride, accompanied and traveled with her.  
 Gifts from creatures accompanied her daily.  
 Meanwhile, she boasted the finest provisions.  
 The height assuaged her with manna it sent to her,  
 and the depth fed her quail it offered to her [see Ex 16].  
 Blessed water flowed out a rock for her [see Ex 17:1-7],  
 and creatures of every kind nourished the pretentious one.  
 Every creature assembled to go with her  
 that the world see the great wedding banquet held for her.  
 She was led by her fellow-servants to Sinai  
 and arrived at the place where her Lord has revealed to her.<sup>15</sup>

As invitees to this glorious wedding feast, God's creatures bring their peculiar wedding-presents to honor the Bride on account of their Creator, the Bridegroom. These bridal gifts, referring to the wonders that took place during the Israelites' wandering in the desert, are unusual, since they occur miraculously. They allude to the column of fire, and by extension, to the column of cloud which shows the Bride the way through the desert (see Ex 13:21). Furthermore, they insinuate the manna and quail which feed the hungry Nation (see Ex 16) and the water which flowed out the rock in the wasteland and satiated the thirst of God's Fiancée (see Ex 17:1-7). The Bride and her retinue finally arrive at Sinai, the place her heavenly Spouse reveals.

Moses leaves Israel encamped in front of Mt. Sinai, and he goes up the mountain of God (see Ex 19:2-3). Once Moses reaches its summit, the Almighty addresses him and sets down the covenant he wishes to establish between him and his Bride (see Hos 2:21-22). This covenant is the marital

14. See Ex 13:21.

15. "HSJS I," 7:18-8:14.

<p>           * מַחְבֵּה כֹהֵן יִחְבֵּהוּ כֹהֵן חֵם מִן הַמַּחְבֵּה            * הָאֵלֹהִים יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ חֲסִידָיו כֹּהֵן חֵם            * כֹּהֵן שֹׁמֵר יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ וְיִשְׁמְרוּהוּ כֹהֵן חֵם            * הָאֵלֹהִים יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ חֲסִידָיו כֹּהֵן חֵם            * כֹּהֵן שֹׁמֵר יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ וְיִשְׁמְרוּהוּ כֹהֵן חֵם            * הָאֵלֹהִים יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ חֲסִידָיו כֹּהֵן חֵם            * כֹּהֵן שֹׁמֵר יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ וְיִשְׁמְרוּהוּ כֹהֵן חֵם            * הָאֵלֹהִים יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ חֲסִידָיו כֹּהֵן חֵם            * כֹּהֵן שֹׁמֵר יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ וְיִשְׁמְרוּהוּ כֹהֵן חֵם         </p>	<p>           מַחְבֵּה כֹהֵן יִחְבֵּהוּ כֹהֵן חֵם מִן הַמַּחְבֵּה :            * הָאֵלֹהִים יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ חֲסִידָיו כֹּהֵן חֵם            * כֹּהֵן שֹׁמֵר יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ וְיִשְׁמְרוּהוּ כֹהֵן חֵם            * הָאֵלֹהִים יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ חֲסִידָיו כֹּהֵן חֵם            * כֹּהֵן שֹׁמֵר יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ וְיִשְׁמְרוּהוּ כֹהֵן חֵם            * הָאֵלֹהִים יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ חֲסִידָיו כֹּהֵן חֵם            * כֹּהֵן שֹׁמֵר יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ וְיִשְׁמְרוּהוּ כֹהֵן חֵם            * הָאֵלֹהִים יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ חֲסִידָיו כֹּהֵן חֵם            * כֹּהֵן שֹׁמֵר יִשְׁמְרוּהוּ וְיִשְׁמְרוּהוּ כֹהֵן חֵם         </p>
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bond between God and his people, the foundations of this martial relationship, and the condition for the wedding to take place.

Her marriage arranger, Moses, left her (the Bride) in front of the mountain and ascended [Ex 19:2-3]  
to find out when the Bridegroom is coming to meet her.  
He heard the Hidden One commanding him, "Go down and say to the Bride I saved and brought out of Egypt [see Ex 19:3, 20:2].  
'Behold I bore you as if on eagle's wings in the air [see Ex 19:4] and carried you uninjured through regions.  
Let us remain in love<sup>16</sup> and establish a covenant between us.  
Hereupon, I shall come to marry you in holiness.  
Before the wedding feast, I shall make known to you my entire will.  
If you agree with me, come to the wedding banquet because I desire you.  
I seek you for pure company that you be with me when you do not submit yourself to infidelity with another.  
I shall make you dwell in my hope for ever.  
Again, you shall not be attracted to another that he come in unto you.  
I shall take you in holiness now if you are mine.  
However, if you act lewdly with foreigners, I shall repudiate you.  
I shall find in you neither the abhorrent sign of adulterers nor the ways found in a deceiver.  
You shall not show me vile signs of licentious women.  
You shall not go about the guile of lasciviousness.  
You shall bow [your] head to no one except to me [Ex 20:5].  
Hereafter you shall not have another covenant.  
Be holy, venerable, chaste and unblemished, distinguished, pure, unsullied, [and] clean in every way.  
You shall be vigorous, safe, and clean, serene and calm, pure, watchful, placid, becoming, and undefiled.  
Also, if you thus come to me with unveiled face [see 2 Cor 3:18], you shall be the sovereign mistress of all I have.  
I shall give you a great diadem, a band for kings.  
I shall place within you holiness, the treasure of priests [see Ex 19:6].  
Prophets revealing hidden [things] shall belong to you.  
Priests, forgivers of debts, shall dwell among you.  
Behold Levites like messengers shall accompany you, and ministers in the appearance of servants shall escort you.  
The heaven is a throne. Its hoarfrost thickly [sprinkled] over your ground.<sup>17</sup>  
The land shall increase the choice produce before you.  
The air shall sprinkle your encampment with every delight.  
The sun shall make sweet fruits ripe for your nourishment.  
You shall take possession of the land of all kings who wage war against you.  
You shall not be conquered by mighty men who attack your country.

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16. See Jn 15:9; 1 Jn 4:16.

17. See Ex 16:13-14.

The Bridegroom sent this covenant at the hands of Moses that he descend to see if the Bride would agree with the Bridegroom [see Ex 19:7].<sup>18</sup>

18. "HSJS I," 8:15-10:20.

سَبَّحَهُ مَعَهُمَا كَذَمًا لَهْؤًا مَحْفَوفًا دَهْشَمَ :  
 مَكَمَ كَيْسًا وَجَحَقَ كَدَ وَمَا هَاذَ كَدَ :  
 مَا أَهَقَلَدَ آبَ وَخَا رَفَتَ نَعْمًا حَاوًا :  
 نَهَدَا حَسَاوًا لَمَّا لَبَسَ كَدَ أَفَ كَحَ :  
 مَبَرَّ مَعْدَةً لَأَ كَدَ نَحَسَ مَهْ يَ إِنَّا كَحَ :  
 حَتَمًا وَمَا حُتْنَا كَحَ وَأَمَقَ نِزَابَ :  
 حَبَمًا حَكَمَ خَا قَدَا يَدَ مَهَامَ إِنَّا كَحَ :  
 مَبْعَامَ نَهَمَ إِنَّا كَحَ أَا هَا وَوَكَّ أَيْدَ :  
 لَا أَسَا كَحَ أَلَا هَسَدًا وَكَسَدًا :  
 لَا لَمَقَ كَا وَمَا مَعَدًا وَكَتَدًا :  
 هَبَّ أَقَا لَامَ لَا لَمَقَ أَلَا أَا كَا :  
 هَا مَبْعَا صَبَا نَحَمًا هَا مَعَدًا :  
 لَمَقَ سَرَا لَمَّا هَا مَعَدًا هَا مَعَدًا :  
 هَا مَعَدًا كَحَدًا أَلَا لَمَ نِزَابَ :  
 أَلَا وَكَا سَامًا وَحَقًا كَحَ هَا إِنَّا :  
 كَحًا وَكَحَ خَا قَتَدًا وَكَحَ نَهَدًا :  
 هَا كَحَتَا آبَ وَهَسَا نَاكَا كَحَمَ :  
 مَعَدًا لَاهُ مَهَمَ لَكَا كَا وَجَمَ وَهَسَلَدًا :  
 أَوَّ نَاكَا خَا كَادًا خَا مَعْبَدًا :  
 أَلَا وَبَا أَوَّحَا وَكَدَا مَحَلًا وَوَبَ كَحَمَ :  
 لَاهَسَبَ حَقَمَ كَحًا مَهْ نَوَا وَوَهَّ أَوَّحَا :  
 كَدَا أَتَبَ مَحَلَّحَ إِنَّا كَحَ كَحَمَ وَوَكَّ :  
 نُمَا مَعَدًا هَا نَسَدًا حَاتَبَ مَعَدًا :

declaring his salvific deeds (see Ex 20:2; Dt 6). Remaining unblemished has its rewards: the Bride is set to inherit and rule over all that God possesses. To validate her sovereignty, God will crown her. Moreover, he will establish priests for the forgiveness of sins, and prophets for revealing the hidden truths in her midst. Nature will be at her service by providing her with the finest provisions. She will capture the lands of any king who wages war against her, and she will subjugate the rulers of the earth under her heel. God sends Moses down with the covenant to the Bride that he ask for her consent.

The mediator, the son of the Hebrews, descended from the mountaintop and summoned the leaders and rulers of the house of Jacob.  
 He repeated the precepts of the Bridegroom verbatim before them [asking]<sup>19</sup> if they would agree to the marriage settlement he established. Lest perhaps they would not.  
 They answered him kindly while rejoicing in it,  
 “We agree to your mediation, our teacher, Moses.  
 The Bridegroom rightly desires our daughter in holiness.  
 We wish that that race would unite to our race!  
 We are insignificant. Which Bridegroom has been chosen for us?  
 Whence is he that he become related to us in marriage? Great is the blessing!  
 Behold the girl we reared in the house of the Egyptians is before you.  
 Inquire of her [if she would accept] the marriage settlement your Lord has made.”  
 Moses summoned her to ask [her] before the elders.  
 Rejoicing, she gave her word<sup>20</sup> to go with him [see Ex 19:8].  
 The Levite heard that she offered herself willingly.  
 So rejoicing, he returned to his Lord to inform him,  
 “My Lord, the girl accepted our agreement as we had desired her,  
 and does not refuse to live<sup>21</sup> in holiness.  
 Behold she agreed with me to the benevolent marriage settlement as you instructed me.  
 If she is faithful as she says, she will not be seduced.”<sup>22</sup>

19. See Ex 19:7

20. *Lit.* she gave her mouth

21. *Lit.* to exist *or* be

22. “*HSJS I*,” 10:21-11:19.

❖ ַמִּלְחָמָהּ וְחֵלְהָ וְחֵלְהָ ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ❖ וְאֵל מְחַיֶּה מֵתִים חֲלֵלָהּ וְחָבֵר אֶל וְחֵלְהָ לָא  
 ❖ וְחֵלְהָ לָא ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ❖ ַמִּלְחָמָהּ ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ❖ ַמִּלְחָמָהּ ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ❖ ַמִּלְחָמָהּ ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ❖ ַמִּלְחָמָהּ ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ❖ ַמִּלְחָמָהּ ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר

ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר  
 ַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר



The Bride's consent means that Israel intends to follow God's precepts faithfully. It will obey God, and keep his covenant (see Ex 19:5). In nuptial terms, it is the marriage contract signed by the bridal parties. The wedding can only proceed once both sides agree to the stipulations of the matrimonial contract. Therefore, Israel's acceptance of this relationship is of utmost importance. The words of the prophet Jeremiah expresses it best, "They shall be my people, and I will be their God" (Jer 32:38; see also Jer 24:7, 31:33). For this unity to become a reality, Israel has to consent that God is its God and that it is his people, for God does not force himself upon others and is the gentlest of all even if he is the Omnipotent. For this reason, Moses summons the elders of the people to inform them of God's will: God desires to establish an intimate relationship between him and them. The most intimate of all relations is that of the nuptial unity. He yearns to make of them *his* Nation, *his* bride. Once Moses announces God's terms, Israel unanimously responds that it will do everything the Lord has ordained (see Ex 19:8). This resounding 'yes' by which Israel accepts God's precepts is analogous to a bride consents to be united in marriage to her bridegroom. Now God can come down, as Israel has accepted the terms of the wedding.

Before a marriage takes place, a bride prepares herself to be suitable for the groom. In this context, Israel must be undefiled to receive in purity her heavenly Bridegroom. Therefore, God commissions Moses to return to Israel, and instruct the Nation to cleanse itself.

He (God) responded to Moses again and said to him, "Return to her.  
Go down, adorn her both externally and internally [see Ex 19:10].  
On the outside, let her wear elegant white garments to be radiant in them.  
On the inside, [let her have] thoughts of holiness to be beautiful due to them.  
Let her purify herself mystically for me today and tomorrow [see Ex 19:10],  
and, on the third [day], I shall come to her in power [see Ex 19:11]."  
Moses went down and began to adorn the bride.  
He was wearied and enfeebled after he admonished the troubled one,

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<p>         * מִכָּן מִיָּדָה וְעַד מִבְּטֵן יִבְרָכֶם יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁמְרָה כֵּן *          * וְלֹא תִהְיֶה אֵלָּה מִכָּן וְעַד מִבְּטֵן כְּבִיעָמֶל *          * וְלֹא תִהְיֶה אֵלָּה מִכָּן וְעַד מִבְּטֵן כְּבִיעָמֶל *       </p>	<p>         מִכָּן מִיָּדָה וְעַד מִבְּטֵן יִבְרָכֶם יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ :          מִכָּן מִיָּדָה וְעַד מִבְּטֵן יִבְרָכֶם יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ :          וְלֹא תִהְיֶה אֵלָּה מִכָּן וְעַד מִבְּטֵן כְּבִיעָמֶל :       </p>
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As seen above God comes down on Mt. Sinai to marry Israel, yet this is not the only reason. He does not want to allow Israel any pretext for rejecting him.

The matter urged him to bend his Majesty over Mount Sinai  
that the Synagogue be united to him on account of the astonishing vision.  
If he had not descended, she would have said after [committing] adultery,  
“Since I do not see him, how would I look for him?”  
Since one could well make up an occasion for pretenses in this way,  
a word issued forth, “Behold the Lord is coming down on the mountain.”<sup>31</sup>  
[...]  
He stretched out the cloud, a lined veil, and encircled the mountain [with it].  
As if he were inside of it (the cloud), he encircled the entire (mountain) [with  
it].  
He spread out dark clouds<sup>32</sup> like veils on all sides [of the mountain],  
as glory on their outside, for he was inside of them.<sup>33</sup>  
He lit rays of light through the air as lamps  
as if it were truly shining [like fire] in front of him in his honor.  
Also, he did not thus allow an occasion for pretenses,  
and, as if in truth, he did not give the daughter of Abraham a reason.<sup>34</sup>

The astonishing vision refers to the majestic scene with thunder, lightning, fire, the dark cloud, the loud blast of the shofar, and the mountain trembling violently (see Ex 19:16, 18-19). It manifests God’s majesty and is also meant to enchant the Synagogue to accept God’s marriage proposal, i.e., to remain faithful to him. Moreover, this spectacular sight provides Israel, who, or for that matter, anyone, is not allowed to see God face to face, with the necessary “audiovisual” spectacle manifesting God’s presence on the mountain. As a result, the Bride will be unable to excuse herself after having

31. See Ex 19:9; 11.

32. See Ex 19:18.

33. Reading *וְהָיָה כְּעָנָן*. See “HSJS I,” 23, footnote 4.

34. *Ibid.*, 22:14-19, 23:8-15.

<p>וְהָיָה כְּעָנָן כִּי יִשְׁכַּח חֲסִידָא וְיִשְׁכַּח          וְכִי לֹא שָׂא כִּי אֲשַׁחֲלֵה אֶת אֶהְיָ כִּי          וְעַתָּה מְחַלְלָא וְהָאֵל כִּי מְחַלְלָא חֲסִידָא</p>	<p>חֲסִידָא מְחַלְלָא וְיִשְׁכַּח חֲסִידָא וְיִשְׁכַּח          וְכִי לֹא שָׂא כִּי אֲשַׁחֲלֵה אֶת אֶהְיָ כִּי          וְעַתָּה מְחַלְלָא וְהָאֵל כִּי מְחַלְלָא חֲסִידָא</p>
<p>אֶת מֶלֶךְ וְהָאֵל כִּי חֲסִידָא מְחַלְלָא          אֶת אֶהְיָ כִּי חֲסִידָא מְחַלְלָא וְיִשְׁכַּח          אֶת מֶלֶךְ וְהָאֵל כִּי חֲסִידָא מְחַלְלָא          וְכִי לֹא שָׂא כִּי אֲשַׁחֲלֵה אֶת אֶהְיָ כִּי</p>	<p>חֲסִידָא מְחַלְלָא וְיִשְׁכַּח חֲסִידָא וְיִשְׁכַּח          וְכִי לֹא שָׂא כִּי אֲשַׁחֲלֵה אֶת אֶהְיָ כִּי          וְעַתָּה מְחַלְלָא וְהָאֵל כִּי מְחַלְלָא חֲסִידָא          וְכִי לֹא שָׂא כִּי אֲשַׁחֲלֵה אֶת אֶהְיָ כִּי</p>

committed adultery saying she has not seen him, yet the ultimate betrayal occurs: the Bride commits adultery on her wedding night!

The glorious manifestation on Mt. Sinai has the opposite effect on the Bride. She fears what is happening on the mountaintop, thus rejecting the Bridegroom categorically. Instead of captivating her, the spectacle scares her and alienates her to the extent that she substitutes Moses for God (see Ex 20:18-21).

The Mighty One descended, dwelt on the mountain, in the manner he descended.

Moses descended to summon the Bride to come to him (the Mighty One).

[...]

The sounds shook her, lightning terrified her, thunder shouted at her, and the visions so scared her that she was not able to endure [them].<sup>35</sup>

The Bridegroom began to talk her solemnly.

She, however, did not accept to listen to him pleasantly.

She cried out to Moses, "You are humble [see Nm 12:3], speak to me.

The voice of the Lord is driving me away to the place of death."

The voice of the Holy One did not please the adulteress.

Therefore, she shrank from purity because of her wickedness.

She asked Moses to relay to her the word of the Bridegroom,

for it was easy for her to clash presumptuously with him.

Since the sounds out of Mount Sinai did not satisfy her,

she cried out if it got stronger [than the fire already is], she would be on fire.

She said to that humble one (Moses), "You talk to me,"

for she knew he could be insulted and would not complain.

She asked him to speak to her to mistreat him

and answer him with troublesome sounds of doubt.

The sound thundering from Sinai was not easy for her [to bear],

for she could neither quarrel nor murmur before its power.

She called Moses, who was enfeebled because of her madness,

for she was confident that if he were harsh, it would be easy to cause his death.

The voice of the Lion that roared and made Sinai quake terrified her.

She desired that the lamb, Moses, would answer her softly.

The scream of the Eagle shook up the detestable vulture.

She asked for the nestling laid between her talons.

She abhorred the sound that shakes mountains

and longed for Moses's speech impediment [Ex 4:10-12, 6:12].

The sounding horn from the summit of the air shook her up,

and she coveted to hear the speech of the tongue-tied because it delighted her.

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35. See Ex 19:16; 20:18-21.



she would not have chosen Moses's speech over that of the Hidden One.  
 If she had not loathed the face of the Bridegroom,  
 she would not have dreaded his intimacy when she received him.  
 If her heart had not loved her corruptor,  
 she would have allowed the Bridegroom of Truth to talk to her.  
 If she had been pure, why was she was in awe of the Holy One.  
 It was revealed to her that she was in filth. So, she was ashamed.  
 She realized that the hour of the Bridegroom seeking the truth approached  
 and it revealed her secret that she is lewd toward the one raising her.  
 She called on Moses to speak to her according to her will  
 thinking that her adultery could be concealed,  
 "You, O humble one, talk to me," she said to him,  
 "Let God silence his sounds because they shake me up."  
 Moses soothes and encourages her as a little girl,  
 "He wants to test you. Do not be afraid of the powerful One!  
 [He desires to] make a marriage settlement and ascend to his sublime abode.  
 Enter into a covenant with him, and behold his thundering voice will be  
 silenced.  
 Come and find out to whom I have betrothed you lest I be ashamed.  
 See how much his creatures revere his *Shekinah*!<sup>38</sup>

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38. *Shekinah* —transliteration of a Hebrew word, which originally meant "the one who dwells" or "that which dwells"— is not a biblical term, yet it found its way in post-biblical Jewish literature. Old Testament passages describing God as dwelling among a people or in a particular place (see Gn 9:27; Ex 25:8; 29:45,46; Nm 5:3; 1 Kgs 6:13; Ps 68:16; 74:2; Is 8:18; Ez 43:7-9; Jl 3:17-21; Zec 2:10,11) provide the source for the later use of the term *Shekinah*. God's habitation is both the heavens and the earth. In the Targums and rabbinic literature, it means God's radiance, glory, or presence in the temple, the midst of his people, or the world, and it signifies God himself. However, in later Rabbinic sources, *Shekinah* develops into a separate entity created by God and becomes understood as an intermediary between God and man. The New Testament authors do not use the term *Shekinah*, but they ascribe it to Christ as divine (see Mk 8:38; 10:37; 13:26; Lk 9:32; Jn 1:14; 2:11; 11:4) and associate it with light, and glory (see Lk 2:9; 9:29; Acts 9:3-6; 22:6-11; 26:12; 2 Pt 1:16-18). Also, Paul identifies Jesus Christ as the *Shekinah* of God (see Col 1:19; 2:9). (See BEB, s.v. "Shekinah;" NBD 1997, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., s.v. "Shekinah;" NIDB, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. "Shekinah;" Martin McNamara, "Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible: A Light on the New Testament," (2010), 148-152.) The Syriac term ܫܝܬܝܢ for *Shekinah* occurs several times in the Old Testament rendition of the *Peshitta* and is a translation of various Hebrew and Greeks words. In the writings of the Syriac Church Fathers, *Shekinah* appears in relation to a place, and an object, or a person. Cerbelaud calls it the *Christian Shekinah* to distinguish it from the *Jewish Shekinah*. The *Christian Shekinah* refers to such locations as the highest heavens, Sheol, the burning bush, the summit of Mt. Sinai, Mt Zion, the desert, the temple of Jerusalem, and the fiery Chariot Ezekiel saw. It is attached to objects such as the Temple of Jerusalem, the fiery Chariot Ezekiel saw, the Arch of the Covenant, the cross of Jesus as an object of adoration, and the Christian Churches and their altars. It is also attached to God, heavenly beings, people such as Moses, the Just in the Old Testament, and the Christian priests, and to the entire Nation of Israel. The *Christian Shekinah* is





The wedding-guests are reclining [at table], the worlds are rejoicing, [and]  
the marriage feast is prepared,  
but the deceiver refuses the wedding.  
The scribe stands, bearing a pen to write up the covenant,  
and the Bridegroom is waiting to throw in the world to [her] marriage  
portion.<sup>40</sup>

The Bride whom God desires shuns him and rebuffs his covenant. She desires the intimacy of a handmade calf and rejects being united with the Lord of the universe who had promised her the world as her marriage portion. Indeed, “the Daughter of Abraham then treated this Bridegroom with contempt, since the calf’s [intimate] companion [see Ex 32:1-29] was not contented with his (Bridegroom’s) intimacy.”<sup>41</sup> God, therefore, repudiates her due to her lewd act. “You did not retain the one you betrothed in the Sinai region [...] After you had loved the assembly of the Nation, it committed adultery with a calf.”<sup>42</sup>

Abraham’s progeny refuses the Lord, who comes down on Mt. Sinai although he is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (see Ex 3:6), who appeared to Moses in the burning bush (see Ex 3:2) and commissioned him to rescue Israel from the Egyptian’s grip.

He (God) was on the mountain, in the heights and everything,  
on the chariot [see Ez 1:26], and in the bush [see Ex 3:2] and every region.  
He showed the form of a fire-blaze on the mountaintop  
to prepare in an astonishing way the marriage feast among earthly beings.  
He desired to show the Daughter of Abraham a marvelous vision  
and enchant in an amazing way the Bride to direct her sight toward him.  
[...]  
He showed the form of a fire-blaze on the mountainside  
to bind her in a holy manner to his union with marvelous [visions].

40. *Ibid.*, 27:16-21.

<p> ❖ <span>חַנּוּכָּה מַעֲבִיר מַחְלָה בְּעֵינֵי מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה בְּרִישׁ</span>  <span>וְעֵינֵי מַחְלָה בְּרִישׁ מַעֲבָרָה בְּרִישׁ מַעֲבָרָה בְּרִישׁ</span>  <span>וְעֵינֵי מַחְלָה בְּרִישׁ מַעֲבָרָה בְּרִישׁ מַעֲבָרָה בְּרִישׁ</span> </p>	<p> מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה :  מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה :  מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה מַעֲבָרָה : </p>
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41. *Ibid.*, 28:1-2.

<p>❖ <span>וְחַנּוּכָּה לֹא וְחַנּוּכָּה לֹא וְחַנּוּכָּה לֹא וְחַנּוּכָּה לֹא</span></p>	<p>חַנּוּכָּה לֹא וְחַנּוּכָּה לֹא וְחַנּוּכָּה לֹא וְחַנּוּכָּה לֹא :</p>
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42. *Ibid.*, 4:3, 5.

חַנּוּכָּה וְחַנּוּכָּה וְחַנּוּכָּה וְחַנּוּכָּה וְחַנּוּכָּה : [...] :  
חַנּוּכָּה וְחַנּוּכָּה וְחַנּוּכָּה וְחַנּוּכָּה וְחַנּוּכָּה :

Although the Lover of Adultery approached to come to him,  
she refused to listen to his teaching.  
Since Moses placated her that she be utterly quiet for a moment [see Ex 20:20]  
until the contract with her has been ratified, and the Bridegroom has  
ascended.  
While the *Shekinah* on the mountain was astonishingly smoldering,  
the Lord called the chosen one, Moses, to come to Him.  
The voice as a messenger went out to Moses  
that he enter, and ratify the contract with him (God) in the dark clouds.  
He entered the cloud to ascend to the Holy One,  
and the voice hastened to prepare for him a flamelike path.  
He lifted up before him the curtain of the clouds [see Ex 20:21; Sir 45:5]  
that he enter to see the Bridegroom<sup>43</sup> in his glory where he is.  
The command went out, cut a path for him through the dark clouds  
that the immense brilliance out of Sinai not terrify him.  
Moses entered the bed-chamber of the Bridegroom-King  
to learn his mysteries and bring the Bride to the Holy One.  
He entered, learned [his mysteries], and went out to lead her [to God] as  
commanded  
that she approach and hear the teaching of the house of God.  
He did not persuade her to enter the bridal chamber, for she was impure.  
She stood outside listening and learning the will of the Bridegroom [see Ex  
20:21].<sup>44</sup>

Jacob of Sarug identifies the One who comes down on Mt. Sinai with  
the figure that looks like a human being sitting on the likeness of a throne  
above the firmament over the heads of the angels carrying the chariot of fire  
(see Ez 1:26). Since this image typically refers to Christ, it indicates that the

43. For Moses speaking to God face to face, see Ex 33:11; Nm 12:8; Dt 34:10; Sir 45:4-5.

44. "HSJS I," 32:11-16, 32:21-33:21.

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Jacob of Sarug interprets the mission Eliezer undertakes to fulfill the promise he made to Abraham as a depiction of the events occurring at the Jordan River at the hands of John the Baptist. The mission of Eliezer foreshadows that of John the Baptist, for finding a wife for the son of Abraham prefigures espousing a bride to the Son of God. Eliezer sees Rebekah at a well, and John the Baptist summons the daughter of Abraham, the daughter of Rebekah, to the Jordan River. Water, a shared detail connecting the two biblical stories, is once more a reference to washing, sanctification, and Christian baptism. Eliezer promises Rebekah in marriage to Isaac, and John the Baptist invites her daughter to marry Jesus Christ. Since Rebekah is a type of the Church, one could expect that her daughter is the Church. Surprisingly, her progeny in this citation is *not* the daughter of the Aramaeans but Israel. This interpretation indicates that God has not given up finding ways to reconcile the Hebrew Nation he saved from Egypt with himself. In the end, however, it will reject categorically the only-Begotten when she crucifies him.

Bridal imagery connects closely to baptism. In a language reminiscent of Jesus promising to make his disciples fishers of men (see Mt 4:19; Mk 1:17; Lk 5:10; Jn 21:11), Jacob of Sarug presents John the Baptist as a fisherman throwing his net into the water of the Jordan, thus linking fishing for men with baptism. Baptism is a visual sign of conversion. The Father sends John the Baptist to convert the daughter of Abraham. She responds and comes to be sanctified (see Mt 3:5-6; Mk 1:5; Lk 3:21). However, John's baptism is not complete. Jesus, who is mightier than he, shall perfect it with Spirit and fire (see Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16). Similar to Moses who prepares the daughter of Abraham for her marriage in the desert, now John prepares the daughter of Rebekah for her marriage in the wilderness. God commissions Moses and John to purify the Bride (see Ex 19:10; Lk 3:2). The former sanctifies her by washing (see Ex 19:14) so too does the latter by baptizing her. Thus, both



imperfect baptisms are preparations for the wedding which takes place when the perfected baptism with Spirit and fire occurs.

By exhorting the Bride to be like her mother, Rebekah, John calls her to be chaste and virgin, and to accept the Bridegroom whom she has not seen. Over against adultery are chastity and virginity. Once more, adultery implies worshiping and adoring idols, whereas virginity signifies being faithful to the one God and his commandments. Urging her to be chaste, John enjoins the daughter of Rebekah to reject false gods and not to repeat what had happened at Mt. Sinai. She is to denounce the Golden Calf (see Ex 32). The other way the Bride can be like her mother is by agreeing to this marriage although she has not met the Bridegroom. Before seeing Isaac and without knowing him, Rebekah accepts him as her husband. She consents to the wedding and leaves her homeland to join him (see Gn 24:58). The Bride Israel is now called upon to imitate Rebekah by accepting her Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, without knowing him, and to leave her earthly home and join him in his heavenly abode, for his dwelling place is up above in the heavens. The daughter of Rebekah does not pay heed to the admonitions of John the Baptist and ends up crucifying the Son. Consequently, Christ rejects the Daughter of Rebekah and chooses in her stead the Daughter of the Nations to be his Bride. Baptism is the means by which the Bride joins her Bridegroom and the two become one in spirit (see Gn 2:24; Mt 19:5; Mk 10:7-8; Eph 5:31).

If he (Isaac) had not served these types,  
his name and deed would not have been celebrated in the Pentateuch.  
If he had not depicted the type of the Church of the Nations  
as the Bride he betrothed, his story would not have been well known.  
Precious things are compared to ordinary things,  
and truths are proclaimed by simple things.  
The entirety of the book of Moses is a type of the one who understands,  
and using one thing it depicts,<sup>61</sup> another thing for the one who perceives.  
Eliezer was the type of John,  
and Isaac the figure of the mysteries of truths of the Son.  
The bride Rebekah portrayed the Church when she was betrothed:  
the former [was betrothed] out of the waters and the latter out of baptism.

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61. Reading ٢٤١



### 5.2.2 Betrothal in the Jordan

Like Moses before him, John the Baptist is only a marriage broker. Besides, the Apostles,<sup>67</sup> Paul,<sup>68</sup> and the bishops of the Church<sup>69</sup> fulfill the same function in the poetry of Jacob of Sarug. The marriage broker is not to be confused with the Bridegroom (see Jn 3:29): he is the herald who leads the Bride to and betroths her to Christ. That means that the bishops follow in the steps of Apostles and Paul. They are the go-betweens who call people to repentance, conversion, baptism, and redemption. Jacob of Sarug seem to address bishops as marriage-brokers but not priests. Thus, the titles itself implies apostolic successions.

John ran from the womb to the river  
as a voice [travels] from the mouth to the ear, and yet it does not touch [it].  
He (John) did not enter the bridal chamber of the Bridegroom to marry  
the Bride, whom he betrothed to his Lord, and he went away [see Jn  
3:29-30].<sup>70</sup>

67. See Mouterde, *"Deux Homélie Inédites,"* 12:1-2 (French), 26:5-6 (Syriac).  
 The Virgin [Church] says, "The Apostles betrothed me to the Son of God,  
 I know him, and let no one teach [me] who the Bridegroom is!"  
 68. See *"HSJS III,"* 604:12-13, 604:18-605:2.  
 Whose ring did Paul give me when he promised me in marriage [Eph 5:25-33],  
 and in whose name I abide [see Jn 15:7]? Is he now a human being or God?  
 [...]
- If he is a human being, I will not accept the ring from him,  
 for Paul betrothed me to God when he promised me in marriage.  
 Unless the Son of God is God,  
 why then did I renounce idols to become his own?
69. See *"HSJS IV,"* 793:15-16.  
 The shepherds promised the flock in marriage by the blood of its Lord  
 that it might be distinct through the desirable color of the crucifixion.
70. *"SM,"* 682:20-683:1.

The marriage broker is responsible for getting the bride ready for her wedding by cleansing her and then leading her to the Bridegroom. Washing the bride is a euphemism for calling her to repentance and conversion. The message of John the Baptist was clear, “Repent...” (see Mt 3:2), and the sign of this contrition is receiving his baptism (Mt 3:6). He instructs the Bride that her Bridegroom is a heavenly King and inflames her with his love, yet the Bridegroom’s identity remains concealed.

John came to betroth the Bride to the Son of God,  
 was ready to wash away her filth, and then she would be betrothed.  
 He brought her to the water and cleansed her with repentance  
 that she be clean. At that time, she would see the King-Bridegroom.  
 [John] purified her and removed from her the confusion of faces [see Dn  
 9:7-8]  
 that the Bridegroom, who delights in beauty, not see her filthy.  
 He made her clean and spotless with baptism  
 and then brought her sanctified to the wedding feast of the Bridegroom.  
 On that account, the Son of the Levites (John) hastened to the river  
 to prepare the Bride full of beauties.  
 He bathed her, purified her, sanctified her,  
 [and] made her glow that the Bridegroom might see her beautiful.  
 He announced to her the greatness of the King, her Lord,  
 and proclaimed incessantly to her that he is a heavenly Being.  
 He said to her, “I am neither worthy of nor equal to his sandals,”<sup>71</sup>  
 to exalt, by his humility, his Lord just as he was.  
 He loved the Bridegroom’s sandals more than his head<sup>72</sup>  
 that the Bride listen to and be proud of the One to whom she was betrothed.  
 While proclaiming to her, he taught her that he is from earth,  
 and taught her concerning his Lord that he is heavenly.  
 He inflamed her with his love daily that she wait for him.  
 The Bridegroom was concealed, and the Bride did not know who he was.<sup>73</sup>  
 She learned from John that he is mighty and glorified.  
 Christ was concealed, and creation was burning with his love to see him.  
 People were asking one another with great trembling,  
 “Where is he? Where is the one who was announced by John?”  
 While John resembled thunder [see Ex 19:16,18, 20:18] with his proclamation,  
 the Bride was fallen in love and drunk with the love of the Son of God.  
 People were asking about him because he was concealed,

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حَدَّثَهَا وَبَسَّمَ بِرُءُوسِهِ وَأَمْسَحَ بِرِجْلَيْهَا

كَيْ لَا يَرَى الْمَلَأُ خَلْفَهُ الْمَلَأُ الْمَلَأُ :

71. See Mt 3:11; Mk 1:7; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:27.

72. See Mt 14:3-12; Mk 6:16-29; Lk 9:9.

73. See Jn 1:26.

and baptism longed to gain holiness from him.<sup>74</sup>

The bride is identified here with the Daughter of the Hebrews, who is not aware of the Bridegroom, for she is sleeping like the virgins in Mathew's parable (see Mt 25:1-13). John's voice wakes her up and proclaims to her the imminent coming of the Bridegroom. The Bride is filthy on account of all the holocausts she offers to idols and not ready in this state to receive her Bridegroom. Worshiping false gods goes back to the time when Israel rejected God on Mt. Sinai and worshiped the golden calf. Therefore, she must be purified and cleansed that her luster return to her and be dressed in prized garments, her wedding dress. Then she will be thus presented to the only-Begotten. The effect of John's baptism is to wash off the Bride's filth of her.

The Daughter of the Hebrews was sleeping, and the Bridegroom has come,<sup>75</sup> but the slumber of wickedness weighed down on her, and she was not aware of him.

John, however, as a faithful [servant] and mediator,  
woke her up and proclaimed to her that the Bridegroom has come.  
Since she was filthy, he bathed her in [the waters of] baptism  
that the Groom not see her in her uncleanness when she would receive him.  
He brought her to the river and washed off the smoke of  
burnt offerings, that had diffused into her face and with which she was  
stained.  
So like a lady, he was dressing her in precious garments

74. "HSJS I," 154:15-156:2.

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75. See Mt 25:1-13.

that she, being beautiful, might be present at the wedding feast of the only-Begotten.<sup>76</sup>

John, the voice of one crying in the desert, announces the coming of the Bridegroom and all the assemblies of Judah, i.e., the Bride, comes to the wasteland where he is.

The voice between the Bridegroom and the Bride became a herald that the Bride might be aware of the Bridegroom's retinue who came.  
[...]

Also John, a voice in an empty, desolate place,  
sounded, and the assemblies of Judah heard him.<sup>77</sup>  
The Levite sang, and the Bride greatly rejoiced in his song.<sup>78</sup>

When Christ the Bridegroom finally comes, John points him out to the Daughter of the Hebrews by bowing down to him. He is the effulgence of the Divine Being, the Lord of Israel.

Then the Bridegroom came like the sun and a glaring light,  
and John was moved to show the Bride his beauty.  
The Levite bowed down and lowered his head in great astonishment,  
for he saw the Light, the Son of the Majesty, who came to him.  
The effulgence of the Divine Being shone forth on John,  
and, by his rays, he [so] inspired her with awe that she marveled at him.<sup>79</sup>

76. "HSJS I," 164:12-21.

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77. See Is 40:3; Mt 3:1-3; Mk 1:3; Lk 3:2-4 Jn 1:23.

78. "HSJS I," 165:1-2, 7-10.

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79. *Ibid.*, 156:3-8.

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Like the Daughter of the Hebrews, the Church of the Nations must be purified because she is sullied and defiled. The smoke emanating from incense offered up to false gods covered up her beauty. Harlotry is, as mentioned above, in connection with her submission to idols. Her smell is repugnant on account of the stench of the burnt offerings that diffused into her. Therefore, John the Baptist, the marriage broker, is sent to prepare the Bride for Christ, the Bridegroom. John cleanses her, sanctifies her in the Jordan, and dresses her in wondrous garments. Her wedding dress is heavenly, for it was woven in God's dwelling place. John captures her with his enticing speech, and she falls in love with the Bridegroom, the heavenly king.

The Church of the Nations proves to be smarter than Eve, who listened to the snake and followed its counsel (see Gn 3:1-6). The Church does not simply take John's words, but she inquires about him and his message. She has recourse to Isaiah, who confirms John's mission and message. The Church is waiting for conversion, which John preaches. Furthermore, John looked like a beggar, reminiscent of the austere attire of the prophet Elijah (see 2 Kgs 1:8; Zec 13:4; Mt 3:4, 11:7-8).

She (the Church) called Isaiah to learn from him concerning John [the Baptist],  
 "Who is this one proclaiming to me the kingdom on high?  
 Come, [O] Prophet, come, explain to me about the Herald,

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for I need to learn the truths from you.  
 I shall accept your voice, which is in my favor,  
 for I heard the discourse of your account long ago.  
 You promised me conversion with your prophecy [see Is 1:27].  
 Come, look! Has the time perhaps arrived that I come to it (conversion)?  
 Look! Who is this one proclaiming precious [tidings]  
 while [the state of] poverty is seen on him?  
 His appearance is penurious, but the voice of his proclamation is rich.  
 His clothes are worthless, but his word is significant in everyone's ears.  
 The man did not speak according to his stature when I saw him,  
 and the promise he sown in my ears is not insignificant like him.  
 He exalts his word even if he possesses absolutely nothing.  
 He roams the desert and announces to me the kingdom on high.  
 Tell me, [O] Prophet, if he is genuine, I shall listen to his words.  
 However, if he is not genuine, I shall not be deceived by him as [I was] by  
 others.  
 Your Lord is coming, and I am getting ready to go before him.  
 Reveal the truth to me. You shall not be blamed."<sup>91</sup>

Isaiah assures the Church that John is genuine. Additionally, he informs her that he is the voice crying out in the desert (see Is 40:3) before the King's Son, and tells her to accept John's words and to allow him to baptize her.

Isaiah drew nearer to teach the Church concerning John [the Baptist],  
 "He is the sharer of the mystery of the Bridegroom, your Lord. Accept his  
 words.  
 This is the voice crying out in the desert before the King's Son,  
 'Prepare, prepare the way for the Lord in faith.'  
 Go, descend and bathe. Do not reject the Herald.  
 He is making straight a rugged place to prepare the way for the King<sup>92</sup> to  
 come."<sup>93</sup>

91. *Ibid.*, 169:3-170:1.

<p>           وَمَنْعَهُ رُبُّهُ وَجْهَهُ كَمَا مَحْجَعُهُ وَهَذَا            وَهَسْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ وَتَنْبِئُكُمْ عَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ            مَعْنَى هَذِهِ كَيْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ وَهَذَا            أَلَا سَأَلَ وَجْهَهُ كَمَا أَعْلَمَ وَأَعْلَمَ            كَيْفَ مَعْنَى هَذِهِ تَعْلَمُونَ أَلَا            حِينَئِذٍ تَعْلَمُونَ وَهَذَا تَعْلَمُونَ            هَكَذَا أَعْلَمَ حِينَئِذٍ هَكَذَا وَهَذَا            فَهَذَا حَسْبُكُمْ وَهَذَا كَمَا مَحْجَعُهُ وَهَذَا            هَذَا لَا هَذَا لَا أَعْلَمَ هَذَا            هَذَا كَمَا لَا أَعْلَمَ كَيْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ         </p>	<p>           مِنْهُ لَا مَحْجَعُ وَلَا كَفَ مَعْنَى هَذَا            أَلَا كَيْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ أَلَا كَفَ مَعْنَى هَذَا            مَحْجَعُهُ إِيَّاهُ كَمَا حَسْبُكُمْ وَهَذَا            أَلَا أَعْلَمَ كَمَا هَكَذَا كَمَا مَحْجَعُهُ            سَأَلَ مَعْلُومَهُ وَهَذَا وَهَذَا            مَعْنَى هَذِهِ هَكَذَا مَعْلُومَهُ            كَمَا مَحْجَعُهُ هَكَذَا كَمَا مَحْجَعُهُ            مَعْنَى هَذِهِ كَمَا مَحْجَعُهُ            إِيَّاهُ كَمَا مَحْجَعُهُ            هَذَا كَمَا مَحْجَعُهُ         </p>
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92. See Is 40:3; Mt 3:3; Mk 1:3; Lk 3:4; Jn 1:23.

93. "HSJS I," 170:2-7.

Consequently, the Church goes down to the Jordan and allows John to baptize her. Meanwhile, John instructs her that she amend her ways and be prepared for the Bridegroom to come. Smitten by his words, the Church confuses John the Baptist with the Bridegroom (see Lk 3:15; Acts 13:25). Could he be the awaited Messiah? John, the faithful servant, corrects the Church. He pushes her away from him and tells her that he is not the Bridegroom (see Lk 3:16; Jn 1:20, 3:28). He humbles himself so low that he does not deem himself worthy of his master's sandals (see Mt 3:11; Mk 1:7; Jn 1:27), and he instructs her that her Betrothed is coming after him.

The Church, the Bride of the King, went to John.  
 He began to bathe, cleanse, purify, and sanctify her.  
 He became a trustworthy [person] to her and labored to adorn her according to his ability.  
 He taught, and instructed her that she be reformed, for she was perverse.  
 She heard his voice, fell for his words,  
 and thought that he is the bridegroom to whom she was betrothed.<sup>94</sup>  
 She affectionately took the servant for the Lord,  
 for Christ was hidden from her among the tribes [of Israel] [see Jn 1:26].  
 The faithful [servant] realized that the Bride he betrothed clung to him,  
 and began to remove [her] off his lap crying out, "I am not the Bridegroom."<sup>95</sup>  
 He pushed her back away from him that she not go astray because of him, for he was [merely] a servant,  
 and lifted her up that she hang on the Bridegroom's hope while he went away [see Jn 3:29-30].  
 He humbled himself [saying], "I am neither worthy of nor equal to his sandals,"<sup>96</sup>  
 to preserve the [utter] loftiness of his Lord.  
 He saw the girl who has eyes for him<sup>97</sup> because [he is] a Nazirite<sup>98</sup>  
 and hastened to sever the cause of offense from her mind.  
 He bound her by a covenant to wait for the Bridegroom and not look at him

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94. See Lk 3:15; Acts 13:25.  
 95. See Lk 3:15-16; Jn 1:20; 3:28.  
 96. See Mt 3:11; Mk 1:7; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:27.  
 97. *Lit.* settled her eye on him  
 98. See Nm 6:1-21; Lk 1:15.





He regarded that Bird (the Holy Spirit),<sup>104</sup> the Mistress of the Heavens:  
 how he would come down, and on whom he would alight to testify for him.  
 He was looking for the swift Pinions, bearers of the ends [of the universe],  
 to see whom they would receive from the waters.  
 He was thirsty for seeing the Wing that soars without flapping,  
 for when he would appear, he would testify for the Savior.  
 He was listening for the mighty voice of the Father<sup>105</sup>  
 to hear from it concerning whom it cries out, "He is my Son, my Beloved."<sup>106</sup>

Having been purified and made perfect with repentance, the Bride now awaits the coming of the Bridegroom to come to her. Jacob's description is reminiscent of his account of when the Bride Israel had been cleansed and was ready for her Bridegroom to descend on Mt. Sinai (see above). Everyone anticipates his arrival, but no one knows who he is until he manifests himself, and the Father's voice and the Spirit testify for him. Suddenly, Jesus leaves the crowds and goes to the river to be baptized.

After the Bride was perfected with the ornaments of repentance,  
 bathed, and ascended from the waters of baptism,  
 and after the entire wedding feast was prepared including its arrangements,  
 —but only the Bridegroom delayed coming to visit his own [see Mt 25:3]—  
 after the washing of the wedding guests took place, and it cleansed them,<sup>107</sup>  
 —but they were not dressed in the garments of the Spirit from the waters—  
 and when all the Nations were standing naked  
 expecting the Bridegroom to come to clothe them,  
 and after the dirt on the Bride was washed away with water, and she  
 ascended,  
 and [when] everyone was waiting for the white garments the Bridegroom  
 would bring,  
 and when baptism was lacking the remission [of sins],  
 and no one has received the Holy Spirit from the waters [yet],

104. See Is 42:1; Mt 3:16; Mk 1:9; Lk 3:22; Jn 1:32.

105. See Mt 3:17; Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22.

106. "HSJS I," 171:19-172:14.

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107. See Lk 3:21.

and while the entire wedding party was looking for the Bridegroom [asking]  
 where he is [see Lk 3:15],  
 the Son of the King left the crowds to come to the River.<sup>108</sup>

To prevent a misunderstanding concerning who the Bridegroom is,  
 John and the crowds clear the waters of the river, and leave him standing  
 alone in the Jordan separated from everyone else. Consequently, the identity  
 of the Bridegroom is finally revealed: he is Jesus Christ,<sup>109</sup> the Heir to the  
 heavenly kingdom.

He (John) signaled the wedding guests to give him a place among the crowds  
 that the Bridegroom might gloriously show himself to all the Nations.  
 The crowds encircling the baptismal [waters] fled,  
 and the Heir to the kingdom separately stood alone.<sup>110</sup>

John assures the Bride that Jesus is her Betrothed.

The faithful servant (John) hastened to tell the free [Church] of the Savior.  
 He called the chaste [Church] to show her that he is her Lord,  
 "To this Bridegroom have I betrothed you, [O] Church, from the beginning.  
 I have let you hang on the hope of this One since the I came.  
 This is the Lamb who came to become the sacrifice.  
 This One takes away the sin of the world by his sacrificial offering [see Jn  
 1:29].  
 I exhorted you to trust this One long ago.  
 In the name of this One have I kept you that you might wait for him.  
 For this One have I guarded you with great care like a faithful servant.<sup>111</sup>

108. "HSJS I," 173:14-174:6.

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109. *Ibid.*, 175:2.

... Christ, the Bridegroom, might stand alone

110. *Ibid.*, 175:6-10.

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111. *Ibid.*, 175:11-19.

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David also testifies for Jesus and confirms John's witness.

While John was instructing the Bride of the King,  
behold the singer of the Holy Spirit, David, approached singing to her,  
"Listen, my daughter, see, and incline your ear to glorious [things]  
and forget your people and your father's house [see Ps 45:11], for they are  
incredulous.

Yes, he is in truth your Lord. Come and bow down to him.  
Do not be in doubt about the Savior, for he has come to you."<sup>112</sup>

After Isaiah validates John's authenticity, John identifies the  
Bridegroom to the Church, and David echoes John testimony about Jesus, the  
circumspect Church became certain that Jesus is her Bridegroom. She draws  
nigh, witnesses the Lord's baptism, and is now ready to bow down to him in  
worship.

The Church learned from both John [the Baptist] and David  
and was confident that he is the Bridegroom, to whom she was betrothed.  
She came nearer and stood watching how he was also being baptized  
that, when he ascends from the waters, she might bow down before him.<sup>113</sup>

In describing the baptism of the Lord in the Jordan, the bishop of  
Batnan employs a language redolent of the one he utilized limning the  
betrothal of the Son of God on Mt. Sinai and interpreting the dark cloud as the  
Bridegroom's bridal chamber.

The Fiery Coal<sup>114</sup> (Jesus) came down to wash in the rushing streams,  
and the fire of his holiness poured there.  
The Flame came, removed the garments he was wearing  
and came down to set ablaze the waters of baptism.  
The heavenly beings were astonished at the washing of the Blaze  
when his shining body was washed to sanctify the waters.  
The rushing streams of waters mingled with the [Blaze's] rays,

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112. *Ibid.*, 176:1-6.

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ⲕⲉⲙⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲉ : ⲕⲉⲙⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲉ  
ⲕⲉⲙⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲉ

113. *Ibid.*, 176:7-10.

ⲕⲉⲙⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲉ : ⲕⲉⲙⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲉ  
ⲕⲉⲙⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲉ : ⲕⲉⲙⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲁⲓ ⲕⲉ

114. See Is 6:6; Ez 1:13; 10:2-13.





His Father symbolized the Bride of Light as the bright cloud [see Mt 17:5], for she is one, and the mysteries affectionately betrothed her to the One. The Father placed [on the hand] of the Daughter of the Light a bright ring, and betrothed her to his Son, for the Bridegroom is also completely light. He symbolized the Church as a dazzling cloud, and the Father enjoined her to listen to his Son [see Mt 17:5] all he says to her. By apostleship and prophecy, one thing was manifest: the Bridegroom is one! Blessed is the One, whose mystery accomplished everything.<sup>123</sup>

122. See "HSJS II," 374:7 (Syriac); Khoury, "Transfiguration," 90:284 (French); Kollamparampil, "Festal Homilies," 229:567 (English).

حَسْبُكَ رَبُّكَ وَأَنْتَ أَكْبَرُ ۝

123. "HSJS II," 374:15-375:2 (Syriac); Khoury, "Transfiguration," 90:288-291 (French); Kollamparampil, "Festal Homilies," 230:575-582 (English).

كَلِمَةً يَوْمَئِذٍ نَحْنُ حُجَّتُهَا وَمَعَهَا أَهْلُهَا :  
 حُجَّتُهَا تَعْنِي حُجَّتُهَا وَمَعَهَا هُمُ كَلِمَةُ الْكَلِمَةِ :  
 وَمَعَهَا حُجَّتُهَا حُجَّتُهَا وَمَعَهَا :  
 هَكَذَا تَعْنِي حُجَّتُهَا سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ :

125. "HSJS I," 193:4-5.

حَبْلًا مَوْسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ حَسْبُكُمْ حَصْبًا : ﴿١٠٥﴾ لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوحْيِيكَ الْغَايِبَ وَأَنبَأَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَمَنْعَكَ مِنَ الْغَيْبِ الَّذِي كُنْتَ تُخْفِيهِ عَنِ السَّاعِدِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

By recognizing and accepting Jesus Christ, the Church declares that she is related to God the Father by marriage. She belongs to his Son and is his daughter-in-law.

Until I had learned what his race is and who his Father is,  
I did not accept to wash with him through baptism.  
The voice proclaiming "He is my beloved Son"<sup>126</sup> gave me a sign,  
and then I agreed to the betrothal from his herald.  
I believed his Father and accepted to be the betrothed of his Son.  
I am the daughter-in-law of the Father, before whom the mountains tremble.  
The Father does not have another Son except that one,  
the One who married me at [my] baptismal birth.  
I was a harlot, and, in water, he made me a virgin,  
a virgin also gave birth to him in the flesh miraculously.  
I learned his mystery, entered with him, and became his.  
Therefore, I do not need to learn again concerning him.<sup>127</sup>

The Church moreover professes her adulterous past, but, more importantly, realizes that her Lord purifies her in waters of baptism, thus making her a virgin, the theme of the following section.

### 5.2.3 The Harlot Made a Virgin

Before submitting herself to the Lord, the virgin Daughter of the Nations whom he had chosen for himself was a harlot: she had worshiped other gods and defiled herself. Jacob's *mimro* *On Holy Baptism* (ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܬܡܝܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ)<sup>128</sup> provides the researcher with the theme at hand.

Come, [O] Daughter of the Nations, who went a whoring after nugatory  
gods.  
Put on your betrothed and be with him through a pure union.  
Come, [O] Harlot, and give your hand to the Only-Begotten,  
and he will make you a virgin in the water in a holy manner.  
Come, [O] Black One, whose color the Sun rendered odious by his rising.

126. See Mt 3:17; Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22; 2 Pt 1:17.

127. Mouterde, "Deux Homélie Inédites," 12:3-14 (French), 26:7-18 (Syriac).

❖ ܠܐ ܡܪܝܬܐ ܐܬܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ	ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ :
❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ	ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ :
❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ	ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ :
❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ	ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ :
❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ	ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ :
❖ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ	ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠܐ :

128. See "HSJS I," 193-211.

Clothe yourself with magnificence through the forgiving waters, which was prepared for you.

Come, [O] Foul One, who stunk with the smoke of sacrifices, shine from the effulgence and may your smell be pleasing through anointing.

Come to baptism, [O] Old Woman, who grew old by idolatry.

Become a comely, and glorious girl from the waters.

Come, descend, and clothe yourself with the divinely woven garment.

Then ascend, and show us your sweet beauty that we rejoice with you.

Come, be adorned by the spring gushing out light that the world see you with the ornament of the Holy Spirit.<sup>129</sup>

The effects of pagan rituals affected the Daughter of the Arameans. Her outward appearance displays their effects on her. She is black because of the smoke emanating from the innumerable burnt-offerings she raised to her false gods and she stinks owing to their foul smell. Weighed down by idolatry, she becomes old, but the state of this strumpet changes radically by her pure union with Jesus Christ in the waters of the Jordan. The giving of the hand represents her consent to this marriage. Upon entering the waters, she declares her repentance and professes her faith in the Only-Begotten. In the bosom of the water, Jesus Christ washes and anoints the harlot, thus making her his unblemished and virgin Bride by forgiving her sins. He rejuvenates her, makes her a glorious girl, perfumes her, dresses her in a divinely woven garment, i.e., her wedding dress, and adorns her with the spring gushing out light (an allusion to Jn 19:34), the ornament of the Holy Spirit. These images are undoubtedly symbols of the three Christian mysteries: baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist.

129. *Ibid.*, 206:2-15.

❖ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ	ܐܡܢ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ :
❖ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ	ܐܡܢ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ :
❖ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ	ܐܡܢ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ :
❖ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ	ܐܡܢ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ :
❖ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ	ܐܡܢ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ :
❖ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ	ܐܡܢ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ :
❖ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ	ܐܡܢ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ :

Unlike any virgin girl who loses her innocence on her wedding nights, the Daughter of the Nations, the Church, gains her virginity at her marriage feast.

Come, enter and see an awesome, and amazing deed  
because nothing like it happened before it or will happen after it:  
a virgin bears a Son and remains in her virginity,  
and a harlot becomes a virgin from her wedding feast.  
The Son of God came to the virgin, made her his mother,  
and when he betrothed the harlot from the Nations, he made her a virgin.  
Behold the virgin has a child and milk [in her breasts] without marriage,  
and the harlot is in a virginal state, which she gained at her marriage feast.  
[...]

The Son of the King performed a wonder for the Bride whom he brought: when he married a harlot from the street, he made her a virgin. Virgins who are betrothed lose their virginity on their wedding [night]. However, the Daughter of the Nations gained hers from her wedding feast. She remained a harlot until her marriage feast and [became] a virgin from [the time of] her wedding feast onward. She committed harlotry with idols ... When the Crucified one made a wedding feast for her, she became a virgin. Idols marred her, and she became a bride among gods. She met images and was joined to graven images in love. She committed adultery with the devil, and demons were her defiled companions. The Daughter of the Aramaeans went a whoring, was satisfied, committed adultery, [and] was disgraced. The Bridegroom married the harlot from the street, brought her down to the waters, and made her a virgin. Behold she is with him.

Who is this one who made the harlot a virgin  
except for the one who made the virgin his mother?  
Unless a virgin had given birth to Wonder [see Is 9:5],  
it would be impossible for a harlot to become a virgin.  
Since he made a Virgin a mother,  
behold a harlot is made a virgin and dwells with him.  
The entire Creation marveled at how much she committed adultery  
and went a whoring, and at how much she was disgraced and exalted.  
Her adultery and her foul name [she earned] because of them ceased,  
[for] the Bridegroom gave her a beautiful name and the house of his Father.  
Behold she elates at the virginity, which the Bridegroom had given her,  
at the white [garments], which she put on from the waters [when] she went  
down [to the river].<sup>130</sup>

130. "HSJS II," 236:3-10; 236:17-238:10.

۞ اَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ سَوَآءً حَرْفًا ۚ وَحَا ۙ وَحَلَا ۙ اَوۡمًا ۙ :  
 حَا ۙ وَحَلَا ۙ اَوۡمًا ۙ : حَا ۙ وَحَلَا ۙ اَوۡمًا ۙ : حَا ۙ وَحَلَا ۙ اَوۡمًا ۙ :

The Son of God further makes the Bride, the Church, beautiful, and her beauty is unparalleled. She reflects the light of her Bridegroom and glows with the colors of water and blood flowing from his side on the cross. Her mouth is like a scarlet thread on account of the blood of her Lord and Savior she drinks. Besides, she is vested with embroidered bright garment woven of Fire and Spirit (See Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:33). With the vestment, the Bride resembles a high-priest in the holy of holies.

٤٠ : كَلِمَاتُ مَلِكِهِ كَلِمَاتُهَا وَجَدَتْهُ :  
 ٤١ : وَأَلَمَ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ أَنَّمَا يُدِيرُ  
 [...] :  
 ٤٢ : وَوَلَدًا لَهُ ذَكَرًا فَجَعَلُوهَا نِسَاءً  
 ٤٣ : لِمَا لَمْ يَخْلُقْ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُوهُنَّ لَهُ  
 ٤٤ : زَوْجَاتٍ خِلَافَ مَا خَلَقَ لَهُنَّ  
 ٤٥ : وَلَهُنَّ أَزْوَاجٌ خِلَافَ مَا خَلَقَ  
 ٤٦ : لَهُنَّ أَزْوَاجٌ خِلَافَ مَا خَلَقَ  
 ٤٧ : لَهُنَّ أَزْوَاجٌ خِلَافَ مَا خَلَقَ  
 ٤٨ : لَهُنَّ أَزْوَاجٌ خِلَافَ مَا خَلَقَ  
 ٤٩ : لَهُنَّ أَزْوَاجٌ خِلَافَ مَا خَلَقَ  
 ٥٠ : لَهُنَّ أَزْوَاجٌ خِلَافَ مَا خَلَقَ



How beautiful are you, [O] Daughter of the Aramaeans, how beautiful [are you],  
 and your entire countenance looks like a beautiful morning light.  
 A certain great light shines on your forehead.  
 If even the Sun looked at it, it would be immediately blinded.  
 Your clean mouth resembles a scarlet thread [see Sg 4:3],  
 and it seems to me that your lips are also wet with blood.  
 Your beauty shines out with two colors in the assemblies:  
 with the blood and waters flowing for you from the beautiful One.  
 Your bridal chamber is in the waters, and your dwelling in the dark cloud of  
 the exalted One.  
 Your beloved is the Cross, and your Hope is at the right [hand] of the Father.  
 You are wearing an embroidered vestment like [that of] a high priest in the  
 holy of holies.  
 A garment whose entirety is light has been woven for you [of] Fire and Spirit.  
 O Daughter of the Nations, you are betrothed to the Light within the  
 waters.<sup>131</sup>

The Bride reflects through and through her Bridegroom, for she is vested with him. Jacob of Sarug sees Christ on the cross through the colors of the water and blood flowing from his side on the Cross. White and red are the colors of Jesus, and now they are the colors of the Bride. The color white, a reference to baptism, is that of her light emanating from her. In fact, she shines infinitely brighter than the sun. Red, the color of blood, is the color of her lips and her wedding garment. With these two colors, the Bride is unmatched in beauty. Thus, the Church is unequalled with the mysteries of baptism and Eucharist!

Your Church knelt at your wounds to drink your blood.  
 Behold it is painted on her lips like a scarlet thread [see Sg 4:3].  
 Wearing you, the Bride ascends from the water  
 and resembles the incense and smoke of a fine censer.  
 That black [Bride], whom evil spirits blackened with their offerings,  
 behold, is glorious because of you, and splendid like a dark cloud.

131. "HSJS I," 207:18-208:11.

✧ ܡܚܕܐ ܡܥܬܬܝܟ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ	ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :
✧ ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ	ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :
✧ ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ	ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :
✧ ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ	ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :
✧ ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ	ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :
✧ ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ	ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :
✧ ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ	ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :
✧ ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ	ܡܢ ܡܥܬܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :

Behold you, [O] Son of God, are blood-red.<sup>132</sup> Behold you are white,  
 for, behold, water and blood, are flowing down on you<sup>133</sup> like fountainheads.  
 Behold the Bride, who was baptized by your crucifixion, is wearing you,  
 and her beauty shines magnificent, powerful colors.  
 She was baptized in water and wore light like the day,  
 and your blood became for her a glorious garment of scarlet.  
 Behold! You, [O] Daughter of the Aramaeans, are beautiful! You are bright!  
 On account of your light, the sun would be darkened if it would look at you.  
 Who has given you this beauty? Who has given it to you?  
 Behold! The entire world is captivated by your beauty while it marvels at  
 you!<sup>134</sup>

The reference to water and blood flowing from the side of the crucified  
 One allows a transition into the next section, the betrothal on the cross.

### 5.3 Betrothal on the Cross

#### 5.3.1 Jacob's Dream at Bethel

Besides at the Jordan, the Son of God betroths the Church of the  
 Nations on the cross. This theme is also typologically expressed in Jacob's  
 dream at Bethel (see Gn 28:10-22). It is another Old Testament account which  
 the bishop of Batnan construes as the betrothal of God's Son to the Church  
 and expounds on it in his *mimro* entitled *On Jacob's Vision at Bethel* (ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝܥܩܒ ܕܒܝܬ ܠܗܝܡ).<sup>135</sup>

132. See Sg 5:10.

133. See Jn 19:34.

134. "HSJS IV," 761:4-18.

ܕܐܠܗܐ ܚܩܩܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܐܝܢܐ ܫܥܠܐ ܕܝܥܩܒ ܕܒܝܬ ܠܗܝܡ :	ܕܝܥܩܒ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܝܥܩܒ ܕܒܝܬ ܠܗܝܡ ܕܝܥܩܒ ܕܢܝܢܐ :
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135. See Paul Mössinger and Pius Zingerle, eds., *Monumenta Syriaca ex Romanis codicibus collecta*, I (Oeniponti: Libreria Academica Wagneriana, 1869), 21-32; "HSJS III," 192-207. For a German translation, see Bickell, "Ausgewählte Gedichte," 247-258; Landersdorfer, "Ausgewählte Schriften," 332-343. For a French translation, see François Graffin, "Mimro de Jacques de Sarûg sur la vision de Jacob à Béthel," *L'OrSyr*, 5, (1960): 225-246. See also Christian Lange, "The Mystery of the Son Did Not Journey Without the Church: A Study on Jacob of Serugh's Memra on the Vision of Jacob At Bethel," *TH*, XX, (2006):

The bishop of Batnan already sees in this biblical account a foreshadowing of both the cross of Jesus Christ and his death. The angels “saw that he (Jacob) embraced his staff and slept on the mountaintop. The [heavenly] hosts surrounded him [see Gn 28:12] to see the image of the crucifixion.”<sup>136</sup> Thus, Jacob’s slumber is “a repose which depicted the mystery of the death of the Son of God,”<sup>137</sup> and his staff is a symbol of the cross. “He (Jacob) took the staff with him when he went on the journey that it might represent in truth the Son’s cross.”<sup>138</sup> Not only does Jacob’s sleep depict the scene of the crucifixion, but it prefigures the betrothal of Christ to his Church as well.

209-220.

سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُ الْقَوْمَ الّذِينَ هَؤُلَاءِ عَلَيْهِمْ : ﴿١٠٠﴾ قُتِلُوا فَمَنْ قَتَلَهُمْ فَاسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَنْ يَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا فُتِنَا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُضِلٌّ ضَالٌّ ۖ ﴿١٠١﴾

[...] حَمْدًا وَبِحَمْدِهِ يُؤْمَرُ وَبِحَمْدِهِ يُؤْمَرُ وَبِحَمْدِهِ يُؤْمَرُ

سَقَطُوا مِنْ عَصَاكَ وَأَمْرًا فَدَعَا لَهُمْ رَّبُّهُمْ نُورًا ۖ

By it, Satan and death were driven away like thieves.  
 Jacob took [with him] its mystery when he went away to Haran [see Gn 28:10].  
 For this reason is his journey more exalted than that [of others].  
 He dozed off on his staff, set a rock as his pillow and fell asleep [see Gn 28:11],  
 that is the Son who betrothed the Church and died on the cross.<sup>139</sup>

The crucifixion signifies the betrothal of the Son of God to his Church. That the cross and the staff are both betrothal dowries highlights further the parallelism between the staff and the cross.<sup>140</sup> The staff is Jacob's sole possession. He brought nothing with him when he left his father's house except for it (see Gn 32:11), but he presents it as his dowry to acquire the two sisters, Leah and Rachel.<sup>141</sup> Jacob's staff, according to Jacob of Sarug, symbolizes Christ's marriage portion. Since the Son of God manifests only his cross in the world, it is his sole belonging and dowry. With and on it, he betroths the Church. Moreover, Jacob used his staff to protect his sheep and drive away the savage beast. Similarly, Christ protects the sheep, his Bride, by utterly defeating Satan and death with his cross.

The Cross descended to make a betrothal settlement,  
 and without oil [see Gn 28:18] its word could not have been proven true.  
 The type of the Son appeared to the sage,  
 and when he woke up, he painted an image of him that befits him.  
 The revelation descended and stopped him while on [his] way [to Haran]  
 that he would not pass by until he betroths the Church to the Son.  
 "Accomplish my [affair], and you may move on to your business afterward.  
 Represent me with types, and then you may pursue your [goal].  
 Prepare for me a mystical marriage feast here with a new vision,  
 and afterward, you may take for yourself a woman who is also a symbol.

139. *Ibid.*, 194:1-14.

* وَأَمَّا هَؤُلَاءِ فَهُمْ إِسْرَائِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ * وَهَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ * حَقًّا دَائِمًا وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا * وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا * وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا * وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا * وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا	* وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا * وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا * وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا * وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا * وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا * وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا * وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا وَهَذَا هُوَ حَقُّ دَائِمًا
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140. See Graffin, "Église - Épouse," 326-327.

141. As will be shown below, Leah and Rachel, Jacob's wives, are types of the Synagogue and the Church respectively.

Betroth me a wife, and the daughter of Haran may be afterward betrothed.  
 Build me a house, and then you may carry out your plans.  
 If the daughter of the king would not be mystically betrothed,  
 also your journey would not be rightly established.  
 Write me a contract for the Church's wedding and pass by.  
 Travel the road on whose entirety the mysteries are depicted.  
 Set up a memorial to the vision on the mountain, and you may go afterward  
 lest the vision of the mystery slip your mind.  
 Bring oil, pour it on the stone which is the Church,  
 and depict her for me, for after a time she will return.  
 Establish the foundation of the grand house of the King's Bride  
 that upon it all the Just build all their offsprings.  
 Interweave me a bridal chamber that the mystery enter and be celebrated in  
 it  
 until I prepare a magnificent wedding feast in the entire world."<sup>142</sup>

Jacob is the marriage broker just like Moses and John the Baptist after him. God's providence guided Jacob to that place where he slept that he be the go-between, the one who betroths the Church to the Son of God, prepare him a mystical marriage feast with a new vision - an allusion to the pouring of oil - and write him a wedding contract with the Church. Jacob of Sarug explicitly states that the stone Jacob uses as a pillow (see Gn 28:11) is a symbol of the Church. She will return not as a symbol but as the community which professes its faith in the divinity of Christ. The rock, moreover, is an image of the grand house of the King's Bride and her bridal chamber. In this bridal chamber, the mystery will be celebrated. The pouring of oil represents both the ratification of the betrothal contract and the bridal ceremony celebrated by

142. "HSJS III," 202:14-203:16.

<p>           ❖ ܕܠܐ ܬܡܥܬܐ ܬܠܡܕܐ ܠܡܢ ܠܐ ܬܚܝܬܐ ܝܗܘܐ ❖            ܗܕܐ ܠܡܠܟܝܢ ܝܗܘܐ ܢܐ ܕܗ ܢܚܬܐ ܐܢܝ ܦܩܐ ܕܗ ❖            ܠܐ ܬܚܕܝ ܝܗܘܐ ܚܒܬܐ ܡܚܕܝ ܚܒܠܐ ܕܗ ❖            ܡܥܬܡ ܕܐ ܠܗܩܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܠܐ ܐܠܐ ܠܚܬܐ ܡܚܕܝ ❖            ܗܕܐ ܡܦܬܐ ܐܝܕ ܐܝܕܐ ܠܚܬܐ ܠܚܬܐ ܐܝܕ ܐܝܕ ܝܗܘܐ ❖            ܬܠܐ ܕܐ ܬܠܐ ܗܕܐ ܗܕܐ ܐܝܕ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܝܗܘܐ ❖            ܐܝܐ ܠܐ ܐܕܘܨܐ ܡܚܕܝ ܠܚܬܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܡܚܕܝ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܕܡܥܬܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܕܡܥܬܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܕܡܥܬܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܕܡܥܬܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖         </p>	<p>           ܐܡܬܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܠܗܩܬܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܡܥܬܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܡܥܬܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖            ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܬܠܐ ❖         </p>
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context, Jacob typifies the Lord Jesus Christ, and Rachel the Church<sup>147</sup> of the Pagans.

The tidings of his (the Son of God's) road sent Jacob to the Haranites  
that the great just One go down to betroth the Daughter of the Pagans.  
That one (Rachel) who grew up among the images of idolatry [is betrothed]  
to this one (Jacob), rich in both blessings and revelations.  
"For the unbelieving wife is made holy  
through [her] holy husband" just as Paul wrote [see 1 Cor 7:14].  
Now, if Rachel was holy on account of Jacob,  
how much [more] is the Church of the Nations sanctified through Jacob's  
Lord?  
The [two] daughters of pagans are made holy by a just man (Jacob),  
that is [to say], the Son made the assemblies of the Nations holy.  
Unless Jacob bore the image of the Son,  
he would not have become renowned for his actions.<sup>148</sup>

Jacob's actions make sense only if they foreshadow those of the Son of God. His travel to Haran seeking a wife prefigures the Son's journey from his heavenly abode to earth to marry the Church, represented by Rachel. Rachel, the daughter of the pagans in Haran, is a type of the Church made up of Nations who worshiped idols. Although the Bride is unclean, she is sanctified by the Holy One. Jacob bases his argument on Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. If an unbelieving wife is made holy through her believing husband (see 1 Cor 7:14), how much more is the Church of the Nations made holy by her heavenly Bridegroom? Jesus Christ erases the Church's idolatrous past and makes her pure and her holy.

Jacob of Sarug contrasts Rachel with her older sister so as to juxtapose the Church and the Synagogue. Rachel is glorious and splendid, whereas

147. See *Ibid.*, 223:14.

Our Lord is typified by Jacob, and the Church by the daughter of Laban (Rachel).

148. *Ibid.*, 209:7-18.

✧ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ ܡܬܩܠܐ ܫܡܐ ܬܥܡܥܐ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ	ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ :
✧ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ	ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ :
✧ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ	ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ :
✧ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ	ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ :
✧ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ	ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ :
✧ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ	ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܗ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܕܝܢܐ :

Leah is scorned and ugly-eyed, a reference to her dull eyes (see Gn 29:17). The younger sister exudes the glory of the Church, and the beauty of the Church is hidden in and shines through her, but her older sister represents the unwanted and disdained Synagogue.

How much is the account of Leah, the ugly-eyed [see Gn 29:17], scorned, now wherefore unless for the sake of the mystery that is served by her? How much is her sister, Rachel, glorious, in the Holy Scriptures? The Church's beauty lie hid in her. That is why her splendor grew great.<sup>149</sup>

Jacob meets Rachel at a well (see Gn 29:9-10). The large stone that covered the well's mouth (see Gn 29:2) is only rolled away once all the shepherds who used that well to water their flock are assembled there (see Gn 29:3, 29:8). This well, according to Jacob of Sarug, is not just a well-water, but also a well full of the Lord's mysteries.<sup>150</sup> These mysteries are baptism and the Eucharist which the Lord gave to his Church on the cross. Although the heavy stone requires the strength of all the shepherds to roll it away, Jacob, upon seeing Rachel, goes up and moves the weighty cover away from the mouth of the well (see Gn 29:10). His cousin's beauty stirred him to action, for what he had seen reflected on her face was the countenance and comeliness of the Church, the Betrothed of the Mysteries.

The collective power of the many shepherds [is required]  
[to] push off the stone of Mysteries, and then it could be rolled away.<sup>151</sup>  
Jacob stood and looked at the herds inflamed [with thirst].<sup>152</sup>  
There was no strength to lift up the stone and water them [see Gn 29:8].  
While he was standing around, Rachel came to the flock [see Gn 29:9].  
Once he saw her, he moved the stone off [the well] that the sheep drink.<sup>153</sup>  
Rachel's beauty moved Jacob after he saw her  
to roll away the stone that was heavy for the many

149. *Ibid.*, 209:19-210:1.

صَلَاةً مَقْصُودَةً ۖ وَكُلًّا هَسْبًا خَيْرًا ۖ  
حِطُّكَ يَا إِلَهَ الْعَالَمِينَ ۖ وَإِلَّا قَدْ أَهْلَعَ دَعَا ۖ  
هَدَفُوكَ ۖ وَجَبَّالُهَا دَعَا ۖ كَلْبُوكَ ۖ وَدَ نَسَبُوكَ ۖ  
صَلَاةً نَسَبًا سَلَامًا ۖ وَسَلَامًا كَلَامًا مَتِينًا ۖ

150. *Ibid.*, 210:14-15.

مَهْلًا مَهْلًا حَذًّا لَا مَهْلًا وَمَهْلًا أَلَّا ؛ وَإِذَا : ﴿١٠٧﴾ سَأَوْا أَيْدِيَهُمْ مِمَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُمْ ۖ

He (Jacob) reached the well, not a well of water but of mysteries,  
for if one thinks about [it], it is filled with mysteries more than with water.

151. See Gn 29:3

152. See Gn 29:2

153. See Gn 29:10





One expects baptism to be an image of the Lord's betrothal to the Church at the Jordan river. However, the lack of reference to John the Baptist or the Jordan River makes this connection questionable. Jacob and Rachel's espousal at the well foreshadows Christ betrothal to his Church on the cross. The water that Jacob drew to water the sheep of Rachel on her account is a symbol of the drink that the Lord gave the Nations because of the Church. Christ reveals the source of the sweet drink for the entire world. This well, a clear allusion to the Eucharist, is in reference to the side of Christ gushing water and blood.

Then Jacob kisses Rachel. The bishop of Batnan explains that this is not a kiss of lust. Isaac's son does not desire his cousin sexually,<sup>156</sup> for he weeps aloud when kissing her (see Gn 29:11). He cries because he was affected by the Son's suffering: the Passion of Jesus Christ causes Jacob to weep aloud.

Jacob, therefore, was not inflamed with lust,  
yet he was affected by the mysteries of the Son's suffering.  
Who has kissed his betrothed while crying except for Jacob [see Gn 29:11],  
who saw the symbol of the Church in Rachel while she was getting  
betrothed?  
It is also right that he weeps and suffers while kissing her  
that he depict the sufferings of the Son through his betrothal.  
With his tears, he drew an image of the suffering of the Son of God,  
for, while he was betrothing the Church, he suffered. Then she got betrothed.  
Behold how more important is the Son's road than that of his heralds,  
and the betrothal of the King-Bridegroom than [that of] his messengers.

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156. *Ibid.*, 211:19-212:2.

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Do not think, my son, that Jacob desired her (Rachel) sexually,  
 for even after he kissed he bitterly wept in great pain.  
 If it were lust, he would not have shed tears there,  
 for lust engenders cheerfulness by its fervor.  
 Suffering engenders weeping and sadness,  
 and, where there is weeping, absolutely there is no lust.





communities, Israel and the Church. Both are betrothed to the one Lord.<sup>163</sup> Jacob of Sarug draws a parallel between Jacob's betrothal and Christ's espousal. Jacob betrothed Rachel, but he is given Leah. The Lord espouses the Church, and yet ends up with the Nation.

Jacob betrothed [the one who is] the paragon of appearance, pleasing of beauty,  
lovely of countenance, attractive of face, [and] glorious in everything.  
However, they gave him [the one with] the ugly eyes, the diminished vision,  
the satisfied look, the sad face, and [who is] full of flaws.  
Our Lord also betrothed the great Church, the Daughter of the Kings.  
She knows the Father, worships the Son, [and] accepts the [Holy] Spirit.  
They gave him also the assembly of the Nation, the Worshiper of Images.  
She forges the calf [see Ex 32:1-29], rejects the Father, [and] crucifies the Son.<sup>164</sup>

The physical appearances of the two sisters reflect the responses of the two communities to God. The ugliness of Leah points to the unfaithfulness of the Nation of Israel. Instead of worshiping God, she rejects the Father and crucifies his Son. In contrast to the disloyal Nation, the Church of the Nations rejected her idols, hand-made gods and clung to God: she comes to know the Father, worships the Son, and accepts the Holy. Her disloyalty was hidden since Egypt. Seeing that daylight would have exposed Israel's ugliness, Moses led the Nation out of that land in the middle of the night (see Ex 11:4). At nighttime, Leah also came to Jacob. Darkness hid the ugliness of Leah and Israel and was used to trick both Jacob and Lord into betrothing the undesired brides. Jacob of Sarug does not explain how the Lord could be tricked into marrying Israel.

a great mystery dawned through the sisters who were taken [as wives].

163. *Ibid.*, 218:16-17.

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ إِلَّا قَوْمُهُ : وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مَنَازِلُ مُتَرَفِّعَةٌ ۖ

Here the mystery of the communities came to pass in the two sisters given to one man.

164. *Ibid.*, 221:5-12.

مَنْ يَدْعُ يَدْعُكَ مَدْبُورًا قَالَهُ هَذَا :  
 سَمِعَكَ مَدْحًا ؛ وَجَاءَ أَقْبَا مَحْسَبَ حَقْلِهِ ؛  
 مَنْ يَدْعُ يَدْعُكَ مَدْبُورًا قَالَهُ هَذَا :  
 سَمِعَكَ مَدْحًا ؛ وَجَاءَ أَقْبَا مَحْسَبَ حَقْلِهِ ؛  
 مَنْ يَدْعُ يَدْعُكَ مَدْبُورًا قَالَهُ هَذَا :  
 سَمِعَكَ مَدْحًا ؛ وَجَاءَ أَقْبَا مَحْسَبَ حَقْلِهِ ؛

In the middle of the night, Moses led her out of Egypt [see Ex 11:4],  
that no one see the Bride he brought how ugly she is.  
She left at night just as Leah entered at night,  
for the day would expose that both were ugly.<sup>165</sup>

Although the Lord desired the Church, Israel came first, stood before  
him with her face covered, and beguiled him into espousing her.

The mystery entered the house of the pagan with the righteous one  
and betrothed the two that it reveals itself through revelations.  
The Nation and the Nations are typified by Leah and Rachel [respectively].  
The Synagogue and the Church were spoken of by the two sisters.  
God invited all nations to his wedding,  
for there is no nation on earth that is not his.  
The invitation of the Nations was dear to the Creator  
that all come to be his through conversion.  
He loved the Church and desired that she be his,  
for she is the Bride, who is even much more comely than Rachel.  
Although God betrothed the Daughter of the Nations,  
the community of the Nation preceded her and went to Adonai.  
Through the veil which Moses spread over his face [see Ex 34:33; 2 Cor 3:13]  
is depicted the covering of Leah, the oldest [sister].  
The daughter of the Hebrews was covered and stood before Adonai.  
Moses's brightness covered her ugliness, and she was unrecognizable.  
She was thought to be the Church by witnesses,  
and that account she wanted the covering lest she be exposed.  
Her appearance was even uglier than [that of] Leah, the daughter of the  
Haranites.  
Her eyesight was taken away—not [that] her eyes were dull [see Gn 29:17].  
She gazed at the calf [see Ex 32:1-29] and called it Lord, for she was blind  
[and] did not have the sight to ascertain the truth.  
The one deprived of eyesight entered first,  
and the comely Church, like Rachel, was dismissed.  
She was covered with Moses. No one recognized that she was blind,  
and, with a covering, she appeared as if she were lovely.  
The mistress of [comely] appearance was covered by the nations and was not  
recognized,  
but the ugly one, entirely veiled, enters the house of God.  
For the sake of the Church did God labor with humanity  
through revelations and mighty deeds.  
Since the Daughter of the Nation was the oldest [and] albeit she was ugly,  
they gave her to the Lord, like Leah the oldest [see Gn 29:26].  
This Nation was indeed the firstborn to God.

165. *Ibid.*, 220:20-221:2.

وَلَا يُبْصِرُ نِسَاءَ حَقِّهَا وَأَسْلَمَ وَصَلًا هَسَلًا ❖  
حَلَّ وَأَسْلَمَ فِي رَجُلٍ فَهَسَلٌ وَهَسَلٌ لَا يَدْعُو :  
فَلَجَّهَ وَحَكَّهَا أَفْهَمَ هَسَلًا فِي رَجُلٍ :  
حَكَّهَا نَعْمًا أَسْلَمَ وَأَفْ كَلَّ حَكَّهَا حَكَّ :

Although the Daughter of the Nations was beautiful, she was dismissed.<sup>166</sup>

Jacob of Sarug describes the Nation as being blind, for it chose the golden calf and called it Lord. Its lack of sight deprived it of recognizing the truth and seeing the true Lord. Therefore, its ugliness significantly exceeds that of Leah. Moses was as if a veil to Israel. By hiding its true appearance, it gave the impression of being beautiful. Its comeliness was an account of Moses. The Church, whom the Lord desired, was dismissed like Rachel was, and he ended up with the undesired Israel, the older sister, even if he had labored for the Church with revelations and mighty deeds.

In contrast to Leah and Israel, Rachel and the Church came in the daylight, for they have nothing to hide. Both are attractive, and their beauties shine forth on their faces. “The young Rachel and the youthful Church, who were beautiful, entered last, for the light showed their beauties.”<sup>167</sup>

Jacob of Sarug describes Rachel and the Church as young, for grooms prefer young brides. Notwithstanding her idol-worshipping past, the Church rejects her hand-made gods, and clings to her Lord: “she knows the Father,

166. *Ibid.*, 219:6-220:17.

[illegible]

167. *Ibid.*, 221:3-4.

حَسْبُكَ الْخَلْقُ وَبِعَهْدِكَ الْخَلْقُ حَقَّقْتَهُمْ ❖

اِذَا كَانَ يَوْمَ الْحُجَّةِ، وَسُطَا حِمْرُ اَبْنِهَا :  
 حَمَلًا وَخَتَمًا حَكَمًا وَنُسًا مَدَامُ، وَمَضَى بِهِ :  
 فَدَعَاهُ، وَخَتَمًا مِنْ اَلَّذِي كَانَ حَمْلًا اَعْلَاهُ :  
 مِنْهَا، وَخَتَمًا حَمَلًا يَوْمَ كَانَ يَوْمًا :  
 حَبَالًا، وَنَسَمَ يَوْمًا وَكَهْ حَبَالًا يَوْمًا، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ يَوْمًا :  
 وَكَانَ يَوْمًا خَتَمًا مَعَ اَلَّذِي كَانَ مَدَامُ، يَوْمًا :  
 حَمَلًا مَدَامُ، وَفَرَسَ مَدَامُ حَمَلًا مَعَ اَقْفَ يَوْمًا :  
 مَدَامُ، وَمَدَامُ مِنْ اَبْنِهَا، يَوْمًا :  
 فَهَمَلًا يَوْمًا، وَحَبَالًا يَوْمًا، وَحَدَا مَعَ سَائِلًا :  
 هَمَلًا يَوْمًا سَائِلًا، اَوْ مَعَ كَلَّا يَوْمًا سَائِلًا :  
 حَمَلًا سَائِلًا، وَهَمَلًا مِنْهَا، وَحَمَلًا يَوْمًا :  
 يَوْمًا، وَفَرَسَ مَدَامُ، وَفَرَسَ مَدَامُ حَمَلًا :  
 مَدَامُ حَمَلًا، وَلَا اِثْمَ نَسَمَ، وَهَمَلًا يَوْمًا :  
 مِنْهَا سَائِلًا، حَمَلًا خَتَمًا، وَلَا يَوْمًا :  
 مَدَامُ، حَبَالًا فَكَسَ اَلَّذِي كَانَ حَمْلًا اَعْلَاهُ :  
 وَكَانَ حَمَلًا مَدَامُ، يَوْمًا، وَهَمَلًا يَوْمًا :  
 مِنْهَا حَمَلًا، وَكَانَ يَوْمًا، وَفَرَسَ اَلَّذِي :

احۃ؛ اُلسَّلاۃُ کُلُّهَا مَعْقُوتٌ بِهٖ :

worships the Son, [and] accepts the [Holy] Spirit.”<sup>168</sup> As beautiful as Rachel is, the comeliness, grace, elegance, and attractiveness exceedingly surpass her beauty. Also, the Church and Rachel exceedingly love their husbands and without deceit.

Bridegrooms love young [brides], for they are beautiful.  
 The Church and Rachel, without deceit, loved their husbands.  
 It was not in deceit [that] Rachel went to the righteous one,  
 nor does the Church remain with the Holy One with a covering.  
 The exposed countenance of the Church is more beautiful than Rachel’s face.  
 She entered in the morning that everyone see how comely she is.  
 The Synagogue and Leah would not enter without a covering,  
 for they do not [ooze] comeliness that one desire them.  
 They employed pretense, deceit, and guile  
 with God and Jacob who represented him.<sup>169</sup>

The morning brought to light Leah’s deceit, and the brightness of the Son on the cross exposed the Synagogue’s guile. The light shining on the Church, standing at the foot of the cross, reveals her perfect countenance and unsurpassed beauty.

Lest the deceitful one remain with the true one,  
 the cross and morning exposed them, since they acted cunningly.  
 In the morning, Jacob gazed at Leah, who was ugly,  
 and the brightness of the Son revealed the Synagogue, which was dubious.  
 The Church stood before the True One with her face exposed.  
 She was uncovered, for her beauty proclaims her splendor.  
 Her appearance is full of the spots of beautiful ornaments.  
 She does not enter with a different look to cover her marks.  
 There is not a fleck in her beauty [see Eph 5:27; Col 1:22] that it be covered.  
 Rachel, whose appearance is beautiful and countenance is winsome, typified  
 her.<sup>170</sup>

168. *Ibid.*, 221:9-10.

169. *Ibid.*, 221:13-22.

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170. *Ibid.*, 222:1-10.

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These mysteries came to pass in the house of Laban  
because Jacob drew the entire path of the Son.  
He betrothed Rachel, but Leah entered. As one might say,  
instead of the Daughter of the Nations, the Synagogue entered although she  
was ugly.  
He typified her by the feeble-eyed symbolically.  
She was uglier than her by her actions.  
“the heart of the Nation was hardened, its ears were deaf, and  
eyes shut, lest it see or hear.”<sup>171</sup>  
It was not that the eyes of that one were dull [*lacuna*],  
but that she shut her eyes and ears to understanding.  
Leah was not to be blamed for her ugly and poor eyes,  
for she was ugly unwillingly as if in mystery.  
The Synagogue is blameworthy, for she shut her eyes willingly.  
The fault emanating from [one’s] freedom is much ugly.  
Credit is [due] to Leah, for she loved her husband although she was ugly.  
Woe to the despised Synagogue for it hates the One who loves her.  
The Daughter of the Hebrews shut her eyes and ears,  
and how uglier is she than the Daughter of the Haranites, Leah!  
The Church is loved although she is rejected because of her beauty  
and resembles the dismissed Rachel although she was fair.  
Jacob took [for wives] both the ugly and the beautiful one  
and resembled our Lord, who betrothed both the Nation and Nations to his  
Gospel.  
These just ones drew these,  
and so their news shines out throughout the regions.  
Jacob typifies our Lord and the daughter of Laban the Church.  
Blessed is the One by whose mysteries the righteous ones shine out through  
their actions.<sup>172</sup>

حَصْلَهُ وَخَلَعَ كَحِبْ إِيَّالَ أَهْلَ صَعَةِ ٥٥٥ :  
 مَحْذُومٌ يَوْمَ الدُّنْيَا وَحَكَّهُ كُنَّا أَسْرَ إِيَّاهُ نَاخِذُ :  
 حَوْسٌ وَصَحْلًا حَتْلًا زُومٌ وَإِزْلَالُ :  
 الْأَخْصَحُ كَمْ حَصَّ وَخَصْلًا دَاهِمٌ أَوْتَهَجُ :  
 كَمْ صَدَّ خَتْمُهُ يَوْمَؤَلَّ ... وَصَبَّ مَهْتَتُ :  
 وَأَوْتَهَجُ وَخَلَعَ كَحِبْ إِيَّالَ أَهْلَ صَعَةِ ٥٥٥ :  
 سَكَّ ذِكْرًا حَقَّقًا صَفْعَةً حَكَّهُ صَبْلًا يَوْمَؤَلَّ :  
 صَبْلًا يَوْمَؤَلَّ كَنْزٌ صَبْلًا حَصْبٌ حَصْبٌ يَوْمَؤَلَّ :  
 أَوْ هُمْ خَتْمُهُ يَوْمَؤَلَّ وَلَا تَعْبَهُ يَوْمَؤَلَّ تَسْلًا :  
 أَلَّا خَتْمُهُ دَاهِمٌ هَكَّ صَبْلًا هَكَّ :

The Son of the Rich One humbled himself by the course he undertook to grow up with the Daughter of the Lowly betrothed to him. Since [his] birth, he set off on the journey to walk with her that the Bride receive the custom of the Bridegroom and then he would take her [as a wife].

Thirty years did he walk with her on the earth of the evil ones that she subdue [evil] with him and then he would raise her up to his Father's abode.

He was a companion to her and instructed her through his intimacy that she not flee when he leads her to return to his abode.

He came to her father's house and was tried by poverty and was not weary of showing her how much he loved her.<sup>174</sup>

لَا جَبَلًا يَوْمَئِذٍ كُنَّا وَهَبْنَا وَهَتَعِي خَتَمَهُ :  
 فَهَبْنَا جَبَلًا وَجَنَحْنَاهُ كَحَمَلٍ خَتَمَهُ :  
 لُحْيَةً لَحْلًا وَنُسَكًا رَحِيحًا قَبْ هَبْنَا يَوْمَ :  
 خَتَمَهُ دَاوُتْشَهُ هُجْدًا يَوْمَئِذٍ جَبَلًا حُدْنًا :  
 نُسَكًا جَبَلًا قَبْ فَهَبْنَا يَوْمَ قَهْلًا هَقَافَةً :  
 هَقًا يَوْمَ حَقَمَقٍ أَوْ كَهَبْنَا كَهَبًا مَقَمًا :  
 هُكَبَ يَوْمَئِذٍ دَهْكَبَ طَانًا مَلًا وَهَمَلًا يَوْمَ :  
 حَقَمَقًا مَلًا وَهَجَبًا كَحَمَلٍ جَبَلًا يَوْمَ :

174. *Ibid.*, 331:7-16.

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is true that Jacob toils twenty years behind sheep in the freezing cold and scorching heat. Still, Jacob's hard labor and humbleness fail in comparison to the humility shown by the Ancient of Days (see Dn 7:9), who becomes a human being. Although divine, he wills to be born for the sake of his Bride. He grows up just like her and goes through the stages of her growth from infancy to adulthood. He desires her and wants to take her back with him to his heavenly adobe. He suffers shameful indignations for her sake and does not give up until they become one. He becomes the Son of Man and makes her the Daughter of God.

Jacob the Great was afflicted for twenty years  
 [toiling] behind sheep for the sake of Rachel, the daughter of the Haranites.<sup>175</sup>  
 Christ came, showed his love, and increased [it] by ten,  
 when he humbled himself thirty years for the sake the Church.  
 Jacob depicted this image in the land of Aram,  
 whither he went down, where he toiled and married, and whence he went up  
 as a vigorous one.  
 The freezing cold and scorching heat devoured Jacob<sup>176</sup> for Rachel's sake,  
 and he endured [all] on account of her love without murmuring.<sup>177</sup>  
 The Son of God yearned for the Daughter of Adam,  
 went down after her to bring her back to the abode of his Father,  
 and subjugated himself to hard labor—more than Jacob [did]—  
 thirty years on account of the love of the one whom he loved.  
 Jacob did not do what the Son of God did,  
 for there is no love that [can] ever resemble his [love] in the world,<sup>178</sup>  
 for our Lord, the great One, who agreed to become a child  
 although he is the Ancient [of Days]<sup>179</sup> and to bring the little girl to his  
 Father's house.  
 He became a child to grow up with her [and] in her nearness  
 that she know his love from his intimacy [and] how much he humbled  
 himself,  
 for she became the beloved one and went with him when he called her,  
 for he bore with her the burden of poverty.  
 Her ancestors treated him shamefully, and he endured [it] on her account.  
 They spat in his face.<sup>180</sup> Unless he had married her, he would not have left.  
 He endured their indignation for thirty years, was patient,  
 and did not consider his shame as shame on her account.

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175. See Gn 29:18, 29:27, 31:38-41.

176. See Gn 31:40.

177. See Gn 29:20

178. See Jn 15:13]

179. See Dn 7:9

180. See Mt 26:67



### 5.3.3 Samson and the Timnite Woman

He (Samson) went to the place on account of a woman he wanted to take [to wife].  
A mystery, clear as daylight, fell in with him.  
To betroth a woman, he went to the land of the Philistines [i.e., Timnah],

189. "HSJS III," 333:14-334:4, 334:13-18.

سَاءَ نَعْمَهِ حَصْحَمَهُ؛ إِذَا جَبَّ مَسُّهُ ❖  
 وَيُسَّ نِزْلُهُ؛ أَسْ أُمُّهُ لَمَّا وَبَا؛ وَكَا ❖  
 حَسْبُ هُوَ مَعْسَلٌ وَحَصْحَمَهُ فَنَبَّ حَتْلُهَا ❖

وَجِبَ الْإِمَامُ صَلَاةً مَحْمُودَةً وَبُحْبُوحَةً :  
وَالْمُحِبُّ مَحَبَّةً مَحْمُودَةً وَبُحْبُوحَةً :  
وَالْمُحِبُّ مَحَبَّةً مَحْمُودَةً وَبُحْبُوحَةً :

when a lion's whelp [came] roaring out toward him like a strong one.<sup>190</sup>  
 Whom does he (Samson) resemble except our Lord, who came to betroth  
 the Church of the Nations when death befell him like a mighty one.  
 To take [to wife], that daughter of the uncircumcised,<sup>191</sup> Samson lowered  
 himself  
 and depicted his Lord, who betrothed the Daughter of Pagans by his  
 Gospel.<sup>192</sup>

The Daughter of the Philistines whom Samson desires to take for a  
 wife bespeaks the pagan origin of the Bride whom the Lord wills to betroth.  
 Jacob of Sarug identifies this Bride with the Church of the Nations. She is the  
 Daughter of the Pagans whom the daughter of the uncircumcised, i.e., the  
 Timnite woman, typify. The Lion charging on Samson is a symbol of death  
 befalling Christ Jesus. The Lord dies on the cross and death takes him to his  
 den, so to speak.

Come. Look here. If you are capable, you will see rightly.  
 Take and depict an image for maidens and their fiancés.  
 Against Samson, who went out for the land of the Philistines,  
 a lion's whelp came threateningly to ravish him,  
 and against our Lord, who has come to betroth the Daughter of the  
 Aramaeans,  
 death dared to bring him to its den to dominate him.  
 Let us see now what befell death and the lion  
 on account of both our Lord and Simeon, his Nazirite [see Jgs 13:5].<sup>193</sup>

Samson's defeat of the Lion depicts God's killing death to save his  
 Bride from its grip.

To betroth a woman, who depicts a type of the Church of Light,

190. See Jgs 14:5.

191. See Jgs 14:3.

192. "HSJS V," 335:1-8.

ⲉⲩⲉⲛⲁ ⲕⲉ ⲕⲉ ⲁⲩⲱⲗ ⲛⲁⲥ ⲁⲥⲉⲛⲁ  
 ⲛⲁⲩⲱⲗ ⲛⲁⲩⲱⲗ ⲛⲁⲩⲱⲗ ⲛⲁⲩⲱⲗ ⲛⲁⲩⲱⲗ  
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ⲉⲩⲉⲛⲁ ⲕⲉⲛⲁ ⲕⲉⲛⲁ ⲕⲉⲛⲁ ⲕⲉⲛⲁ  
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193. *Ibid.*, 335:9-16.

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Samson was led<sup>194</sup> and, for this reason, he killed the lion's whelp.<sup>195</sup> The Daughter of the Pagans typified the Daughter of the Uncircumcised, for the Son of God killed death as he saved her.<sup>196</sup>

The lion does not hinder Samson's journey, and death cannot stand in the face of the Son of God. He triumphantly overcomes death, betroths the Church by his crucifixion, for whose sake he came down, and returns to his heavenly abode. She is now his forevermore.

The Son of God arose from his place and came to our land to betroth the Church of the Nations as we have said. Death, the lion, who devoured all generations, befell him. However, he killed death as Simon killed the Lion. He made his way, betrothed and took to wife, by his crucifixion, the one for whose sake he descended to the inhabitants of the earth. The lion was not able to bring to an end the journey of Samson, who betrothed and married whom he had desired and then left. Likewise, the journey of the Son of God did not end because of death, for he married the Church, made her his, and then he ascended.<sup>197</sup>

## 5.4 Diametrical Responses

John the Baptist betroths the Son of God to Israel and the Church. As has been shown above, the betrothal of Jacob to Leah and Rachel prefigured Christ's betrothal to these two communities. "Jacob took both the beautiful and ugly [daughters of Laban for wives]. He became like our Lord, who betrothed the Nation and Nations for his Gospel."<sup>198</sup> Jacob of Sarug presents two diametrical responses to the Heavenly Groom. "The Synagogue hated the

194. See Jgs 14:4.

195. See Jgs 14:6.

196. "HSJS V," 336:8-11.

وَبَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا مَصْعَدٌ مِّمَّا فِي مَلَكُوتِهِمْ لَا يَرَوْنَهُ إِلَّا أَلْبَابُهُمْ مُصَوِّغَتٌ وَإِلَيْهِ خُورٌ ۝

197. *Ibid.*, 336:14-337:2.

وَبُعِدَ، قَالَ لَهُ كَيْفَ أَفْعَلُ؟ وَابْنُ  
 مَرْثَدَةَ حَفِصَةُ أُمُّ وَهْبٍ، قَالَ لَأَزِلَنَّ مَعَكُمْ،  
 وَأَبُو بَرْصَةَ، قَالَ مَهْجُودُ بْنُ حَصَدٍ، وَخُذْنَا  
 وَهَبُ: هَبَّكَ أَمُّ وَهْبٍ وَهَبَ، قَالَ  
 وَمَعَهُ: كَيْفَ أَعْدُو: وَكَلِمَةُ هَبَّ أَلَا كَلِمَةُ

198. "HSJS III," 223:10-11.

حَضْرَٓةٓ ۙ وَكَفَّ ۙ وَحَمَلًا ۙ وَحَقَّقْنَا مَخْرَجَ كَهْدِنَا ۙ ❖

وَمَصْحَفٌ وَإِلْمٌ؛ وَإِلْمٌ لَهُ فَعِلٌ حَبْلٌ سَوِيٌّ :  
حَبْلٌ وَحَبْلٌ لَا حَبْلٌ، وَتَقْلٌ مَعْلٌ مَعْلٌ :

ذَٰلِكَ أَكْثَرُ ۖ مَن آتَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ لَآؤُهُ ۖ  
 مَن آتَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ لَآؤُهُ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ أَكْثَرُ ۖ  
 ذَٰلِكَ أَكْثَرُ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ أَكْثَرُ ۖ  
 ذَٰلِكَ أَكْثَرُ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ أَكْثَرُ ۖ  
 ذَٰلِكَ أَكْثَرُ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ أَكْثَرُ ۖ

مَلِكًا ۝ هُوَ الْمُحْصِي ۝ اُو۟لُو۟ الْعِلۡمِ ۝ عَلٰٓمُ الْغُ۬و۬بِ ۝

true Betrothed, who came to her, and the holy Church bowed down to, honored, and loved him.”<sup>199</sup>

The following sections elaborate on how the two Brides reciprocated Christ’s invitation to the matrimonial union.

### 5.4.1 Israel’s Response

Israel repeats her actions at Mt. Sinai by refusing once more her Lord, who came down for her sake. “She did not receive the Bridegroom, [her] Betrothed, who has come to her.”<sup>200</sup> In his *mimro* entitled *On Hosannas, the Colt, and the Sending of the Disciples* (ܐܘܨܗܢܐ ܕܗܘܨܢܐ ܕܠܥܠܐ ܕܡܬܪܝܢܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐܢܐ),<sup>201</sup> Jacob of Sarug describes Zion rejecting her Bridegroom despite the signs her prophets had revealed to her.

[A prophet] was proclaiming to her, “Awake, awake, and put on strength!”<sup>202</sup>  
Another was saying, “Exult, [O] Daughter of Zion, for your King has come.”<sup>203</sup>

However, she, full of wickedness, shut her mouth [so as not to] praise,  
stopped her ear[s], and did not receive the one who has come to her.

The rejected Bride gave herself up to nugatory idols,  
and did not accept the true Betrothed, who has come to her.

On Mt. Sinai his Father betrothed her, wrote her under his name,  
and placed around her neck lovely gems: all the commandments.

He put on her head the beautiful ornament of all the laws  
placed on her hands the Holy Scriptures like rings.

He betrothed her to his Son and gave her a ring from Mt. Sinai,  
yet the unworthy Bride did not receive the true Betrothed.

She murmured against his Father, even said to him she did not know him,  
and she began screaming, “I do not accept that he reigns over me.

I do not want the One who has come to approach me.

Why is it necessary for him to come near me when I do not love him?

I hate him. I loathe him, and he knows [it].

If he comes to me, I will stone him [See Jn 8:59, 11:8].

Since I utterly do not love the one who has come,

199. “HSJS V,” 631:9-10.

❖ ܕܠܥܠܐ ܕܡܬܪܝܢܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐܢܐ

ܐܘܨܗܢܐ ܕܗܘܨܢܐ ܕܠܥܠܐ ܕܡܬܪܝܢܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐܢܐ

200. *Ibid.*, 618:18.

❖ ܐܘܨܗܢܐ ܕܗܘܨܢܐ ܕܠܥܠܐ ܕܡܬܪܝܢܐ ܕܬܠܡܕܐܢܐ

201. *Ibid.*, 613-631.

202. See Is 51:9.

203. See Zec 9:9.



let him go to where he would be received and loved.<sup>204</sup>

Zion's Daughter murmurs against the Bridegroom's Father although he had betrothed her to his Son on Mt. Sinai and had given her lovely gems, a crown, and rings. These are symbols of the Decalogue, the laws, and the Holy Scriptures, respectively. She declares her hate and loathing toward her Betrothed, rejects him, and chooses empty and worthless idols over him. Moreover, she threatens to stone him. Israel responds thus despite the message of its prophets. Isaiah and Zechariah had prophesied that the Son would come to her, and both prophets had prepared her for his coming. Nevertheless, she refused them and spurned all the prophets God sent to her.

[Zion] covered her face [so as not to read]<sup>205</sup> Zechariah,  
"Behold your Lord is coming on a colt.<sup>206</sup> Get up and go meet him."  
She hated Isaiah, who proclaimed the truth before his (the Lord's) coming,  
and who was shouting at her, "Awake, awake, put on strength!"<sup>207</sup>  
She abhorred David the King, for she was insane,  
and all the sayings of prophecies did enter her ears.  
Ezekiel was driven away, the entire scroll of his prophecy [was dismissed],  
and the rabid harlot did not listen to him.  
The evil Bride did not accept all of them,  
for she was unwilling to receive the true Betrothed lest she be exposed.<sup>208</sup>

204. "HSJS V," 623:20-624:18.

❖ אִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי וְיִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי אֵלֶּיךָ יָשָׁב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	מִן מַחְנֵהוּ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ

205. *Lit.* from reading

206. See Zec 9:9.

207. See Is 51:9.

208. "HSJS V," 625:5-14.

❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ
❖ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵּן בְּיָדְךָ



Consequently, the Son of God repudiates the Bride who disdained him and chooses the Daughter of the Aramaeans, the Church, whose response to him is opposed to that of her older sister Israel.

His crown of thorns wove a diadem for the Daughter of the Aramaeans, the Bride whom he seized from among the idols and wrote her under his name.

[...]

The Daughter of the Hebrews was rejected because she hated him, and he repudiated her in the presence of the Nations on the great feast day.

She gave him a reed<sup>215</sup> pen to write her a bill of divorce,<sup>216</sup> for she saw that he greatly loves holiness like his Begetter.

She made him take the reed pen that he might repudiate her, that she might be free from him,

and that she might go and have her fill with Baal, the calf, and Tammuz.<sup>217</sup>

She gave the Bridegroom a reed pen, for she hated him, that he might subscribe the bill of divorce he wrote to her.

[...]

Lest the Son of God make her useless through his teaching, she gave [him] the reed-pen to go to her beloveds.<sup>218</sup>

#### 5.4.2 The Church's Response

In contrast to the Synagogue, whom the Mighty One repudiates because it rejected him despite the stupendous manifestation on Mt. Sinai and regardless of the fact that he saved it from slavery and Egyptian tyranny, the Church clung to the Lord notwithstanding that he manifested himself in weakness. The fearful vision on Mount Sinai is absent when the Word of God becomes incarnate: neither fire, nor dark cloud, nor thunder and lightning,

215. See Mt 27:30. The soldiers struck Jesus with a reed, which Jacob of Sarug turns into a pen.

216. *Lit.* to put her away

217. See Ez 8:14.

218. "HSJS II," 546:15-16, 546:19-547:6, 547:11-12.

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and nor horn blowing. He came down to human beings not in a splendiferous way, but in humility.

That one (the Synagogue) despised the Mighty One in that magnificence,  
and this one (the Church) madly clung to the Son.  
He did not descend to her (the Church) [carried] by angels as [he did] on  
Sinai  
nor did he blow heavenly horns for her.  
Not with laws, not in a dark cloud, not in a cloud,  
not in a fire [and] not even with blazing lightning,  
—the house where he dwelt did not smoke on account of him—  
but in humility did the Son of the Mighty One come down to earth.  
He manifested himself to humanity [wrapped] in swaddling clothes,<sup>219</sup>  
hungry,<sup>220</sup> thirsty,<sup>221</sup> [in need of] sleep<sup>222</sup> and work,<sup>223</sup> and needy.<sup>224</sup>  
When Satan tempted him in the desert [See Mt 4:1-11],  
when the unbelievers called him the prince of demons [see Mt 9:34],  
when the waves of scandals were breaking<sup>225</sup> on him from every side,  
when he was reviled because he ate with sinners [see Mt 9:11],  
when they chided him for mingling with tax-collectors [see Mt 9:11],  
when they demanded that he pay the king a census tax [see Mt 22:15-22],  
when he had nowhere to rest his head [see Mt 8:20],  
when he processed alone [riding] an unsaddled colt,<sup>226</sup>  
when a piece of cloth girded his loin in the likeness of a servant,  
when he washed the feet<sup>227</sup> of dust whom his hands formed,<sup>228</sup>  
when a [close] associate who accompanied him sold him,<sup>229</sup>  
when the faithful ones who adhered to him denied him,<sup>230</sup>  
when a judge interrogated him as a killer,<sup>231</sup>  
when he was scourged with whips as a convict,<sup>232</sup>  
when he clung to a column in the tribunal and drank torment,  
when lunatics clothed in shameful clothing,<sup>233</sup>  
when a crown of thorns woven by defiled people was on his head,<sup>234</sup>

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219. See Lk 2:7, 12.

220. See Mt 4:2.

221. See Jn 19:28.

222. See Mt 8:24.

223. See Jn 5:17.

224. See Mt 21:3.

225. *Lit.* were blowing

226. See Mt 21:1-11; Mk 11:1-11; Lk 19:28-38; Jn 12:12-15.

227. See Jn 13:1-11.

228. See Gn 2:7.

229. See Mt 26:14-16; Mk 14:10-11; Lk 22:3-6.

230. See Mt 26:69-75; Mk 14:50-52, 14:66-72; Lk 22:56-62; Jn 18:17-18, 25-27.

231. See Mt 27:11-14; Mk 15:2-5; Lk 23:2-3; Jn 18:29-38.

232. See Mt 27:30; Mk 15:19; Lk 23:16; Jn 19:1.

233. See Mt 27:28; Mk 17:17; Lk 23:11; Jn 19:2.

234. See Mt 27:29; Mk 17:17; Jn 19:2, 5.



He enters Jerusalem alone on an unsaddled colt. He washes the feet of others as a servant. One of his apostles sold him out for thirty pieces of silver while the others abandoned him. To make matters worse, his accusers judge him a killer, scoff and mock him, place a crown of thorns on his head, repeatedly strike, and scourge him. Consequently, he suffered greatly. Unjustly sentenced to be crucified, he carries his cross, on which they nail him. They strip him naked to cast lots for his garments and make him drink vinegar offered to him on a sponge. They bore his side pitilessly with a spear to make sure he is dead. His sympathizers embalm, wrap, and bury him. Despite the Lord's displayed weakness, the Church clings to him and stays by his side. Whereas Israel, who had known God, chooses a golden calf over him, the Church, who had worshiped foreign gods, leaves them and becomes united with him. The Church does not go back to her graven images and does not exchange him for idols although she sees him at his weakest point.<sup>242</sup> Consequently, by cleaving to Christ, the Church accepts his betrothal proposal and becomes the Bride of Christ.

Since her Bridegroom is a very wealthy King, the Bride deserves the finest jewelry. The finest gems, precious stones, gold, pearls and the like should adorn her ornaments.

Let golden chains for the Bride who ascended from the Waters  
and strips of silver for the Mistress of Shining enhance [her] beauty.  
Let pearls be brought from Cush<sup>243</sup> for the high head,  
along with arrays of precious stones from India.

242. See *Ibid.*, 38, footnote 1.

[...]

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[...] when they cast lots for his garments [to see] to whom they would belong,  
when bitterness and vinegar in a sponge was offered him  
when his side was pitilessly pierced with a lance,  
and when he died, was embalmed, wrapped, and buried, the Church saw him  
and did not exchange him for a strange [god]—blessed is her taste!  
Blessed is he who seized her from idolatry.

243. Ethiopia

Let the sea bring the rich blood of the Tyrian murices<sup>244</sup>  
 and its friend, the dry land, the stones of Thummim and Urim.<sup>245</sup>  
 Let the mountains offer all the emeralds and valuable gems,  
 and the depths send jacinth<sup>246</sup> from their treasures:  
 precious stones from the forehead of snakes;  
 gold from Ophir<sup>247</sup> for beautiful beads;  
 and multifarious necklaces and chokers for the neck of the Crowned one (the  
 Bride).  
 Her Betrothed is wealthy. Let her adornments be multiplied.<sup>248</sup>

Nevertheless, the Church rejects these ostentatious, immaterial ornaments. She beautifies herself with Christ's suffering, for she values more than anything else the cross upon which her Beloved hung, the nails hammered into his hands and feet, and the water and the blood flowing out of his side which dyes her wedding dress.

The Bride says, "I have the cross instead of ornaments,  
 and all my beauties are arrayed with him on my limbs.  
 He dyes my clothes for me with his blood and adorns me.  
 Thus, I do not desire the blood of the Tyrian murices.  
 He places his mark between my eyes and purifies me.  
 Therefore, golden chains and pearls are not beneficial to me.  
 With his anointing, he gladdens my countenance and sanctifies me.  
 Hence, the strips of silver, which are used for me, are not for me.  
 Instead of jacinth and valuable gems, he gave me his nails  
 that I forge all the betrothal ornaments from them."<sup>249</sup>

244. From this kind of seashell the purple dye was extracted.

245. See Ex 28:30; 1 Sm 14:41; 28:6.

246. See Ex 28:19.

247. See Gn 10:29; 1 Kings 9:26-28, 10:11, 22:49; 2 Chr 8:17-18, 9:10; Job 22:24; 28:16; Ps 45:10; Is 13:12.

248. "HSJS I," 206:16-207:7.

✧ אֶתְּנָהּ וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם חַיִּים וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	כִּבְּלָהּ וְיִשְׁמְרוּ חַיִּים וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם
✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם
✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם
✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם
✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם
✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם
✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם

249. *Ibid.*, 207:8-17.

✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם
✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם
✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם
✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם
✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם
✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם
✧ מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם	מִן־הַיָּם וְהָאֵלָהִים יִשְׁמְרוּ מִן־הַיָּם

The crucifixion of Jesus is revelatory, for the cross manifests the identity of the crucified One. The Church recognizes and identifies him as the Son of God, in contrast to Israel that remained blinded. Using Paul's voice, the Church shouts in the synagogues that Emmanuel betrothed her through this crucifixion. Therefore, the Church deserts her old pagan ways, clings to Christ, her Lord, and boasts only in his cross (see Gal 6:14).

The daughter of the Aramaeans saw you, Emmanuel [see Is 7:14], on the cross,  
and recognized who you are because of your mighty wonder.  
Envy blinded the Daughter of the Hebrews. Thus, she did not recognize you,  
and since she hated you, the power that occurred did not excite her.  
The Church of the Nations, the Daughter of the Day, beloved by you,  
recognized you, Lord, through the crucifixion and that you are God.  
[...]  
Behold the voice of the Bride rose, and she shouts in the synagogues,  
"I shall not boast except in him [see Gal 6:14].  
Emmanuel came, betrothed me through his crucifixion,  
and I recognize who he is, and whose Son he is. He shall not be dishonored.  
As a destitute, he came to our house when he betrothed me,  
and I felt that he has riches. Thus, I sallied forth with him.  
I detested my ancestors on his account, for I love him.  
Fire and sword marched out against me and did not terrify me.  
[...]  
On his account did I desert my ancestors, for I have loved him,  
and I scorned idols and every god of idolatry.  
His cross became for me a magnificent diadem, which I put on my head,  
and I shall not boast except in it [see Gal 6:14]!"<sup>250</sup>

Consequently, the Bride shouts for joy, for Jesus has saved her, freed her from her captives, and enriches her with his mysteries. The appropriate

250. "HSJS II," 188:16-189:1, 189:6-13, 189:18-21.

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The saved assembly of the Church of the Nations shouts for joy,  
for you have freed it from the stumbling block of vain idols.  
The Daughter of the Aramaeans exults on your day and rejoices in you,  
whereas the daughter of the Hebrews was sad. She scorned [you], and was  
furious.  
[...]  
Behold! The shepherds and their herds bow down to you [see Lk 2:8-20]  
instead of the flock that crucified its Shepherd on Golgotha [see Jn 10:1-22].  
Behold the assemblies of the Nations kneel down before you in all places,  
whereas the band of Caiaphas's people reviled you [see Mt 26:57-68].  
Behold they are shouting to you "Holy, Holy" [see Is 6:3] in the assemblies,  
whereas the Synagogue of the Nation shouted, "Condemn [him] to death."<sup>251</sup>  
[...]  
Behold the Virgin Church resounds [your praises], is enriched by you, and  
she rejoices in you  
because you brought her back from the captors.<sup>252</sup>

Jacob of Sarug speaks of this indissoluble marriage in his *mimro* known as *On the End* (ܐܢܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ).<sup>253</sup> Contemplating Gn 2:24, the bishop of Batnan interprets the man leaving his father and mother and clinging to his wife as Christ, and the spouse as the Church. Accordingly, Moses “symbolically depicted an image of the Church and Christ.”<sup>254</sup> Paul’s letter to the Ephesians

(see Eph 5:32) is the foundation of Jacob's explanation. The true Bridegroom and Bride are Christ and the Church, respectively. Christ's sacrifice on the cross is the proof of their mutual love.

"I speak concerning Christ and not Adam,  
and also regarding the Church and not Eve, who ruined her man."<sup>255</sup>  
They are the Bridegroom and the true Bride, who are one,  
and [his] slaughter and crucifixion seal the proof of their love.<sup>256</sup>

In his *mimro On the Veil of Moses* (ܝܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ),<sup>257</sup> an exegesis of Ex 34:33-35, Jacob of Sarug also expounds on Gn 2:24.

The hidden Father betrothed the Bride to his Only-Begotten  
and taught symbolically through prophecy.  
He built with his love a great house for the Bride of Light  
and represented the Bridegroom with various types on its palaces.  
Moses came in, described, like a skilled painter,  
the Bridegroom and Bride, and hid with a veil<sup>258</sup> the great painting.  
He wrote in his book "a man shall leave his father and mother  
and cling to his wife that the two become one whole."<sup>259</sup>  
The prophet Moses introduced the subject of a man and woman  
that on their account Christ and his Church might be spoken of.  
With the great Eye of Prophecy, he saw how  
Christ becomes one with his Church in the waters.  
He gazed at him who put her on in the womb of virginity,  
and she put him on in the waters of baptism.  
Behold the Bridegroom and Bride are caused to become one spiritually  
and on their account did Moses write down, "the two are one."  
However, the Nation, unworthy of the great mystery, thought  
that he said "the two are one" concerning a man and a woman.  
The covered Moses gazed at Christ and called him "man"  
and gazed at the Church and called her woman for a reason.  
So that he might not speak of [this] subject clearly before the Hebrews,  
he covered his words from the outsiders with different affairs.

ܝܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ

255. See Eph 5:32.

256. "HSJS V," 883:3-6 (Syriac); Babakhan, "Fin du Monde," 370 (French).

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257. See "HSJS III," 283-305; *Jacob of Sarug's Homily on the Veil on Moses' Face*, ed. Sebastian P. Brock and George Anton Kiraz, trans. Sebastian P. Brock, TCLA, vol. 20 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009). For a French translation, see Jacques Babakhan, "Homélie de Jacques de Saroug sur le Voile de Moïse où est Expliqué le Mystère des Noces du Christ et de L'Église," *LVS*, 397, (July 1954): 142-156.

258. See 2 Cor 3:12-18.

259. See Ex 2:24; Eph 5:31.





The language speaking of the Lord as becoming of the Daughter of the Wretched and she of him highlights that the Bridegroom and the Bride are now one. Their union cannot be annulled, and thus, it lasts forever.

The Lord's union with the Church is unique and not like any other marriage between a man and a woman.

Wives do not thus cling to their husbands  
as the Church clings to the Son of God.  
Which Bridegroom dies for the sake of the Bride except for our Lord?  
Which Bride has beseeched a slain [man] to become her husband?  
Who has thrown in, from ever, his blood to the marriage-settlements  
except for the crucified One, who sealed the marriage feast with his  
afflictions?  
Who has seen a corpse lying at a wedding feast,  
the Bride embraces it and remains that she be comforted by it?  
At which wedding feast was a banquet and instead of bread  
they broke the body of the Bridegroom for the guests except here?  
Death separates the wives of men from their husbands  
but joins this Bride with her Beloved.  
He died on the cross and gave his body to the Glorious One.  
Behold she tears it in pieces and eats from eats from it daily.  
He opened his side [see Jn 19:34] and prepared his cup with his healing blood  
and gave [it] to her that she drink and leave behind her too many idols.  
With oil, she receives his anointing, in the water, she puts him on, and in the  
bread, she eats him.  
In wine, she swallows him that the world perceive that they are one.  
He died on the cross, and she does not replace him to be for another.  
She loves his death, for she knows that she has life through it.  
Man and woman were a pretext for this mystery,  
and the image, type and a figure resembling its actions.  
Moses spoke of this mystery [using] them as a pretext,  
covered and kept it under the veil lest it be exposed.  
The great Apostle, however, revealed its beauty, showed it to the world,  
and the saying Moses, "the two are one," shone and was substantiated.<sup>266</sup>

266. *Ibid.*, 290:10-291:14.

أَصْلًا وَجَبَلًا سَكُنًا حَمِيمًا وَدَّ لَكَ	لَا هَؤُلَاءِ سَكُنَتْ تَقَا حَمَّ حَاحِيَهُ
وَأَمَّا كَلَامًا حَمِيمًا كَمَلًا وَتَهْدِي لَكَ	أَمَّا سَكُنًا سَكُنًا كَلَامًا حَمِيمًا أَلَّا حَمِيمًا
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فَكَلَامًا وَتَهْدِي حَمِيمًا كَلَامًا	كَلَامًا سَكُنًا حَمِيمًا وَتَهْدِي لَكَ
وَأَمَّا كَلَامًا حَمِيمًا وَتَهْدِي لَكَ	تَهْدِي حَمِيمًا وَتَهْدِي حَمِيمًا
وَأَمَّا كَلَامًا حَمِيمًا وَتَهْدِي لَكَ	حَمِيمًا كَلَامًا حَمِيمًا وَتَهْدِي لَكَ
وَأَمَّا كَلَامًا حَمِيمًا وَتَهْدِي لَكَ	لَا وَتَهْدِي حَمِيمًا وَتَهْدِي لَكَ

Another argument for this indissoluble marriage is the fact that the Church consumes the body of her Bridegroom and drinks his blood. Instead of decaying, his corpse turns into the wedding banquet, the source of food spread for the Bride and her guests. It nourishes the Church, and she partakes of it daily. The three Mysteries of Initiation, Baptism, Chrismation, and the Eucharist denote that the Son of God and the Church are one.

As long as his finger has written my dowry, who settles it,  
and my Bridegroom, who offered himself to me, is my marriage portion?  
If he desires to separate me from him, it would be impossible,  
and he would not be able to, for he would deny himself, since, behold, he is  
with me.

She who leaves [her husband] would lay claim to her dowry  
and take with her everything written in the [marital] bond.  
How can I leave when my dowry is the Bridegroom?

Even if I would leave—God forbid that I would leave—he would [have to] come with me.  
 Joined to him I am, and there is no way that I separate from him,  
 for I am with him whether in life or death.<sup>267</sup>

Furthermore, Jacob explains the biblical narratives of Mt 12:46-50, Mk 3:31-35, and Lk 8:19-21 in light of a man cleaving to this wife. The Church is the Lord's brother, sister, and mother. In this manner, the bishop of Batnan argues that Jesus leaves his mother to cling to his Bride and the two become one.

"Who is my mother? Or who are my siblings?"<sup>268</sup> says the Bridegroom.  
 I have the Church. She is my brothers, sisters, and my mother."  
 Behold he left his mother and clung to his spouse in a pure manner,  
 and the saying of Moses, who said that the two [became one], was confirmed.<sup>269</sup>

Becoming one bespeaks of the bond between Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, and the Church, his Bride. Moreover, this marital union lasts forever. Jacob founds this elucidation on Rm 8:35-39, where Paul argues that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The Bride-Church echoes Paul's words that nothing can split her up from her Christ, her Bridegroom. Despite his horrific demise, the Church remains loyal to Jesus.

In the book of Moses, "a man and [his] wife are one [Gn 2:24]."  
 However, it was evident that they are not one as we have said.  
 By the mighty eye of apostleship, Paul recognized  
 this mystery, which is greater than [any] explanation.  
 "I say in reference to Christ and his Church

267. "HSJS IV," 784:2-11 (Syriac); Grill, "Heiligtum der Kirche," 50-51 (German); Griffith, "In the Shadow of the Mosque," 332 (French).

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268. See Mt 12:48; Mk 3:33.

269. "HSJS V," 883:7-884:8 (Syriac); Babakhan, "Fin du Monde," 370 (French).

<p>ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ          ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ          ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ</p>	<p>ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ          ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ          ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁ</p>
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“Nor height, nor depth, nor death,  
 nor life, nor sword, nor angels,  
 nor principalities, nor powers, nor dominions,  
 nor present things nor future things in their many forms,  
 nor another Creation will change my opinion about<sup>270</sup>  
 the Bridegroom, to whom I was betrothed in holiness [see Rom 8:35-39].”  
 Behold the one [man] and the one [woman], who [become] one as it is  
 written:  
 Christ and his Church, whose love not even a sword separates [see Eph 5:25].  
 He (Christ) was treated with contempt on the cross. Still, she is proud of him,  
 for he is the Son of God.  
 He was hung on a tree,<sup>271</sup> and she boastfully bears his sufferings.  
 “May I never boast except  
 in the cross of shame, my pride, and by which I was saved.”<sup>272</sup>  
 Behold the concord: not even in death will she renounce [him].  
 The mystery of Moses that the two [become] one has [finally] been  
 explained.<sup>273</sup>

The eschatological marriage feast is a Syriac symbol that found its roots in the aspirations of the early Syriac ascetics, who looked forward to their union with Christ in the wedding banquet and afterward in the heavenly bridal chamber.<sup>274</sup> The Syriac Fathers developed it later into a symbol of the Church as attested by Ephrem.<sup>275</sup> According to Jacob of Sarug, the Bride's



wedding feast takes place on Golgotha, where the Son of God is crucified. It is a unique kind of banquet insofar as it is rich in sufferings and the food is the body and blood of the Bridegroom.

The grand banquet of the crucifixion, rich in sufferings,  
pressed wine for the one who entered it that they drink.  
The [wedding] guests whom the slain Bridegroom invited to rejoice with  
him,  
a sharpened spear met them at his wedding-feast.<sup>276</sup>

The Church's Beloved offers her his body as the source of her life and invites all to his marriage. He is the "exalted Bridegroom, who summoned all the worlds to his marriage feast"<sup>277</sup> and "the Heir of the kingdom, who invited the worlds to his wedding banquet."<sup>278</sup> His wounds are the well satisfying her thirst. She, in turn, summons all the Nations to this royal banquet and presents to them her Bridegroom's food. Allowing them to partake of the Eucharist, his true body and his true blood, the Son of God makes human beings his relatives, thus raising them to a rank higher than that of the angels to the degree that these heavenly beings would be envious if they could.

The Virgin [Church] approaches and sees the Bridegroom, her slain  
Betrothed,  
burns with his love, kneels down, and embraces the body of the Son.  
With her lips, she sups up his blood from his wounds.  
She puts around her neck all his sufferings like a necklace.  
She invites the Nations to the table of the King to delight them in  
the abundant crumbs [see Mt 15:27] of the Bridegroom's body available to  
her.  
Also, she celebrates all the mysteries concealed among the angels  
as if she were the teacher of the heavenly beings.  
The hidden, heavenly hosts deem humans blessed,  
for they were esteemed worthy to be brought to this life.  
If there were jealousy among the angels,  
the cherubim would come close to envying humanity,

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(وَالْمَلَكُوتُ حَبْلًا وَبَلَدًا أَوْ اَلْمَلَكُوتُ اَيُّدِيَهُ فَيَنْهَى سَلَامًا هَلْ يَدُ اَيُّدِيَهُ كَبَرْتَهُ سَعْلًا  
276. "HSJS II," 640:4-7.

هَمْلًا وَكُلَّ رُفْعَةٍ أَلْ مَدْلَا سَعْلًا :  
اُتَمَّتْ رُفْعَةُ سَدْلًا مَهْلًا حَمْلًا حَمْلًا :  
277. *Ibid.*, 375:8.

سَدْلًا وَرُفْعَةً وَكَبَرْتَهُ حَمْلًا مَلَا كَسَلَةً كَبَرْتَهُ :  
278. *Ibid.*, 375:10.

حَمْلًا حَمْلًا وَرُفْعَةً حَمْلًا حَمْلًا :  
حَمْلًا حَمْلًا وَرُفْعَةً حَمْلًا حَمْلًا :

since the former carry him on their backs in awe [see Ez 1],  
 and the latter bear him in the palms of their hands.  
 Those [spirits] cry out “Blessed”<sup>279</sup> like ones distant from their place,  
 and these [humans] eat at his table as kinsfolk.  
 He gave a figure to the chariot that it bear him [see Ez 1:26],  
 and gave the Church his Body and Blood, which are not shadows.  
 He summoned her and drew her near that she might touch his flesh and hold  
 his body  
 to reveal openly to her the truth about how much he loves her.<sup>280</sup>

Christ’s Bride, the Church, along with her Bridegroom, summons all nations to their wedding feasts and invites them to enjoy the delights of his body. “The King’s Bride prepared a marriage feast for the entire world. Come, [O] Nations and Worlds, to the feast of the glorious One.”<sup>281</sup> The Eucharist is the center of this imagery and replaces Gihon and the other three rivers (see Gn 2:13), the source of life for the entire world. Furthermore, the Church distributes the body and blood of her Bridegroom, the exhaustible fountainhead of life, to nourish her children. The color of the Bride’s wedding dress obtained from the waters of the baptism is white but red when she receives it at the crucifixion on Golgotha.<sup>282</sup>

Behold she felt elated at the virginity the Bridegroom had given her,  
 at the white [garments] which she put on from the waters [when] she went  
 down [to the river],  
 at the cross of light hanging around her neck like a necklace,  
 at the ornament of the Son’s sufferings dear to her,

279. See Is 6:3.

280. “HSJS IV,” 609:1-20.

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281. “HSJS I,” 194:19-20.

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282. The colors of the Bridegroom and Bride are white and red. These colors designate baptism and the Eucharist.

and at the fountainhead of blood and water flowing from him [see Jn 19:34],  
 by whom she sits as by Gihon [see Gn 2:13] filled with life.  
 She eats from him, for he willed to become food.  
 She drinks from him, for he desired to become a drink.  
 She breaks his body, lifts it up, and places it in the mouths of her children.  
 She mixes his blood and all drink life from him.  
 She tears him in pieces and puts him on her table every day.  
 She distributes him to the nations and worlds that they live because of him.<sup>283</sup>

The children of light and the righteous are the wedding guests and enter with the Son of God to his wedding banquet. They feast on the Bridegroom whose appearance reminds Jacob of Sarug of a table covered with the choice produce, which is, once more, a reference to the Eucharist.

The Bridegroom enters, the children of the light enter with him,  
 and all the righteous rejoice in his wedding feast.  
 His appearance is like a table covered with choice produce,  
 and all his invitees take delight in it in their seats.  
 They feed on it like a pasture of a new life,  
 are satiated from it, and enriched by it spiritually.<sup>284</sup>

The Eucharist and the Bridegroom are so intertwined that the Church only accepts as the Bridegroom him who offers her his body to eat and his blood to drink. The Eucharist issued forth from the side of the slain One who married his Beloved on the cross is paramount insofar as it allows the Church to recognize her Lord, who is simultaneously the Son of God and the Son of Man.

The Church never acknowledges that the Father has two Sons,  
 for he has [only] One, and to him, she is betrothed, for he is God,  
 and this only-Begotten is the Son of God,

283. "HSJS II," 237:20-238:10.

✧ ܕܚܫܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ	ܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :
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284. *Ibid.*, 396:12-17.

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the one crucified between thieves on Golgotha.<sup>285</sup>  
If he (God) had another [Son] foreign to the crucifixion,  
she would not recognize him, for he did not betroth her.  
She is betrothed through blood. Unless he has blood, he is not the  
Bridegroom,  
for the Only-Begotten betrothed her by his blood when he betrothed her.  
Unless he has a body to distribute to the partakers of his mystery,<sup>286</sup>  
she does not belong to him, for she craves to eat the body of the Bridegroom.  
If, however, he has a body and blood, he is the Bridegroom.  
The one who has a body and blood, it is clear that he will die.<sup>287</sup>

Furthermore, the wedding feast has eschatological connotations drawn from the fact that the martyrs are also invitees to the marriage ceremony and recline with the Bridegroom and Bride at their table.<sup>288</sup> These guests include, for example, the innocent children whom Herod slew. "The beloved wedding guests arrived at the marriage feast of the Bridegroom, and offered him fresh blood from their necks [see Mt 2:16-18]."<sup>289</sup> Their blood spilled for the sake of the Bridegroom is their wedding gifts they offered their host, and it symbolizes the crucifixion of Christ.

The blood of the beloved [infants] was brought to the marriage feast instead of marriage gifts  
that the entire marriage feast might shine with blood from the beginning.  
Slaughter was depicted at the marriage feast symbolically,  
and whoever entered to be a wedding guest poured their blood.  
The mystery came out, plucked first-ripe grapes,  
and pressed out of them a new wine for the King-Bridegroom,  
The Son of the Virgin invited virgin wedding guests

285. See Is 53:12; Mt 27:38; Mk 15:27; Lk 22:37, 23:33; Jn 19:18.

286. *Lit.* children of his mystery

287. "HSJS III," 620:15-621:5.

١٠٦ : لَاقِ لَا مُصَادَمَ حُبًّا حَبْلًا لَّاحًا :  
 ١٠٧ : وَهُوَ سُسْبُتًا حَبْلًا وَكَلَمًا :  
 ١٠٨ : أُنَبِّئُكَ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَسْمَعْهُ وَكَلَمَهُ :  
 ١٠٩ : حَبْلًا حَبْلًا وَهُوَ كَلَمًا :  
 ١١٠ : أَلَا أَنَّهُ كَلَمًا فَكَلَمًا :  
 ١١١ : لَاقِ أَنَّهُ كَلَمًا فَكَلَمًا :

288. See "HSJS II," 640:18.

دَعَا مُصْحٰمًا، وَهٰكِي سَقَا لَهُ مَتْعَةً :

The holy ones (martyrs) reclined at this banquet of sufferings.

289. "HSJS I," 142:18-19.

تَبَّهٗ لَّاسْمَا وَحَمْدُهُ لَآ إِلَهَ سِوَاكَ :

مَمْدُودٌ مَّا مَعِي وَتَبَّهٗ لَّاسْمَا

that, with the virgin blood, they might symbolize his slaughter and his offering.<sup>290</sup>

The bodies of the martyrs who met their demise for not renouncing Christ lie around in his wedding feast. “Bridegroom of Blood in whose wedding feast dead bodies lie.”<sup>291</sup> Jacob of Sarug provides his audience with a vivid scene of the heavenly wedding banquet.

They (the martyrs) were struck as gold and gained beauty like ornaments  
that they be the Bride’s adornments at [her] wedding feast.  
The slain Bridegroom invited them to [his] supper,  
and they brought with them their blood, their marriage gifts.  
Behold I see the banquet of sufferings filled with the slain,  
and I see the Bride exulting in their dead bodies:  
throats cut; bodies sawed; flesh lacerated with combs;  
heads lopped off and the corpses of all the victims.  
The Virgin Bride, greatly rejoicing, is among them,  
and the hideous sights of their chopped off pieces are dear to her.<sup>292</sup>

The Bride ultimately enters the bridal chamber, which is a symbol of the kingdom of heaven.<sup>293</sup> In the Syriac tradition, the symbolism of the bridal chamber finds its origin in the Parable of the Ten Virgins (see Mt. 25:1-13)<sup>294</sup> and goes back at least to the early third century.<sup>295</sup> Like the nuptial imageries, the bridal chambers depicts the intimate union of God and human beings.

290. *Ibid.*, 145:14-21.

<p>✦ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܫܚܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ</p>	<p>ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :</p>
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291. “*HSJS II*,” 636:12.

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292. *Ibid.*, 639:1-10.

<p>✦ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ          ✦ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ</p>	<p>ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :          ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ :</p>
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293. See “*HSJS III*,” 299:11.

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A marriage feast was held, and the Bride entered the bridal chamber.

294. See Brock, “*Bridal Chamber*,” 181.

295. See *Ibid.*, 182.



Jacob of Sarug interprets the Lord's crucifixion as the marriage banquet. The Bridegroom offers his body as food and blood as drink to his Bride, who, in turn, presents the Eucharist at the altar of her Lord, the life-giving nourishment, to their guests. Therefore, one can infer that the Divine Liturgy, a memorial of the death and resurrection of Christ, celebrated in churches throughout the world, is the marriage banquet of the Lord and his Church. The Church's bishops and priests are today's marriage-brokers, like Moses, John the Baptist, the Apostles, and Paul before them. Their primary ministry consists in calling people to conversion, bringing them to God, and providing the faithful with the body and blood of the Bridegroom, the pledge of forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The unity between the Bridegroom and Bride is indissoluble. Not even death can separate the two. Just as Christ goes to the tomb, defeats death, and conquers its kingdom, so too the Church, drenched with the Lover's blood, hastens after him, jumps into the abyss of death, and rises with him as well. Further, she lives with him forevermore in the bridal chamber, his heavenly kingdom.

## CONCLUSION

This study dealt with the life story of Jacob of Sarug and the various typologies of the Church found in his *mimre*. It complements and contributes to the scholarly works already published in the theological field of Syriac Ecclesiology. Moreover, it is a foundational work for further researchers and theologians wishing to investigate Jacob's comprehension of the Church. The purpose of this final chapter is to share the findings of this disquisition and suggest further inquiries on the topic.

1. The question about the person of Jacob of Sarug shall remain unsatisfactorily answered. The current stories about him in extant manuscripts are more hagiographical than historical, yet they contain a tidbit of data that allows the researcher access to general information about him. Jacob of Sarug was born to Christian parents in Kurtam in Mesopotamia, studied at the famous theological school of Edessa, was ordained a priest, then a periodeutes, and ascended to the episcopal see of Batnan in Sarug late in life, two years before his passing on November 29, 521. His natural death occurred seventy years after the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451). Jacob of Sarug was a prolific and an excellent orator, became famous for his exegetical expositions of the books of the Bible, and left behind numerous *mimre*, which he composed in his eponymous dodecasyllabic meter he invented, and other genres of compositions. Being an irenic pastor, he avoided getting into confrontational debates over the Christological issues of his time, albeit the theological interpretation of the person and work of the Son of God takes center stage in his writings.
2. The Church is next to Christ in importance, as her subject is prominent in the *mimre* of the bishop of Batnan. The Son of God is the reason for her



significance. Jacob of Sarug employed different typologies to depict the Church. This work presented four such Ecclesiological themes: (1) the Church as a building on Golgotha, (2) the Church as a fisherman and a life-giving fishnet, (3) the Church as the Garden of Eden on earth in whose midst is the Tree of Life, and (4) the Church as the Virgin Bride of Christ.

3. The Church emerging from these images is inseparable from the Son of God and present with him wherever he is. The prophets in the Old Testament proclaimed with types and symbols not only the coming of the Son of God but also the reality of his Church. For example, Melchizedek offering bread and wine showed the Son offering his body and blood to the world and the Church who would minister this mystery. Abraham longed to see the day of the Son of God, and when he saw it, he saw the Church. The Patriarch Jacob saw the cross of Christ, and the Church established on it. Moses saw Christ, the Bridegroom, and the Church, his Bride. God's prophets possessed the Eye of Prophecy, i.e., Jesus Christ, who granted them access to God's plan of salvation, which includes the Church. After the Incarnation, the Son of God removed the veil that had concealed him and the Church in the Old Testament. Their account shines brighter than the sun. The Church accompanied him clearly through his earthly ministry, is present at his crucifixion, follows him to Sheol, resurrects with him, and joins him in his heavenly kingdom.
4. The first chapter of this study shows how the actions of Melchizedek, Abraham, Jacob, and Moses depict the Church as a building on Golgotha in the writings of Jacob of Sarug: Melchizedek built a house for the Mysteries when he offered God bread and wine at his encounter with Abraham (see Gn 14:18-20); Abraham erected an altar to sacrifice his son, Isaac (see Gn 22:1-19); the Patriarch Jacob anointed a rock when he woke up from his dream (see Gn 28:10-22); Moses sat on a rock with hands extended (see Ex 17:8-16).

- a. The house for the Mysteries Melchizedek built presents the notion of a sacramental Church. He is the king of Salem and its priest. As a type of Christ, he embodies the perfect kingship and priesthood. Jesus Christ is the true King of Peace, for he reconciled heaven and earth. Through his sacrifice and self-offering on the Cross, he became the perpetual peace offering that forgives human beings. Moreover, Melchizedek's priesthood in no way resembles that of the Levites, who sacrificed animals. His priesthood is an image of the perfected priesthood of Jesus Christ, inasmuch as Melchizedek offered God bread and wine, symbols of the true body and true blood which Christ gives the world. At his baptism, Jesus Christ put an end to the Levitical priesthood and manifested the perfect priesthood on the cross when the fountainhead of the mysteries burst out of his side. The Son of God passes down this perfect priesthood to the Church that she may continue nourishing dying humanity with his life-giving body and blood. That makes her a sacramental Church. Therefore, her role is to dispense God's mysteries. The distribution of Jesus Christ's gifts to humanity is related to her everlasting missionary role in the world.
- b. The Altar Abraham and Isaac built also symbolizes the Church as a building on Golgotha. It shows that sacrifice is central to the understanding of the Church. The sacrifice of the Son of God on the cross is a unique event in the history of humanity. However, this occurrence is perpetual, for it takes place again and again on the altars of the Church at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The Church never ceases to be at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ receiving the divine gifts he offered her, i.e., the mysteries of Baptism and the Eucharist, which point to a sacramental Church.
- c. The Church as a building on Golgotha portrays the Church as a permanent reality, which the Patriarch Jacob depicted when he anointed the rock. This permanence is due to Jesus Christ founding her

on Golgotha. Since the Son of God establishes the Church at his Crucifixion, her foundations are unshakable, and he interwove her permanently with him on his cross. Due to this entwinement, she becomes the gate of heaven, the ladder connecting Sheol to the heavenly Kingdom. The Church as a solid building provides the believer with a permanent place of worship and a symbol of enduring faith.

- d. Furthermore, the Church as a permanent reality is prefigured by Moses stretching out his arms and resting on a rock. This image resembles an actual Church building adorned with the cross on its top. However, the image is not about architectural preferences, but it is a symbol of victory. The Church can be permanent only when she overcomes and defeats her enemies, whoever may be. Just as the cross granted victory to the Israelites, so the cross guarantees that the Church will always prevail, for Jesus Christ has perpetually stretched out his arms on the cross.
5. The second chapter explicates how Jesus Christ, the *ṣayādā* par excellence, employs different methods to invite people to come to him to grant them life. The Magi (see Mt 2:1-12) and the Samaritan woman (see Jn 4:1-42) show how the Lord uses their needs to offer them salvation. This chapter also presents the Evil One working in opposition to the Lord. He is an evil *ṣayādā*, who seeks the annihilation of humanity. The man possessed with Legion (see Lk 8:26-39) and the sinful woman (see Lk 7:36-50) are two examples of the Evil One ensnaring human beings and using them to capture other people to their detriment. Moreover, this chapter discusses the Church in relations to evangelization. She continues the mission of Jesus Christ, for she is both Peter's fishnet (see Jn 21:1-14), which the Son of God, throws in the sea of life, and a fisher of man (see Mt 4:19; Mk 1:17; Lk 5:10), which Peter, the Apostles, and Paul represent.

- a. To fulfill her missionary role, the Church must be a herald: she must proclaim the Lord to humankind and bring Adam and his children back to the Lord. In symbolic language, the Church is both the fishnet Jesus Christ employs to net human beings and is the fisherman the Lord sends to fish men. Being a fisher par excellence, the Lord shows the Church how to be a fisher of men. It is the intention of the Son of God to manifest himself to human beings. Unless he goes to people to meet them where they are in life, they would not be capable of knowing him, for God is utterly concealed, incomprehensible, unsearchable, and inscrutable. Thus, the Word of God became man to manifest himself to humanity. In consequence of the Incarnation, human beings have access to God through the Lord Jesus. However, his mission does not end but starts at his conception. A fisherman goes to the sea where the fish are intending to throw his net and catch fish, and the Son of God sails on the sea of the world to fish for humankind, so to speak. It was not haphazard that led Jesus Christ to the well where he met the Samaritan woman, but he had planned on going there to reveal to her his messianic identity. This encounter highlights the Lord's intention. To imitate the Lord, the Church must go out in the world to evangelize. Evangelization, however, does not mean imposing religious ideals, ideas, and philosophies on others but proclaiming the Son of God. Since the Lord respects the free will he gifted humanity with, he does not force anyone to follow him and accept his invitation to salvation. Paul, for example, came to Christ of his own volition. The Church must follow the example of the Lord: he drew the world to him without compulsion through his suffering, afflictions, weakness, humility, being persecuted, and death. The sea of life was not gentle to the Fisher of All, and it will not be to the Church.
- b. Just as he manifested his greatness through his lowliness and death, so the Church will manifest him through her humility and martyrdom.

The martyrs have been evangelizing by gladly shedding their blood for the sake of Christ. The Church, moreover, must not be afraid of being persecuted. By the power of the Lord, she can convert the persecutors and bring them to God just as Jesus did with Paul. Although the persecutor Paul became a persecuted Christian, he did not stop being a herald for Christ. In fact, he spent the rest of his life proclaiming Christ to anyone who would listen. What is highly unusual about this subject of a fisher is Jacob's portrayal of the Son of God attracting the Magi through their craft and without prophets. They are avid students of the heavens as if the skies were their scriptures. The Son of God hid among shooting stars to capture the Magi and their kindred. Did Jacob of Sarug mean that the Son of God lies in wait in the scriptures of other religions? How does Jesus Christ reveal himself to Atheists? How much can one press this train of thought of Jacob of Sarug in today's context of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue? One thing, however, is for sure: the Church cannot sit idle, she must take the initiative, go from one person to another proclaiming the Kingdom of God, and invite them to be part of that kingdom. Not only the hierarchy of Church but also the baptized Christians must seriously take the missionary role of the Church. Therefore, the mission of each Christian is to proclaim Christ in whatever capacity they can just as the Samaritan woman did.

- c. The fisherman's job is to catch fish, but once caught, they die. That makes the image of a fisherman portraying Christ paradoxical, for the intention of the Son of God is to grant life to Adam and his children. Another fisher, the Evil One, does catch human beings for their damnation and destruction. Jacob of Sarug used the biblical stories of the man possessed with Legion and the Sinful woman to show how the Evil One is a fisher who seeks the annihilation of human beings. Christ the Fisherman desires to fish humanity out of this sea of destruction, death. Since Adam left the Garden of Eden, he has been living in this

sinful world that leads to his death. The Son of God's manifestation of himself to human beings is not a boastful display of power and might, yet he reveals that he is the fountainhead of life. Jesus Christ grants the people he fishes forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

- d. After his return to his Father, the Son of God remains active in the business of fishing humankind. He throws his fishnet, an image of the Church, from heaven into the sea of the world. Therefore, the Church is the Lord's fishing tool for capturing human beings. That means that it is through her humankind have access to God. For this reason, she must be diligent in fulfilling her missionary role in the world. The Church takes the role of Jesus Christ in the world insofar as she can forgive them their sins. Also, she is the vehicle to eternal salvation, for she is the life-giving net. Having access to God through the Church means that Christ grants eternal life to those he catches through her. The image of the Church as a life-giving net does not illuminate how the Church offers salvation other than that it brings them to Christ.
- e. The symbol of the Church as a Fisher of Men clarifies her mission to evangelize the world. To be a Fisher of Men means to be Christ's witness throughout the world, to make disciples of all nations, and baptize them. Therefore, the Church must take the initiative as the Lord did, be active, and go to all regardless of their social status, race, skin color, or any other distinguishing traits. The Church must not be discouraged when she faces difficulties like Simon Peter and the apostles. They returned to their previous trade although they were called to be fishers of men. Christ Jesus continually reminds the Church of her missionary role, just like he helps Peter and the Apostles remember that they are no longer fishermen but Fishers of Men. Furthermore, the Lord calls Church to leave everything behind and concentrate on her missionary role. Thus, she can be the true herald, the Fisher of Men in the sea of the world and the life-giving fishnet that

catches the creation and brings the universe to her Lord and God, the source of life to all, who is evermore in her midst.

6. The fourth chapter deals with the topic of the Church as the Garden of Eden on earth, in whose midst is the Tree of Life. Three plantations symbolize the Church: a vineyard, a fig tree, and an olive tree. The vineyard symbolized Israel originally. Since Israel rejected the Son of God, the Father replaced it with the Church, the vineyard bearing sweet grapes (see Mt 21:22-41). The fig tree which Jesus cursed (see Mt 21:18-22; Mk 11:12-14; Mk 11:20-25) also represents Israel, for it refused Jesus the fruit of faith. The fig tree becomes a symbol of the Church when the chief tax collector Zacchaeus who climbed it (see Lk 19:1-10) believes in Jesus Christ. Zacchaeus's faith is the sweet fruit of the fig tree. The broken off branches of the olive tree symbolize Israel, while the grafted wild olive shoot typify the Church (see Rom 11:13-24). This chapter also discusses three images of plants that symbolize Jesus Christ: a grape cluster, an olive tree, and the Tree of Life. All three symbolisms show that Christ is the *Ursakrament* and the source of the Church's sacramental life. In this sacramental sense is the Church paradise on earth and Jesus Christ, the Tree of Life, is her midst. Further, the chariot Ezekiel saw further symbolizes the Church as the Garden of Eden, insofar as the chariot depicted paradise and the burning coal inside of it the Eucharist. Lastly, this chapters deals with the meaning of the keys which Jesus gives to Peter and their power to "loose and bind" (see Mt 16:19).
- a. The economy of Salvation as Jacob of Sarug understood it comes to the fore in this chapter. Adam's fall drove him out of the Garden of Eden and denied him access to the Tree of Life, which stands in its middle. Only the Son of God can restore human being to their God-intended abode and grant them access to the fruits of the Tree of Life, which makes Adam and his children immortal. He is also the only One who

can to unlock the gate to the Garden of Eden, which the fiery Angel guards holding a sword of fire.

- b. The Church is both the “vineyard” and the “vinedressers.” The vineyard insinuates that she is God’s instrument of sanctification, while the vinedressers refer to those who help perpetuate her existence.
- c. The return to this paradisiacal state can be attained now, for where the Tree of Life, Jesus Christ, is, there is the Garden of Eden. For example, the Son of God’s presence on his throne on the Chariot that Ezekiel saw makes the Chariot the Garden of Eden. Jesus Christ hung on the cross turns Golgotha and the world into the Garden of Eden. Sacramentally speaking, the Lord’s presence in the bread and wine offered at the Church’s altar makes her the Garden of Eden. Through the Mysteries of the Church, Christ restores human beings to the Garden of Eden. That means the Church is sacramental, and as such, she is the re-found Garden of Eden on Earth.
- d. Jesus Christ is *Ursakrament*, the fountainhead of the Church’s sacramental life. This sacramental model of the Church is interwoven with Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, for the river of water and blood flows from his side irrigating the entire world. The Church relives the event of Golgotha at the celebration of her Mysteries. Moreover, her altar becomes sacramentally the Son of God’s throne, from which he rules the universe. The Holy Spirit transforms the bread and wine into the body and blood of the Son and hands them to the priests of the Church, who enter the chariot, to distribute them to those who believe in Jesus Christ. The Church’s sanctuary is thus the fiery chariot, whose burning coal is the Eucharist. Also, the Son of God is the Tree of Life, whose fruits are the medicine of life. This medicine of life, a reference to the body and blood of Jesus Christ, cures Adam of the illness of death, and it frees him from the grip of mortality and grants him



eternal life. The Tree of Life is thus the Altar, and its fruits are the Eucharistic species.

- e. Jacob of Sarug does not interpret Peter's key as a symbol of Petrine primacy, but he attaches to it revelatory, sacramental, and eschatological imports, which further point to the sacramental model of the Church. The key represents the unicity and continuity of God's revelation found in both the Old and New Testaments. Although the Bible is a collection of books, which various writers authored at different times in history, its message is one. It ultimately reveals God's love to humanity through the person of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the key grants its holder the power to confect the Mysteries of the Church. By the laying of hands, bishops pass down their ecclesiastical authority from generation to generation and their responsibility in passing on God's teaching. Along with the bishops of the Church, her priests also hold the key, which grants them the power to baptize and celebrate the Divine Liturgy. Eschatologically, this key, a symbol of Christ, unlocked the fiery gate of the Garden of Eden and allowed Adam and his children to return to the Garden of Eden.
7. The last chapter expounds the image of the Church as the virgin Bride of Christ. It presents Israel as a repudiated Bride. Moses led her out of Egypt to Mt. Sinai, where she would meet her Bridegroom. The grandeur of God's display and its splendor on Mt. Sinai (see Ex 19) scared her into rejecting the Bridegroom, and she finally chose the golden calf over him (see Ex 32:1-29), who had saved her from the tyrannical grip of the Egyptians. Israel's sin of idolatry is akin to adultery. This chapter also shows that the Bridegroom on Mt. Sinai is Christ. Moreover, the betrothal of Isaac to Rebekah at the well (see Gn 24) points to Jesus's espousal to the Church of the Nations in the Jordan. As worshipers of idols, the Church of the Nations is adulterous. However, baptism makes her a virgin. Further, the Old Testament accounts of Jacob's dream at Bethel (see Gn 28:10-22)

and Samson's choosing a Timnite woman for a wife (see Jgs 14) prefigure the betrothal of Christ to the Church on the cross. Moreover, Jacob's espousal to Leah and Rachel (see Gn 29:1-30) also represents Christ betrothal to both Israel and the Church. Whereas Israel categorically rejects her bridegroom and crucifies, the Church falls in love with him and clings to him. The marriage feast occurs at the cross, where the Bridegroom offers his body and blood for the wedding guests. Finally, the unity between Christ is indissoluble.

- a. The Nation, Israel, and the Church of the Nations represent humankind. The Son of God's betrothal to both confirms his plan to uniting himself with humanity. This nuptial language symbolizes salvation and shows that God extends redemption to all. It also highlights Jacob of Sarug's stress on the pre-existence of the Church of the Nations in God's plan of salvation, which God reveals through the experiences of Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Samson. Although God's offer of salvation pertains to all, individuals could refuse it just as Israel did when she, by her own choice, rejected and crucified Jesus Christ.
- b. The image of a marriage broker further presents the Church as a herald, whom Jesus Christ entrusted to the Apostles and their successors, the bishops. They are the go-betweens who call people to repentance, conversion, baptism, and redemption following in the footsteps of Moses, John the Baptist, the Apostles, and Paul. Moses as such led Israel out of Egypt to betroth her to the Son of God on Mt. Sinai and called her to purify herself. In his capacity as the friend of the Bridegroom, John the Baptist called the Nation and the Nations to repentance and baptism. As go-betweens, The Apostles and Paul proclaimed redemption through Christ on the cross.
- c. Christ's ability to restore the virginity of the Church of the Nations from its past of worshipping idols though baptism provides an insight

into the power of the Mystery Baptism. It makes the baptized Adam sacramentally a new creation and restores him to his pre-fall state.

- d. The Sacramental model of the Church comes to the fore once again in the images of the wedding banquet at the which the Bridegroom's body and blood are the food and drink. Both the Bridegroom and the Bride invite their wedding guests to partake of the meal which the Bridegroom prepared on the cross. The true union of divinity with humanity makes the Eucharist possible and further supports the sacramental model of Church. That points to the Divine Liturgy as a wedding celebration and the sanctuary as the bridal chamber.
  - e. Christ betroths and cleanses humanity, the "Hebrew Nation" and the "Church of the Nations." That insinuates that all of humanity is betrothed to Christ, yet Israel rejects the Bridegroom, whereas the Church accepts him and remains hopeful that the rest of humanity will eventually be converted.
  - f. Christ will always be united to the Church no matter what, for she is in effect his created body. Jacob of Sarug seems to identify the Church as Christ's physical body, while he is also the Bridegroom. That insinuates that "the two become one flesh" in Genesis is a "type" of the Incarnation. The Church is with her Bridegroom wherever he is, and her actions mimic his deeds. She follows him to the grave, goes to Sheol, breaks down its gates, frees Adam and his children, and resurrects with her Lord.
8. Jacob of Sarug is no doubt a child of his Syriac tradition and is well versed in the writings of the Syriac theologians who proceeded him. However, he is not a copycat. This study shows that not only does he expand on the various ecclesiological notions he received but also provides theological insights that are uniquely his. Jacob of Sarug's understanding of who Melchizedek is differs from that of Ephrem. While Jacob of Sarug imagines the Church built on Golgotha as attested in his account of Melchizedek,

Ephrem sees her built on the location where the temple stood. None of his predecessors seem to have used the fishnet as a symbol of the Church. These and other examples show the originality of Jacob of Sarug's theological understanding of the Church.

9. More research would be desirable to study further the symbolism of the Church as presented in this work and discover others in the writings of Jacob of Sarug which this author might have missed. Extra in depth investigation is required to assess better Jacob of Sarug's originality in expanding on the tradition of his Syriac ancestors and position him rightly in the history of Syriac Ecclesiological thought.

## APPENDIX

### **MIMRO 134: ON INQUIRY AND THE SANCTITY OF THE CHURCH**

The objective of this section is to present for the first time an English translation of Jacob of Sarug's *mimro* entitled *On Inquiry and the Sanctity of the Church* (ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ : ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ). This *mimro* relates to the Ecclesiological theme of this dissertation. The Church is its main protagonist and some of her types found in this *mimro* are discussed in the main sections of this work.

The source of the Syriac text reproduced below is "HSJS IV," 767-789. The English reading of this *mimro* is not the first in a western language, for already in 1963, Grill published a German rendition and republished it in 1970.<sup>1</sup> Along with his work, the following text will make Jacob's *mimro* available to an even larger audience than before.<sup>2</sup>

The context of the *mimro* does not betray the exact year when Jacob of Sarug composed it or even to whom he addressed it. He presents his ideas by making the Church a speaking person. This personified Church delivers a heated address denouncing disputants and their inquiries into the Son of God, and she asks the hearers to be the judge of what she has to say. The historical, theological background of this *mimro* is undoubtedly the Council of

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1. Severin Matthias Grill, *Jacob von Sarug. Die Kirche und die Forschung*, HS, vol. 13 (Heiligenkreuz: Severin Matthias Grill, 1963); Grill, "Heiligtum der Kirche". The three-digit-numerals found on the Syriac pages correspond to the page numbers in the Bedjan's edition, while the digits enumerating the paragraphs follow the numbering of Grill.

2. At times, this translator finds it difficult to reconcile his reading of the Syriac text with that of Grill. Therefore, when the English and German versions diverge, he makes available the German translation in the footnotes without commenting for fear of being presumptuous. Some of these divergences are minute, while others are not.

Chalcedon held in A.D. 451, for Jacob of Sarug lived and wrote after it, and he experienced the damaging aftermath of this controversial Council, which caused dissensions and divisions in the Church. The “two natures in the one person of Jesus Christ” formulation of the Council of 451 is the crux of the resulting schisms.

*On Inquiry and the Sanctity of the Church* addresses several topics: philosophical investigation, Christology, Mariology, and Ecclesiology. The following subsections present summaries of these themes.

### **Philosophical Investigation**

The dispute is between the Church, on one side, and Disputants (دُخُولِي), Inquirers (فُتُولِي), the Wise (سُخُولِي), the Learned (عُفُولِي), and Doctors (مُخُولِي), on the other (1-3). The identity of these groups remain concealed, for Jacob of Sarug does not betray whether they are pro- or anti-Chalcedon. Since The Son of God is incomprehensible and inscrutable, so the Church stands in opposition to philosophical inquiries. She forcefully says, “The teaching was not sent to me at the hands of philosophers (51)!” According to Jacob of Sarug, a close investigation into the nature of the Son of God results in crafty questions and cunning counterarguments that lead to rebelliousness against God and the Church’s separation from him. Also, it creates harmful divisions and schism within the ranks of believers. The Church states that these kinds of philosophical inquiries trouble her, do not profit her and cause rifts among her groups. Furthermore, they turn shepherds into wolves, pastors into strangers, and depose bishops. These statements bespeak the divisions of the Church and the political situation that occurred as an aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon. To avoid this unfortunate and undesirable result, the Church anchors herself in the Holy Scriptures and categorically rejects philosophical questionings in matters relating to God. Jacob’s stance against this kind of intellectual investigation is not unique to him. Grill provides quite a few

sources, including texts from the Old and New Testaments, warning against a rational explanation of her faith.<sup>3</sup>

### Christology

The Christological debate of the time is the main theme of the *mimro*. It comes to the fore at the beginning of Jacob's work under consideration with such terms as origin (ܐܘܪܝܢܐ), race (ܥܡܐ), stem (ܥܡܐ), and nature (ܡܝܢܐ) (5-7). The Church does not need disputants and the like to instruct her who Jesus Christ is, for she is his Bride and already knows him well. She learned that he is both human and God from the prophet Isaiah, who called him "Emmanuel (ܡܝܢ ܥܡܡܐ)" (see Is 7:14) and "Wonder (ܡܝܢ ܥܡܡܐ)" (see Is 9:5). Emmanuel is not just an abstract notion and an empty title which means "God is with us" but becomes a reality at the Incarnation. The Word of God becomes among human beings in actuality while remaining with the Father and is like him in divinity. Also, being born does not rob the Son of God of his divinity. After the Incarnation, the Church professes Jesus Christ as both the Son of God and the Son of Man, for she denies neither his divinity nor his humanity. To the question how to reconcile divinity and humanity in the one person of Jesus Christ, the Church answers, "His exalted nature (ܡܝܢ ܥܡܡܐ) joined indeed to humanity (ܡܝܢ ܥܡܡܐ), yet he was not deprived of the strength of his magnificence. While he is as he is in his divinity, he put on humanity just as it is with all its changes (19)." With such statements, Jacob of Sarug declares the Chalcedonian faith without using the two-nature formulation of the Council of 451. Whereas the title Emmanuel denotes both the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ, the name Wonder points to the unfathomable mystery of Jesus Christ. He is truly Wonder, for he is the One holding the uttermost edges of the universe and the baby in Mary's womb! His handspan contains the heavens, yet Mary carries him? How could the One whose palm is the sea lay

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3. Grill, "Heiligtum der Kirche," 13-16.

in a manger, or the One who is ablaze put on swaddling clothes? So, the mind is incapable of comprehending or investigating the impenetrable mystery.

### **Mariology**

The *mimro* presents the two origins of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Father does not conceive the Word but begets him of his being (ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܝܢ ܡܠܟܐ) (59). Mary, however, conceives him, and this conception occurs when the Word enters through her ear (61). He dwells in Mary's pure womb and comes to birth from the daughter of David (61). Her virginal state remains intact even after his birth (62-63). Birth pangs do not spare Mary, who suffers like any mother giving birth lest she may think that she conceives a spirit.<sup>4</sup>

### **Ecclesiology**

The Church as the Bride of Christ is the central Ecclesiological image running throughout the entire *mimro*. Jacob of Sarug introduces her at the beginning of the *mimro* as the King's Bride (1), and she presents herself as his Betrothed (2). She is a virgin Girl, whom the Son of God's heralds betrothed her to him. These are the prophets (13), who are the Sharers of his Mystery, the Apostles, and Paul. She is the faithful Bride who investigates her Bridegroom before accepting his ring and entering the bridal chamber with him. After the wedding, all investigations cease, for further inquiry is akin to breaking the covenant. The wedding takes place on Golgotha, and the Bridegroom offers his body as food and his blood as the drink at the banquet (9), an apparent reference to the Eucharistic species the Church offers to her children. Jesus's sacrifice on the cross for the sake of his Bride is her dowry, so he can never repudiate her. He cannot separate from her, for he will have to give himself to her—he is after all her dowry (86). The Bride rejects the Disputants and sends them to her rival, the first Bride (47). The rival Bride is Israel, the Daughter of the Nation, who rejected and crucified Jesus Christ.

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4. On Mary's birth pangs, see Abbeloos, "Vita et Scriptis," 196-198; Costantino Vona, "Maria e i dolori del parto nel pensiero di san Giacomo di Sarug," *ED*, 3, (1950): 254-258.



Another important symbol of the Church mentioned in this mimro is that of a Fishnet. Jacob wrote, "May you be a fishnet capable of catching the sea and land, and may the world be taken in your bosom to life at the hands of your Lord (100)." The image of the Church receiving the entire world speaks of the call to universal salvation the Lord Jesus Christ issues to fallen humanity. He is the Fisher of Men, and she is his instrument that grants life to those they come to her.

Concerning the Order of the Presbyters, Jacob of Sarug does not see the Christian priesthood as a continuation of that of the Levites. Notwithstanding the fact that Jacob of Sarug affirms the legitimate anointing of Levi and his sons at the hands of Moses, who was fulfilling God's command (see Ex 30:30), he claims that Jesus takes away from them that privilege at his baptism in the Jordan River. Indeed, John the Baptist does not pass down the priesthood he received from his father, Zechariah (see Lk 1:5-25) to Jesus Christ, for Jesus lacks nothing, but John returns the entire treasury of the priesthood to its rightful owner. The Son of God, in turn, gives it to his Church and her shepherds.

Jesus's descent in the waters of the Jordan sanctifies its waters, i.e., the waters of Baptism. The water John poured upon Jesus in the river does not add to the holiness of the Baptized, but Christ sanctifies the Mystery of Baptism by pouring his holiness into the waters of the Jordan River (69). Therefore, Jesus grants the Church the power to sanctify the children of Adam through the administration of the Mystery of Baptism.

Jacob of Sarug exalts the Church over all earthly and heavenly principalities and dominions. She is the Bride of the Son of God, and so, nothing can overwhelm her, not even the gates of death (85). Since she is victorious over death, disputants cannot overpower her (90). It is true that strife and division vex her, yet a Church, whose members unite, could become the envy of heaven (106).

## Outline

- I. *Introduction: The Church, the Bride, Debates Disputants (1-2)*
- II. *The Bride Against Further Inquiry into the Bridegroom (3-8)*
- III. *Inquiry Occurs Before the Wedding (9-15)*
- IV. *Isaiah's Testimony and Warning (16-30)*
- V. *The Bride Rejects and Upbraids Disputants (31-49)*
- VI. *The Church's Adherence to Scriptures (50-56)*
- VII. *The Church's Teaching (57-88)*
- VIII. *The Poet's Supplications (89-111)*
- IX. *The End (112)*



وَمِنْهَا مَن مَّحَقَّتْ مَحَقُّهُ

HSJS 134

مَحَقَّتْ مَحَقُّهُ

وَمِنْهَا مَن مَّحَقَّتْ مَحَقُّهُ

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حَبْلُ وَوَقْتُ حَبْلُ حَمُّ وَوَقْتُ حَبْلُ حَكَم :

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5. Do not labor for my sake that I may cleanse my tongue with questions,  
for I will not wipe off the hymns of praise from between my lips.  
I do not need you to show me my Betrothed's origin,  
for I know that he is truly the Son of God.
6. I do not seek to learn from you about his race,  
for I will not forget that he is from the divine stem.  
I do not desire you to comfort me with his magnificence,  
[for] I am convinced that he is of the Majesty, the Author of [all] Origins.
7. Do not say to me that this or that is his nature,<sup>6</sup>  
for I deny neither his divinity nor his humanity.  
After I had known him, was betrothed to him, and became his,  
to what end are the questions, for there is no way that I would leave him.
8. After I had known and entered into a covenant with him,  
why do you want to cause division between him and me?  
After the blood of his crucifixion sealed and washed me,  
to what end do you break my marriage settlement signed with his hand?

### III. *Inquiry Occurs Before the Wedding*

9. The Cross became for me a great marriage feast,<sup>7</sup> and I went to it.  
[So,] to what end is the investigation into the unfathomable,  
inscrutable Son of the King?  
Before the wedding one asks about the bridegroom,  
but when the marriage feast ends, investigations come to an end.

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6. "Does it indicate against two natures (أَبْنُ حَمَلٍ، أَوْ بَنُ حَمَلٍ)?" *Ibid.*, 768, footnote 2.

7. See Jn 19:34.

5. לֹא אֱלֹהִים כִּי יִחְשַׁע אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים :  
 וְלֹא מַחֲלִילָאֵנָּה מִלֵּאמֹר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ חֵד הִתְעַלֵּם \*  
 לֹא הִתְעַלֵּם אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנִי לֵבָרְכְּךָ וְיִתְעַלֵּם :  
 וְיִבְרַח אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיִבְרַח אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ \*

6. לֹא חֲסִילָאֵנָּה וְיִבְרַח מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ :  
 וְלֹא חֲסִילָאֵנָּה וְיִבְרַח מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ \*  
 לֹא וְיִבְרַח אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ :  
 מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיִבְרַח מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ \*

7. לֹא אֲחֵרִים כִּי יִחְשַׁע אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲחֵרִים :  
 וְיִבְרַח אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ \*  
 מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיִבְרַח מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ :  
 חֲסִילָאֵנָּה וְיִבְרַח מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ \*

8. מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲחֵרִים חֲסִילָאֵנָּה :  
 חֲסִילָאֵנָּה וְיִבְרַח מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ \*  
 מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיִבְרַח מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ :  
 חֲסִילָאֵנָּה וְיִבְרַח מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ \*

9. אֲחֵרִים כִּי יִחְשַׁע אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲחֵרִים :  
 חֲסִילָאֵנָּה וְיִבְרַח מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ \*  
 מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיִבְרַח מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ :  
 חֲסִילָאֵנָּה וְיִבְרַח מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ \*

10. Once the bride marries the bridegroom, there is no [longer] investigation,  
yet the one seeking to investigate would cause division there.  
Where have you ever seen a bride asking in her bridal chamber,  
'Who is the bridegroom?;' Or 'How is his reputation?;' Or 'What is his race?'
11. Before entering, she learns all these things from those coming,  
but after marrying him, she refrains her mouth from questions.  
[Since] I became his, I shall not investigate after my wedding.  
[So,] do not teach me effrontery alien to me!
12. When it was necessary, I greatly wore myself out asking questions.<sup>8</sup>  
I investigated about him, then found him, and was betrothed to him.  
Until I had learned the truths of who he is and whose Son he is,  
I would not make a marriage contract with him to become his.
13. When he sent the seekers, [his] prophets, and they came to me,  
I entered with them into a heated debate about him.  
Although they brought me the Bridegroom's ring, I did not accept it,  
for I put in the contract: [not] until I will have learned the truths.
14. I did not hasten to give them credence based on one saying.  
They allured me exceedingly, yet their words did not attract me.  
Since it was necessary thenceforth to enter into a debate with them, I provoked the heralds  
and questioned them to learn who had sent them.

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8. "Belästigt man mich mit Fragen, so ist mir das überaus peinlich," Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 41.

10. מִן הַיָּמִים הַהֵם חָדָלָהּ חֲסִידָא כְּדֵי חַמּוּסָא :  
 עָלְמָא וְנִין חָפְדָּא לְמַעַן מְהֵרָא וְעָלְמָא \*  
 אִמְרָא מִלָּא חֶפְדָּא חָדָלָהּ וְהָאֵלֶּיךָ חֶפְדָּא חֶפְדָּא \*  
 וְחֶפְדָּא מִלָּא אִם מִן הַיָּמִים הַהֵם עָלְמָא חֶפְדָּא \*  
 11. חָבִילָא לְחֶפְדָּא מְחַפְּדָּא חֶפְדָּא מִן חָבִילָא וְאִם :  
 עָלְמָא וְהַיָּמִים הַהֵם מְחַפְּדָּא חֶפְדָּא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 עָלְמָא מִן חָבִילָא לְמַעַן חֶפְדָּא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 לְמַעַן חֶפְדָּא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 12. חָבִילָא וְהַיָּמִים הַהֵם חֶפְדָּא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 עָלְמָא מִן חָבִילָא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 חָבִילָא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 חָבִילָא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 13. חָבִילָא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 חָבִילָא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 חָבִילָא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 חָבִילָא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 14. חָבִילָא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 חָבִילָא מִן חָבִילָא \*  
 חָבִילָא מִן חָבִילָא \*



15. The prophets, whom I asked, showed me the origin of my Betrothed,  
but I did not ask you, Learned, for you are haughty.  
I diligently questioned the Sharers of his Mystery<sup>9</sup> about him  
and learned from them exactly everything I wanted [to know].

#### *IV. Isaiah's Testimony and Warning*

16. I learned from Isaiah the names of my Betrothed.  
So, I do not need to learn from you what to call him.  
'His name shall be called Emmanuel,'<sup>10</sup> he proclaimed in my ear.  
He gave me a sign<sup>11</sup> to learn his concealed nature through the revealed name.
17. I recognize the nature of my Betrothed from this name.  
So, I do not accept the sayings of the Learned and their questions.  
The Disputants cannot investigate Emmanuel,  
for he is our God, behold he is among us and cannot be explained!<sup>12</sup>
18. He is with his Father and is like him in his divinity,  
yet Emmanuel became among us although he is God!  
Since he came and became among us according to the flesh,  
Isaiah said, 'the one who became among us is our God!'
19. His exalted nature joined indeed to humanity,  
yet he was not deprived of the strength of his magnificence.  
While he is as he is in his divinity,  
he put on humanity just as it is with all its changes.

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9. These are the prophets, to whom God had revealed the mystery.

10. See Is 7:14.

11. See Is 7:14.

12. "He is like his Father, is with us, and like us. The Father begot him, the Virgin carried him, and he cannot be comprehended." *"HSJS IV,"* 770, footnote 5.

15. שְׁמַעְתָּ בְּחַתָּא וְאַחֲרֵי אֵיךְ לְהַעֲמִידָהּ וְחֻצְתָּ :  
 חֶסֶד \ וְכִי מַעֲלֵי לֹא מַעֲלָלִי אֵינִי וְשִׁלְתָּ אֵיכָה \  
 כִּחֲסִיתִי וְזֹאת מֵאִכֶּיךָ חֶסֶד \ כְּחִיכָהּ לֹא :  
 וְחֻצְתָּ \ מִחֶסֶד מְחַלֵּל וְחֻצְתָּ שִׁלְתָּ אֵיכָה \

16. תַּעֲמִידָהּ \ וְחֻצְתָּ מִי אֲחֵלִי מִחֶסֶד אֵיכָה \ :  
 הֲלֹא מַעֲלָלִי אֵינִי וְחֻצְתָּ \ אֵלֶּכְךָ אֲנִי אֲמַידָהּ \  
 תִּשְׁמָרָה לְךָ מִי מַעֲמִידָהּ אֵיכָה אֲזַר כָּרֹת :  
 הֲמַעֲלָלִי כִחֲסִיתָ וְחֻצְתָּ \ וְאֵלֶּכְךָ חֻצְתָּ מַעֲלָלִי \

17. מִי הֲלֹא מַעֲלָלִי מַעֲלָלִי אֵינִי חֻצְתָּ וְחֻצְתָּ :  
 הֲלֹא מַעֲלָלִי אֵינִי מִכִּחֲסִיתָ מַעֲלָלִי הֵמָּה אֲכַתֵּהּ \  
 לֹא מִחֶסֶד חֶסֶד אֵיכָה מִי וְזֹאת הֵמָּה :  
 וְאֵלֶּכְךָ \ הֵמָּה הֵמָּה אֲכַתֵּהּ הֵמָּה הֵמָּה מַעֲלָלִי \

18. חֶסֶד אֲכַתֵּהּ \ הֵמָּה הֵמָּה אֲכַתֵּהּ הֵמָּה אֲכַתֵּהּ :  
 הֵמָּה אֲכַתֵּהּ \ הֵמָּה אֲכַתֵּהּ הֵמָּה אֲכַתֵּהּ \  
 מַעֲלָלִי \ הֵמָּה אֲכַתֵּהּ אֲכַתֵּהּ \ הֵמָּה :  
 אֲמַידָהּ \ אֲחֵלִי וְאֵלֶּכְךָ \ הֵמָּה אֲכַתֵּהּ \

19. אֲמַידָהּ \ חֶסֶד אֲכַתֵּהּ אֲכַתֵּהּ :  
 הֲלֹא אֲכַתֵּהּ מִי הֵמָּה חֶסֶד \ וְחֻצְתָּ אֵיכָה \  
 כִּי הֵמָּה אֲכַתֵּהּ \ אֲנִי וְאֲכַתֵּהּ \ אֲכַתֵּהּ :  
 חֶסֶד אֲכַתֵּהּ \ אֲנִי וְאֲכַתֵּהּ \ חֶסֶד מַעֲלָלִי \

20. The prophet gave me these signs concerning the Bridegroom that I might perceive he is both human and God.  
He depicted and showed us his feebleness and greatness,  
for he included both in the adored name of Emmanuel.
21. Isaiah rose at the hand of his prophetic revelation,  
went up, and gave Christ a name in the dark clouds.<sup>13</sup>  
He remained as a mediator between the height and depth  
and sang the name that both sides might rejoice in it.
22. Behold Emmanuel<sup>14</sup> is God as is written  
in prophecy, the revealer of the mysteries of God's house.  
The Son of God, who is God, along with his Begetter,  
descended from his abode and became among us for our sake.
23. I will not deny Emmanuel to whom I am betrothed.  
The prophet is truthful and recorded for me the name of the  
Bridegroom.  
Since he knew that [Emmanuel's] account would be wondrous,  
he called him Wonder,<sup>15</sup> for he wondered foremost at him.
24. He is indeed Wonder: although God, he became a human being,<sup>16</sup>  
and a womb contained the One holding up the uttermost edges  
[of the universe] that he might become a baby!  
The heavens is his handspan,<sup>17</sup> yet he rested on a bosom as wide  
as a handspan!  
The sea is the palm of his hand,<sup>18</sup> yet a manger<sup>19</sup> was enough for  
him to lay in!

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13. See Ex 20:21.

14. See Is 7:14.

15. See Is 9:5.

16. "Denn ein Wunder ist es, wenn Gott sich wandelt zum Menschen," Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 43.

17. See Is 40:12.

18. See Is 40:12.

19. See Lk 2:12.

20. اَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُرَكَاءَ مَا تَدْعُوْنَ ۚ اَمْ لَكُمْ اِلٰهَةٌ غَيْرُ الَّذِي تَدْعُوْنَ ۚ  
خَالِدَةٌ وَّلَا يَمُوتُ وَهِيَ تَحْتُهَا ۚ اَمْ لَكُمْ اِلٰهَةٌ غَيْرُ ذٰلِكَ ۚ  
وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُمْ اِلٰهَةٌ قَبْلَ ذٰلِكَ ۚ اَمْ لَكُمْ اِلٰهَةٌ غَيْرُ ذٰلِكَ ۚ

21. هَـٰٓهٖٓ اٰمَحٰنَا حَبْرٌ كَحٰنُنَا وَبَحَّةٌ اِهٖٓ :  
 هَـٰٓمَڪِم مُمْ كِهٖ مَمَّا كَحَمَمَسَا حِهٖ حَقْلَا ؕ  
 حٰنِلِهٖ وَهٖ مَمَّا حَحَّةٌ مَمَّا مَلَا اِس مَحْرُحٰنَا :  
 هٖ مَمَمِهٖ كَحَمَلَا وَحٰلَا اَوَمَمِهٖ نَسَمَمِهٖ كِهٖ ؕ

22. اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اِذَا حَضَرَ جَمْعًا مِنْكُمْ فَقَالَ هَؤُلَاءِ مِنْكُمْ وَهَؤُلَاءِ مِنْكُمْ :  
حَضَرَ الْجَمْعَ اِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ ؕ  
حَ : اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اِذَا كَانَ مِنْكُمْ جَمْعٌ فَقَالَ :  
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ اَمَّا بَعْدُ فَاَنْتُمْ مِنْكُمْ ؕ

23. لَا تُفْجِرُوا إِنَّا حَمِيمٌ ۖ وَلَا تَمْنَحُوا كَدَ :  
 حُمْلًا مَنًّا : هَمْدًا وَسَلَامًا ۖ وَهَذَا أَحَدُ كَ ❖  
 هَمْزَيْنِ ۖ هَذَا أَحَدُ هَمْزَيْنِ :  
 مَنِّهِ ۖ وَهَذَا ۖ وَهَذَا هَمْزَيْنِ ۖ وَلَا وَجْهَ كَدَ ❖

24. وَهَذَا هِيَ حَبْلُ الْكَلْبِ وَالْهَذَا حَبْلُ الْكَلْبِ :  
هَذَا هِيَ حَبْلُ الْكَلْبِ وَالْهَذَا حَبْلُ الْكَلْبِ :  
هَذَا هِيَ حَبْلُ الْكَلْبِ وَالْهَذَا حَبْلُ الْكَلْبِ :  
هَذَا هِيَ حَبْلُ الْكَلْبِ وَالْهَذَا حَبْلُ الْكَلْبِ :

25. He nourishes babies, yet he grasped a breast like an infant!  
 He feeds the worlds, yet he sucked milk to grow strong by it!  
 He carries the creation, yet knees carried him like a child!  
 He is watchful over creatures, yet the Virgin Mary watched over him.<sup>20</sup>
26. The arms of the solitary widow<sup>21</sup> carried him whom the cherubim carry!<sup>22</sup>  
 He, arrayed in flames, put on poor swaddling clothes!<sup>23</sup>  
 He is formidable among the angels,<sup>24</sup> yet Mary's arms carried him!  
 He inspires the Watchers with awe yet was ordinary and quiet in the house of a carpenter.<sup>25</sup>
27. If someone wonders about the 'where and how' of these things, behold Isaiah called him Wonder<sup>26</sup> and contained all of them.  
 I learned all these from Isaiah.  
 So, I do not need to learn anything additional from you.
28. The prophet saw that I gave credence to the entire account, and he further instructed me, 'Bind up the testimony. Seal the law.'<sup>27</sup>  
 Do not seek the testimony of anyone after these things, and do not learn another law concerning the Bridegroom.

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20. "Der aufstrahlt in der Natur, durch den erglänzt die Jungfrau Maria," Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 43.

21. See Lk 2:36-38.

22. See Ez 1.

23. See Lk 2:12.

24. See Ez 1.

25. See Mt 13:55. "Der Engel erzittern läßt, wohnt bei dem schlichten Handwerker," Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 43.

26. See Is 9:5.

27. See Is 8:16. "Befahl mir sodann: Male das Zeugnis, besiegle (die ganze) Verordnung," Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 43.

25. مَلَّوْهًا تَحَلَّاهُ لَوْ حَصَبٌ يَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ :  
 أَلَمْ يَحْلَقُوا مَعَهُمْ سَلْحًا وَيَنْبِذُوا دَمًا  
 لِحَبْلِ الْحَتِّ لَمْ يَلْخُسُوا حَقًّا أَوْ يَحْجِدُوا :  
 أَلَمْ يَحْقُقُوا دَارًا وَيَنْبِذُوا دَمًا حَلَّاهُ مَنَعًا

26. مَقْبُولًا حَتَّوْهًا وَيُؤْتَا مَمَكَةً يَوْمَ يَجْعَلُهَا :  
 حُلُومًا حَتَّوْهًا حَتَّوْهًا وَهَتَّوْهًا  
 وَسَلَّاهُ حَتَّوْهًا حَتَّوْهًا مَنَعًا مَنَعًا :  
 حَتَّوْهًا مَنَعًا حَتَّوْهًا مَنَعًا مَنَعًا

27. أَلَمْ يَحْلَقُوا مَعَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ :  
 أَلَمْ يَحْلَقُوا مَعَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ  
 أَلَمْ يَحْلَقُوا مَعَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ :  
 أَلَمْ يَحْلَقُوا مَعَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ

28. سَلَّاهُ حَتَّوْهًا وَيَنْبِذُوا دَمًا حَتَّوْهًا :  
 أَلَمْ يَحْلَقُوا مَعَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ  
 أَلَمْ يَحْلَقُوا مَعَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ :  
 أَلَمْ يَحْلَقُوا مَعَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ

29. Do not also investigate many things. The truth is one,  
and I have told it to you exactly as it is.  
Bind up the testimony of prophecy<sup>28</sup> in your mind,  
and do not seek other witnesses concerning these things.
30. Safeguard this account just as you have heard it.  
Never again should useless questions distract you.  
Seal the Law<sup>29</sup> with the great seal of faith  
that no one may break and add to it of their teaching for you.'

V. *The Bride Rejects and Upbraids Disputants*

31. I, the Church, hold fast to this truth  
and believe in it just as I have heard from Isaiah.  
I will wait for the Lord, my savior, only according to my  
instruction  
and expect him, who turned away his face from disputants.
32. My testimony is bound up, my Law sealed, and I am betrothed.  
Let no one come to exchange my seal for their counterarguments!  
I gave credence to the Bridegroom's discourse, entered with him,  
and do not need to learn from you how he is.
33. Go away from me, haughty Learned! Leave me alone to praise!  
You have hindered the hymn of thanksgiving in my assemblies.  
I have laid before my children a hymn of praise that they might  
meditate on it.  
Not to a dispute did I bring them that they might be disparaged  
because of it.

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28. See Is 8:16.

29. See Is 8:16.

29. لَا تَحْمِصْ لَدَىٰ مَوْلَاكَ سَبْعًا وَلَا :  
 ةِ اَنْتَ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَنْتَ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ  
 رَدُّهُ هُوَ وَهُوَ لَا يَحْبُكُ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 هُوَ وَهُوَ لَا يَحْبُكُ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ
30. كَاَنَّهُ تَوَلَّىٰ غِيَاظًا اَوْ اَنْتَ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 لَا تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ نِعْمَتُكَ عَلَيْكَ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 وَلَا تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ
31. اَنْتَ حَبْلٌ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 ةِ اَنْتَ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 حَبْلٌ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 ةِ اَنْتَ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ
32. رُبُّنَا هُوَ وَهُوَ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 لَا اَنْتَ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 هَلَا مَعْنَا اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ
33. اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 حَبْلٌ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ :  
 كَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ اَلَمْ تَحِبَّ



34. I do not seek a polished discourse of your questions,  
for my assemblies are directed to praise in simplicity.  
I do not desire to see any of my children investigating,  
for ordinary people has handed down my Betrothed's tidings.<sup>30</sup>
35. Paul, and not a disputant, betrothed me to Jesus, the Bridegroom,  
uttered in my ears common expressions I have learned,  
'Only Christ crucified do I proclaim everywhere,'<sup>31</sup>  
and subjugated the creation to the name of the crucifixion.<sup>32</sup>
36. The cross of shame was his boast everywhere,<sup>33</sup>  
and he put to shame the Wise through it without dispute.  
He did not proclaim to me these sayings I have heard from you.  
They are novelties which pride has uttered.
37. You have caused me much trouble with your questions  
and traded for a loss all you had learned.  
You are quarrelsome! You are cunning, and you are haughty!  
Are you wise, and yet you have brought me no benefit!
38. Who of you have used astuteness for my sake, and I have profited  
by it?  
Who has disputed in me yet caused no harm?  
Who has caused a schism in me but was not thrown into the side  
of the schismatics,<sup>34</sup>  
or has investigated, yet the world did not perceive their fall?

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30. "Zur Schlichtheit leitet die Botschaft meines Verlobten," Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 44.

31. See 1 Cor 1:23.

32. See 1 Cor 15:27; Eph 1:22; Phi 3:21.

33. See Gal 6:14.

34. "Wer hätte an mir gezweifelt und wär nicht gestürzt mit den Zweiflern?" Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 45.

34. لَا حُكْمًا إِلَّا هَهُؤَا مَدِينًا بِهِمُ الْكِتَابُ :  
 وَحُكْمُهُ إِلَّا مَا سَبَّحَ قَتَبَ كَمَحْمُودَةٍ ❖  
 لَا وَسْمًا إِلَّا أَسْأَلَ حَقَّهِ إِيَّاهُ وَصَحَّفَ :  
 وَحَدَّثَتْهَا أَلَا تَحْكُمُ كَمَا هَدَىٰ لَهُ وَصَحَّفَ ❖

35. حَسْبُنَا نِعْمَةٌ فَهَكَه مَحْبُوبٌ كَمَا يُؤَدُّهَا :  
 هَقْلًا مَعْتَمِلًا أَوْ مَكَّ دَارَتِ هَدَاهُ تَحْقِيقًا ❖  
 مَحْمُودًا بِرَأْفَتِ أَذَرِ حَسْبُهُ كَالْمَوْءُودِ :  
 هَدَاهُ نَا مَعْلًا وَرَأْفَتُهُ إِلَّا حَسْبًا مَحْبُوبًا ❖

36. رَأْفَتُهُ وَنِعْمَتُهُ هُوَ هَدَاهُ كَالْمَوْءُودِ :  
 هَدَاهُ مَحْمُودًا هَدَاهُ مَحْمُودًا كَمَا لَمْ يُوَدِّ ❖  
 لَا أَذَرِ كَمَا هَدَاهُ قُلًا وَنِعْمَةً مَحْمُودًا :  
 تَبْلُغُ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَنِعْمَتُهُ إِلَّا مَحْمُودًا أَيْ ❖

37. هَوَّىٰ حَمَلًا أَوْ مَحْمُودًا كَمَا جَعَلَ الْكِتَابُ :  
 هَدَاهُ مَحْمُودًا أَلَا تَحْكُمُ كَمَا وَصَحَّفَ ❖  
 مَحْمُودًا أَيْ هَدَاهُ مَحْمُودًا أَيْ هَدَاهُ مَحْمُودًا :  
 مَحْمُودًا أَيْ هَدَاهُ مَحْمُودًا أَيْ هَدَاهُ مَحْمُودًا ❖

38. أَسْأَلَ نِعْمَةً أَوْ نِعْمَةً كَمَا هَدَاهُ مَحْمُودًا :  
 نِعْمَةً وَنِعْمَةً كَمَا هَدَاهُ مَحْمُودًا أَلَا تَحْكُمُ ❖  
 نِعْمَةً وَنِعْمَةً هَلَّا حَمَّ مَحْمُودًا وَنِعْمَةً :  
 أَوْ مَحْمُودًا هَلَّا مَحْمُودًا كَمَا حَمَّ أَوْ ❖

39. These ranks which divided me were those of the Wise  
who will meet their fall on their own due to their knavishness.<sup>35</sup>  
Behold the offices of the Learned [*lacuna*] how empty they are,  
for their ingenuity expelled them from their groups.<sup>36</sup>
40. If inquiry had not penetrated me through the Wise,  
a rift would not have had altogether occurred among my groups.  
If the accursed snake<sup>37</sup> had not hissed dispute at me,  
not even the sun would have been comparable to me due to the  
multitude of my children.
41. If the sound of your questions had not troubled me violently,  
the thunder of those glorifying me would have been clear like that  
of the seraphim.  
If you had not caused these divisive rifts within me,  
the choir of the watchers would not have been more united than  
my children.
42. Even if you have been silent in me now [and] allowed that I rest,  
do not renew my grief, now that it has passed?  
O Disputants, I have greatly suffered at your hands!  
Let the previous rifts you had caused in me remain sealed!
43. Did you not quake because of the strife and its damage,  
that when it died out, you revived it so that it would plague me  
again?  
Did the horror that occurred to your brothers not terrify you  
that you would even get ready for the dispute that ruins  
assemblies?

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35. "Die Reihen der Spalter in mir - es warn noch immer Gelehrte, Die durch ihre Spitzfindigkeit nur Spaltung erzeugten," *Ibid.*

36. "Siehe, die 'Reinigung' der Schriftgelehrten, Wir hätten sie je ein Ende gefunden?" *Ibid.*

37. See Gn 3.

39. **וְכָבֵדְהוּא וְלֹא זָכַבְתָּ כִּי שִׁתְּתָהּ** :  
**וְחִנְיָהּ לֹא** \ **וְהָאֵלֶּה וְהַעֲלֵה** \ **חֲלֹסָהּ** ;  
**וְלֹא וְעָתָּה וְהָעֵת [ ... ] לְמִן מִשְׁתָּהּ** :  
**וְהָעֵתָּה לֹא** \ **מִשְׁתָּהּ לֹא** \ **מִן הָעֵתָּה** ;

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40. **לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה כִּי מִן שִׁתְּתָהּ** :  
**לֹא וְחָלָה לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה** ;  
**לֹא וְחָלָה לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה** :  
**לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה** ;

41. **לֹא מָלָה וְהָעֵתָּה לֹא וְכֵס כִּי** :  
**מָלָה וְהָעֵתָּה וְהָעֵתָּה לֹא וְהָעֵתָּה** ;  
**לֹא וְכֵס מָלָה לֹא חָלָה** :  
**לֹא לֹא וְהָעֵתָּה וְהָעֵתָּה לֹא חָלָה** ;

42. **לֹא וְהָעֵתָּה מָלָה לֹא וְהָעֵתָּה** :  
**לֹא לֹא וְהָעֵתָּה לֹא וְהָעֵתָּה** ;  
**לֹא וְהָעֵתָּה מָלָה לֹא וְהָעֵתָּה** :  
**מָלָה מָלָה מָלָה מָלָה מָלָה** ;

43. **לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה** :  
**לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה** ;  
**לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה** :  
**לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה לֹא חָלָה** ;

44. Did you not know from experience that dispute engenders harm  
and corrupts the right actions among congregations?  
Did you not hear that it turned shepherds into wolves  
and made pastors strangers in the community?
45. Do you not know that it is an instigator from the beginning  
and has deposed bishops from the rank of their authority?  
Did it not throw the Learned into a pit and humbled them,  
hurled the Inquirers into a urine retention, and drowned them?
46. So, disputing has not to do with you howsoever it is as such.  
Flee from it, for anyone musing about it finds their death.  
I reject you, Learned, and your sayings,<sup>38</sup>  
and do not need the teaching of your questions.
47. Go to my rival, [the first Bride], who will receive you with love.  
Behold the Daughter of the Nation, who delights in dispute that  
harms her!<sup>39</sup>  
Behold the Sadducees in her midst, who dispute profusely,  
and the Scribes, who assail the hidden things, just like you!<sup>40</sup>
48. Behold the questioners of concealed things are there!  
If they could, they would measure heaven with a handspan.<sup>41</sup>  
I do not allow questions to multiply within me  
or dispute to raise its [ugly] head within my ranks.

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38. "Von euch, ihr Gelehrten, befragt und von euren Worten," Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 45.

39. "Kommet in meinen Schoß, der euch aufnimmt in Liebe. Siehe, die Tochter des Volkes  
(ists), die stürzende Forschung liebet," *Ibid.*, 46.

40. "Gelehrte, sich klammernd ans Dunkle, wie ihr es zu tun liebt," *Ibid.*

41. See Is 40:12. "Sie würden, könnten sie es, den Himmel vermessen," Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 46.

44. لَا تَعْبُدُهُ كَ كِبَرُهَا وَلَا تَقَاتِ مَعَكِ :  
 هَذِهِ مَدَّ سَتَكَ أَوْ لَأَقْبِلُ حَقَّهُ مُدًّا ❖  
 لَا مَعْبُدَ بِهِ حَقٌّ \ وَحَقُّهَا كِبَرُهَا هَقٌّ بِهِ :  
 هَذِهِ حَقُّهَا حَقٌّ بَعْدُ تَنَا حَقَّهُ مَدَّ حَقًّا ❖

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45. لَا يُجِبُ إِلَهُ \ وَجِبَّ حُسْنًا بِهِ مَعِ هَهُؤُنَا :  
 هَهُؤُنَا حَقَّتْ مَعِ وَجِبَّ \ هَهُؤُنَا حَقَّتْ هَهُؤُنَا ❖  
 لَا هَذَا حَقُّهُ \ أَوْ مَدَّ حَقًّا هَهُؤُنَا :  
 هَذِهِ حَقَّتْ هَهُؤُنَا حَقًّا هَهُؤُنَا هَهُؤُنَا ❖

46. لَا كِبَرُهَا هَذِهِ \ مُجِبُّ أَوْ هَقٌّ بِهِ :  
 حَقَّتْ مَعِ نَأْوَ هَهُؤُنَا \ وَهَهُؤُنَا حَقَّتْ هَهُؤُنَا مُجِبَّ ❖  
 مَعَهَا لَا إِنْ حَقَّتْ \ هَهُؤُنَا هَهُؤُنَا مُجِبَّ :  
 هَذَا مَعَهَا إِنْ حَقَّتْ مَعَهَا هَهُؤُنَا هَهُؤُنَا ❖

47. نَبَّ حَقًّا أَحَدَ هَذِهِ حَقٌّ \ سَحَابًا :  
 هَذَا حَقًّا حَقًّا وَوَسْعًا وَوَسْعًا وَوَسْعًا كَذِبٌ ❖  
 هَذَا أَيْ هَهُؤُنَا حَقَّتْ هَهُؤُنَا وَوَسْعًا وَوَسْعًا :  
 هَهُؤُنَا وَوَسْعًا حَقًّا حَقًّا أَيْ هَهُؤُنَا ❖

48. هَذَا حَقًّا حَقًّا وَوَسْعًا أَيْ هَهُؤُنَا :  
 وَوَسْعًا حَقًّا هَهُؤُنَا أَوْ كَمَعًا حَقًّا وَوَسْعًا ❖  
 لَا حَقَّتْ إِنْ حَقَّتْ إِنْ حَقَّتْ \ نَأْوَ كَذِبٌ :  
 هَذَا كِبَرُهَا وَوَسْعًا وَوَسْعًا وَوَسْعًا ❖

49. I strike down every investigation occurring in me  
and do not permit the seed of inquiry to sprout.  
That Crucifier boasts about Scribes and questions.<sup>42</sup>  
Let anyone desiring to dispute profusely go to her.

## VI. *The Church's Adherence to Scriptures*

50. I, the Church, lengthened my ropes<sup>43</sup> in simplicity.  
My teaching is the same to both ordinary and wise [people].  
A simple human is accepted in me just as a keen person.  
I receive a simple-minded individual just as an orator.
51. The entire Good News was plainly chanted to me.  
The teaching was not sent to me through philosophers!<sup>44</sup>  
Wherefore should I dispute over Jesus who was crucified for me?  
Let his death be a witness to his love and how much he loved me.
52. I will not break [my] covenant with him with counterarguments.  
He is faithful to me, and God forbid that I should inquire into him  
like the schismatics.  
If I disputed [over him], I would show I do not love him.  
I do not inquire [into him] that everyone may know how much I  
trust him.
53. I do not resemble the mad one, who disputed [over] and crucified  
[him]<sup>45</sup>  
lest I forsake my Bridegroom as she [has done].  
I do not hasten to [ask] crafty questions.  
Leave me alone that I may rest from divisive investigations.

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42. "Siehe, jüdischer Geist ist in den stolzen Gelehrten und ihren 'Problemen'," *Ibid.*

43. See Is 54:2; 33:20.

44. "Die ganze Botschaft wird von mir in Schlichtheit verkündet, Und eine philosophische Lehre sende ich nicht aus," Grill, "*Heiligtum der Kirche*," 46.

45. "Ich gleiche nicht jener Närrin, die ihn am Kreuze erprobte," *Ibid.*

49. ❖ حَمْدُكَ يَا رَبِّهِمْ كَمَا مَعْنَى إِنْ كُنْ :  
 هَلْ مَعْنَى إِنْ وَتَعْنَى أَوْ كَمَا هُوَ وَحْدًا ❖  
 هُوَ نَحْنُ كَمَا حَقَّقْنَا سَلَامًا وَحَقَّقْنَا :  
 أَمَّا وَحْدًا وَتَعْنَى هُوَ كَمَا نَأْتِي ❖

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50. ❖ إِنْ جَاءَ كَمَا حَقَّقْنَا كَمَا هُوَ تَعْنَى :  
 وَحْدًا وَتَعْنَى هُوَ حَقَّقْنَا سَلَامًا وَحَقَّقْنَا ❖  
 مَعْنَى هُوَ كَمَا أَمَّا وَحْدًا أَمَّا هُوَ وَحْدًا :  
 أَوْ كَمَا أَمَّا أَمَّا كَمَا هُوَ أَمَّا إِنْ كُنْ ❖

51. ❖ كَمَا مَعْنَى كَمَا حَقَّقْنَا كَمَا هُوَ تَعْنَى :  
 كَمَا مَعْنَى حَقَّقْنَا كَمَا هُوَ تَعْنَى ❖  
 حَقَّقْنَا أَوْ وَحْدًا تَعْنَى وَحْدًا سَلَامًا :  
 حَقَّقْنَا تَعْنَى هُوَ حَقَّقْنَا وَحْدًا وَحْدًا ❖

52. ❖ أَمَّا هُوَ إِنْ مَعْنَى وَحْدًا كَمَا :  
 هُوَ هُوَ كَمَا هُوَ كَمَا وَحْدًا أَمَّا كَمَا كَمَا ❖  
 أَمَّا وَحْدًا إِنْ مَعْنَى إِنْ وَحْدًا :  
 أَمَّا حَقَّقْنَا إِنْ وَحْدًا كَمَا مَعْنَى ❖

53. ❖ أَمَّا وَحْدًا إِنْ حَقَّقْنَا وَحْدًا وَحْدًا :  
 وَحْدًا وَحْدًا كَمَا وَحْدًا سَلَامًا وَحْدًا ❖  
 أَمَّا حَقَّقْنَا إِنْ حَقَّقْنَا وَحْدًا :  
 هُوَ حَقَّقْنَا وَحْدًا وَحْدًا وَحْدًا ❖



54. O Disputants, do not debase me, for I am venerable  
and do not come near the ways of baseness.  
How would I abandon the bedchamber of the Bridegroom-King  
and, as a stranger, ask about him in the assemblies?
55. Would the wedding guests discovering that I am asking about  
him  
not despise and shame me because of how debased I had become?  
If I pressed on asking the [wedding] invitees about him,  
I would be counted as a harlot before the lookers-on.
56. They would thus say, 'If she did not know who the Bridegroom  
was,  
wherefore did she enter the bridal chamber with him without  
investigation?  
When she did not probe, wherefore did she wed? On that  
account, she was terrified.  
Now that she has entered, she has come out clamoring to learn  
who he was?'

## VII. *The Church's Teaching*

57. I know him and have no need of questions,  
for after I had inquired into him, then loved him to enter with  
him.  
The origin of his corporality (جسدي) is from the house of David.<sup>46</sup>  
His glorified, divine nature is from the Exalted One.
58. His mother's race is from the line of the house of Abraham.  
His *hypostasis* (مبدأ) is the Word [stemming] from the Majesty, the  
Author of [all] Origins  
He put on humanity from the nation of the honorable Shem.  
He sprouted like a shoot from the vine which Moses let grow.

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46. See 2 Sm 7:12; Mt 1:1; Mk 12:35; Jn 7:42; Acts 13:22–23; Rom 1:3, 9:5; 2 Tm 2:8; Rev 22:16.

54.  $\text{أَوَ قُوتُهُمَا لَا يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمَا} \text{ وَصَلَا إِلَيْنَا} :$   
 $\text{هَلَا مَنَحَا إِلَيْنَا نَبِيًّا أَهْتَصِلًا وَأَكْحَمًا} \diamond$   
 $\text{أَمْحَى أَفْعَمَ مَعِ مَهْمَةً وَبَدَلَا مَحْكًا} :$   
 $\text{وَأَسْبَغَ بَدَلًا حَكِيمًا} \text{ أَمَّا} \text{ حَقِيقَةُ هَذَا} \diamond$

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55.  $\text{تَبَوَّعْنَا وَمُصْحَبٌ وَمَعَالَا إِلَيْنَا مَدْلُكًا} :$   
 $\text{لَا كَدَّ حُصْنٍ وَهَضَاوَةٍ كَبِّ وَصَلَا أَكْه} \diamond$   
 $\text{أَيُّ سَحْلٍ إِلَيْنَا كَمَعْلَاكَةٍ حَكِيمَةٍ كَهْمَمَتْنَا} :$   
 $\text{أَسْبَغَ أَسْبَغًا مَدَّ سَعَا إِلَيْنَا مَبْرَمَ سَانَا} \diamond$

56.  $\text{وَقَوْلَا أَمْنٌ قَوْلًا مَبْرُحًا وَمَنْعَةً سَدْنَا} :$   
 $\text{حَصَّةٌ كَحَيْسَةٍ نَا حَكَا حَصَّةً وَلَا حَقْمًا} \diamond$   
 $\text{جَبَّ لَا مَلَاكٍ حَمَلْنَا تَعْقَلًا حَمًّا قَوْلًا وَهَدَا} :$   
 $\text{وَهَدَا مَلَا وَحَكَا تَعْقَلًا وَمَحَا وَأَكْفَ مَنَعَةً} \diamond$

57.  $\text{مُبْرَحًا إِلَيْنَا كَدًّا هَلَا هَتَمْنَا إِلَيْنَا حَقًّا هَقًّا} :$   
 $\text{وَجَبَّ حَقَّقْنَا قَبْلَ أَسْحَلٍّ وَاحَقًّا حَصَّةً} \diamond$   
 $\text{أَسْلَمْنَا لَهْمًا مَلَا وَفَقِيْ بَعْلًا مَعِ حَمٍّ وَهَبَّ} :$   
 $\text{حَمْلًا مَحْسَلًا وَكَلَمَةً لَّهْمًا مَعِ حَكْلًا} \diamond$

58.  $\text{كَيْسَلًا وَاقْدَمَ مَعِ هَمَحَلًا وَحَمٍّ أَذْمَرًا} :$   
 $\text{مَنْعَةً مَحَلًا مَعِ وَحَقًّا مَدَّنَا لَهْمَةً مَلَا} \diamond$   
 $\text{حَمٍّ إِنْجَعَلًا مَعِ هَمٍّ أَهْمَلًا وَهَمٍّ تَعَقَّلًا} :$   
 $\text{هَمٍّ أَسْبَغَ بَدَلًا مَعِ هَمٍّ هَمَلًا وَوَكَّ مَدَّهَا} \diamond$

59. He is the Word, is also God, [and] is with his Begetter,<sup>47</sup>  
and although he was not conceived, the Father begot him of his  
being (ٱلْءَءْءِءِ).  
His divine begetting does not have a beginning,  
for he is with the Father, created as he did, [and] begotten of  
him.<sup>48</sup>
60. The how and when are hidden from the mind  
and not intoned by the tongues of the fiery beings.<sup>49</sup>  
His coming was at the hand of the Angel who brought his  
tidings.<sup>50</sup>  
He dwelt in a virgin who was not known carnally by a mortal.
61. He entered through the ear to extirpate from it the slithering of  
the snake.<sup>51</sup>  
He took on a body in a pure womb without marriage.  
He put on humanity to go out into the world like a person<sup>52</sup>  
and came to birth from Mary, the daughter of David.
62. He was formed in the [womb of the] girl according to the flesh  
to come to birth like earthly beings according to the body.  
He preserved his mother's virginal state at his birth as he exited  
lest the seals of the womb which carried him would be destroyed.
63. As he entered, the marital door was not sensible of him,<sup>53</sup>  
and as he was exiting, did not break open the seals of virginity.  
He exited the womb [causing] birth pangs like a human being.  
He preserved [her] virginal state and performed a wonder, for he  
is God.

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47. See Jn 1:1.

48. See Jn 1:14, 5:1. "Mit dem Vater bleibt er ewig der Sohn, von ihm gezeugt," Grill,  
*"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 47.

49. See Ps 14:4; Heb 1:7.

50. See Lk 1:26-38.

51. See Gn 3.

52. Grill does not translate this verse. See Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 46.

53. "Nicht fühlte er bei seinem Eintritt die Türe der Ehe," *Ibid.*, 48.

59. אֲלֹהֵי-מִכְלָא אִם אֵלֶּהָ חֵם מְחַדָּה :  
 חֵם לֹא חֵם יֵהוּא חֵם אִם אֵלֶּהָ :  
 חֵם מְחַדָּה אֵלֶּהָ חֵם מְחַדָּה :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם

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60. חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם

61. חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם

62. חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם

63. חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם :  
 חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם חֵם

64. He afflicted his mother with pains and sufferings as he exited  
lest even the girl would think that she bore a spirit.<sup>54</sup>  
His conception occurred in a great wonder divinely,  
yet his birth, on the other hand, in sufferings and pains humanly.
65. He made two proclamations amid his conception and birth:  
Divinity and humanity are in the one savior.<sup>55</sup>  
He became a blessed baby in Bethlehem in a despicable manger,<sup>56</sup>  
yet since he was the Adored One, the shepherds requited him  
what is his.<sup>57</sup>
66. He put on swaddling clothes<sup>58</sup> to make known that he came to  
feebleness,  
yet heaven arose, came down, and prostrated before him, along  
with its children.  
He grew up in the house of Joseph<sup>59</sup> like a needy person,  
yet since he was the King, he received tribute from those far  
away.<sup>60</sup>
67. He became a runaway [fleeing] from Herod on the road to Egypt,  
but since he is the King of kings, he destroyed, by his death, the  
crown that persecuted him.<sup>61</sup>  
He showed that he had truly put on a coward body,  
and like a frightened person, the Might One fled from a helpless  
man.

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54. "Daß man nicht meine von ihr, sie habe nur geistig geboren," *Ibid.* For Jacob of Sarug refuting docetism in his *mimre*, see Bou Mansour, "Christologie," 484-491.

55. *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ*, "HSJS IV," 780, footnote 1. The body of the text has *Divinity and humanity are at the hand of the Savior*. The expression in the footnote fits better the context of this section of the *mimro*.

56. See Lk 2:7, 12.

57. See Lk 2:8-20.

58. See Lk 2:7, 12.

59. See Mt 1:18-25, 2:19-23.

60. See Mt 2:1-12.

61. See Mt 2:13-15. "Ein Flüchtling vor Herodes auf dem Weg nach Ägypten war der, Der Könige ein- und Absetzt, wegnimmt die Krone seiner Verfolger," Grill, "Heiligtum der Kirche," 48.

64. אָמַלְוּ לִלְמַדְוּ חֲזָקָה וְשִׁמְרָה כִּי תִקַּח יְהוָה :  
 וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ כֹהֲנֵי אֱלֹהֵי לְכָל יְהוָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :  
 וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :  
 אֲדַמְּקֵיכֶם חֲזָקָה וְחֲזָקָה לֵאמֹר יִשְׁמְרֵם

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65. כִּלְמֵי כְהֻנָּה וְחֻמֵּי כְהֻנָּה אֲדַמְּקֵיכֶם :  
 אֲלֵכֶם לֵאמֹר יִשְׁמְרֵם חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :  
 וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :  
 וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :

66. חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :  
 וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :  
 חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :  
 וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :

67. וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :  
 וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :  
 וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :  
 וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ חֲזָקָה וְזֶה שֶׁלֹּא יִשְׁכַּחְוּ :

68. He returned to Nazareth to take the name Nazarene from it.<sup>62</sup>  
 He grew up to restore to humanity what belonged to it.  
 He observed in weakness the order [of nature] for thirty years<sup>63</sup>  
 that the image of Adam might be fully grown in him, and then he  
 would ascend.<sup>64</sup>
69. He came to baptism<sup>65</sup> not because he was in need of forgiveness  
 but to perfect the justice found in the Law.<sup>66</sup>  
 He was baptized in a river yet not sanctified more than he was,  
 and he poured his holiness into the bosom of the waters to  
 sanctify all.
70. The priests' treasury was poured out to alight on him<sup>67</sup>  
 although he did not receive an increase from John.  
 John poured Aaron's [priestly] consecration<sup>68</sup> upon the Holy One,  
 to render empty the right of succession that was at the hands of  
 Moses.<sup>69</sup>
71. The High Priest took away the priesthood from the Levites  
 that the hand might go out from him into the world to forgive it.<sup>70</sup>  
 He perfected the way of the ancient [ways], made them come to  
 an end,  
 and began on a new way to the kingdom.<sup>71</sup>

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62. See Mt 2:23.

63. See Lk 3:32. "Dem Gesetze gehorsam dreißig und drei Jahre in Schwäche," Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 48.

64. See Lk 24:50-53; Acts 1:6-12.

65. See Mt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:31-34.

66. See Mt 3:15.

67. "Zurück wich der Schatz der Priester, der über ihm schwebte," Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 48.

68. See Ex 29:1-9, 30:30; Lev 8:12.

69. "Die Heiligkeit Aarons goß Johannes aus über den Heiligen, Um zu genügen jener Überlieferung von Moses," Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 48.

70. "Aufhob er das Hochpriestertum der levitischen Priester, daß ausgehe eines von ihm, ein (neues) die Welt zu entschuldigen," *Ibid.*, 49.

71. "Auf neuem Wege begann er zu bauen das Haus seines Reiches," *Ibid.*

68. ۞ قَبِ ۞ ذَا حُنُوفًا ۞ وَهَبْ لَنَا تَقَدُّمًا ۞  
 ۞ لَا وَفَا ۞ ذَا ۞ لَا يُعَدُّ ۞ وَكُنْ تَدَا ۞  
 ۞ ذَا ۞ لِحَقًّا ۞ خَلِّ ۞ لِكُلِّ ۞ حَصْرًا ۞  
 ۞ لِمَا ۞ حَلَا ۞ ذَا ۞ رَدًّا ۞ وَابْر ۞ قَبِ ۞ حَصْرًا ۞

69. ۞ لَا ۞ كَحْمُ ۞ كَ ۞ وَهَبْ ۞ ذَا ۞ حَا ۞ سَعْمًا ۞  
 ۞ لَا ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞ ۞ ۞ طَابَ ۞ لَ ۞ حَصْرًا ۞  
 ۞ حَبْ ۞ ذَا ۞ حَا ۞ هَلَا ۞ لِمَا ۞ قَبِ ۞ ۞ ۞  
 ۞ رَا ۞ مَ ۞ وَهَبْ ۞ حَصْرًا ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞

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70. ۞ هَلَا ۞ ذَا ۞ حَا ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞  
 ۞ لَا ۞ حَصْرًا ۞ لَ ۞ حَا ۞ ۞ ۞  
 ۞ هَبْ ۞ مَ ۞ وَهَبْ ۞ وَهَبْ ۞ ۞ ۞  
 ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞ ذَا ۞ حَا ۞ مَ ۞ حَا ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞

71. ۞ هَلَا ۞ حَصْرًا ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞  
 ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞ لِمَا ۞ حَا ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞  
 ۞ حَصْرًا ۞ لَ ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞ لِمَا ۞  
 ۞ حَبْ ۞ ۞ ذَا ۞ حَا ۞ وَتَحْمًا ۞ حَصْرًا ۞



72. The Great Sea descended and was baptized in a small river  
that the [priestly] consecration he sent from Mount Sinai might be  
poured out upon it.<sup>72</sup>  
That priesthood the Father entrusted to Aaron's family is  
what Christ took away from John at the baptism.<sup>73</sup>
73. He deprived them of the priesthood that remained with him.  
The [priestly] consecration was not added to him in the waters.  
Up until his [advent], the horn of anointing seethed,  
and after he had come, the oil of all priests ceased.
74. He came up out of the river just as he had gone down to it  
without an increase  
although the brooklets of the children of Levi was poured out  
upon him.<sup>74</sup>  
He entered the contest,<sup>75</sup> not for the purpose of winning, for he  
was the Victor,  
but to give Adam the means by which he would be justified.
75. He undertook the contest as a man and fought Satan,  
that weakness shame the pride of that strong one.  
With human strength, he defeated the powerful athlete  
and made him a laughingstock to anyone who would come that  
they would mock him.

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72. "Eine tiefes Meer stieg herab in ihm, doch er wurde getauft Fließchen, Daß aufhöre die  
Weihe, die er gesandt von Sinais Höhen," *Ibid.*

73. "Das Priestertum, das der Vater anvertraut den Nachkommen Aarons, Hob auf der  
Messias und zugleich auch des Johannes Taufe," *Ibid.*

74. "Die Quellen der Levisöhne mußten durch ihn versiegen," *Ibid.*

75. See Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1-13.

72. **تَعْلًا وَكُلًّا سَدَّ دُونَهُمَا دَحْمَ وَزَا احْتَوَا :**  
**وَمَعَهُمَا يَمْلِكُ مَن لَّهُ؛ هَسَّ حَكَمَهُ تَعْلَفَم** ❖  
**وَهُوَ صَدَقَ الْوَحْخُ الْكَا كَبَحَدِ أَوْوَدَ :**  
**مَعْلَمَهُ مَعْلَسًا حَصْحَصَةً سَلَا مَن مَّسَّ** ❖

73. **حَدَّ كَبِ هَتَمَ مَن مَعَدَّةَالُ وَهَنَكَ نِإْوَد :**  
**كَه كَد مَعَهُمَا أَلَاوَهَق كَد مَن كَع مَتَا** ❖  
**حَبُّعَا حَلَامَ وَمَا مَنَّا وَهَمَّسَّةَالُ :**  
**وَدَّ أَلَا دُونَهُمَا حَصْمَا وَكَدَّة \ مَعَدَّةَا** ❖

74. **هَكَمَ مَن نَدَّ وَزَا أَسَّ وَنَسَّ كَد وَلَا لَاهَقَالُ :**  
**دَّ وَنَمَّا وَتَدَّ كَدَّ حَكَمَهُ أَمَّهَقَم** ❖  
**نَسَّ لَاهَقَالُ كَد نَمَّا دُونَهُمَا وَكُلَّا دُونَ :**  
**أَلَا نَمَّا حَكَمَالُ لَأَوْمَ نَمَّوَقَا دَد** ❖

75. **حَصَّ يُعَالِي وَزَا دَامَتِ حَم هُمَالُ :**  
**وَحَصَّسَكَّةَالُ نَحَا سَلَاوَدَ وَوَدَّ مَعْلَسَا** ❖  
**حَسَّ يُنَعَّةَالُ اَصَوَدَ كَاوَمَالُ الْكَمَالُ :**  
**وَحَدَّوَدَ كَاوَا حَكَمَ الْوَالُ وَنَحَا دَد** ❖

76. After the frailty of the adversary had been revealed,  
the Savior emerged from the struggle to care for his own.  
He began to make signs to the earth that it might be aware of his  
divinity  
while teaching and showing it the might of his being.
77. He joined the exalted to lower things on the road he undertook  
that the world might be aware of his divinity and humanity:  
In part, he was invited to a wedding feast,  
and, also in part, he changed water into good wine.<sup>76</sup>
78. In part, he became weary on the road [and] asked for water,  
and, also in part, he gave life to those who so desired.<sup>77</sup>  
At one place he wept over a deceased, and his tears ran down,<sup>78</sup>  
yet after a little while, he called him out of the tomb, and he came  
out.<sup>79</sup>
79. Heavenly and earthly [things] were united,  
for they were bound together to onlookers:  
While they were seeking to see him, for he was asleep and still,<sup>80</sup>  
they saw that when he rebukes the wind and sea, they obey him.<sup>81</sup>
80. As they gazed at him sitting and being happy among sinners,<sup>82</sup>  
they also saw that he forgives the sins of the needy.  
Whenever they saw that he hungered<sup>83</sup> and was weary as a  
helpless person,<sup>84</sup>  
he multiplied bread, sated thousands, and made them marvel.<sup>85</sup>

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76. See Jn 2:1-11.

77. See Jn 4:4-42.

78. See Jn 11:25.

79. See Jn 11:1-44.

80. See Lk 8:24.

81. See Mt 8:23-27; Mk 4:35-40; Lk 8:22-25.

82. See Mt 9:11

83. See Mt 4:2.

84. See Jn 4:6.

85. See Mt 14:12-21, 15:32-38; Mk 6:32-44; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-13.

76. ܐܠܚܝܬܐ ܣܚܡܐ ܐܠܐ ܕܚܚܝܒܐ :  
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81. Whenever they heard that the priests were determined to kill him,  
they draw closer, met the dead he had raised, and took heart.  
By the feeble things he endured, he confirmed his body,  
and, by the wonders, he showed the might of his divinity.
82. Whoever sought to deny him [saying,] 'he is not God,'  
he bound them with the signs as with fetters.  
Whoever erred by rejecting his body [saying], 'it is not from us,'  
he reproved them by the weakness manifested in it."
83. "The apostles betrothed me<sup>86</sup> to the Adored One," the Church  
said,  
"I know him and have no need of Disputants.  
I learned the entire generation of my Betrothed from his heralds.  
Let no one come to play the wise with me by their pride!
84. I am sorry for you, O Disputants, lest you would be defeated.  
Indeed, I am not terrified of you, and, for this reason, I judge.  
I am confident that the bars of Sheol shall not prevail over me.<sup>87</sup>  
How then will you word overpower me?
85. Behold my Betrothed's promise to me! So, I am confident  
that the gates of death will not prevail over me, and I will not be  
overpowered.  
Since my dowry had been written by his finger,<sup>88</sup> who can settle it,  
and the Bridegroom, who offered himself to me, is my marriage  
portion?<sup>89</sup>

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86. See 2 Cor 11:2.

87. See Mt 16:18.

88. See Ex 24:12, 31:18, 32:15–16; Dt 5:22.

89. "Wie mit seinem Finger ist meine Mitgift unlöslich geschrieben, Mein Brautgeschenk ist der Bräutigam (selbst), der sich mir hingibt," Grill, *"Heiligtum der Kirche,"* 50.

81. مَلَا يَمُكِّحْهُ يَوْمَهُ وَيُكَلِّمُ كُتَاتَا وَيُصَلِّدُهُ نَوْمَهُ :  
 مَلَحَهُ يَوْمَهُ أَمَّصَهُ مَتَلَا وَيُتَمِّمُ أَلَا كَحَّحَهُ يَوْمَهُ ❖  
 كَا حَا وَتَمَلَا وَيُصَفِّدُ يَوْمًا قَلْبَهُ هَمْزُ :  
 هَا حَا مَتَلَا كَلِمَ سَلَا وَيُكَلِّدُهُ لَوْمَهُ ❖

82. أَمَلَا وَيُنْجَا وَيُصَفِّدُ يَوْمًا حَمَ وَيَكُ كَلَمًا يَوْمَهُ :  
 حَبَّ أَلَمًا أَلَا وَيُحَقِّقُ صَفِّدُ يَوْمًا كَمَ ❖  
 لَامَلَا وَيُلْجَا وَيُتَلَحَّمُ قَلْبَهُ وَيَكُ مَلَمَ يَوْمَهُ :  
 حَصَصَكُمَا أَلَا وَيُاسَلُّدُ حَمَ حُفَّ يَوْمًا كَمَ ❖

83. حَمَلَا مَهْجَبًا مَكْتَشًا مَحْنَبَةً أَمَلًا حَبَلًا :  
 مَبَحَلَا إِنَّمَا يَوْمَهُ كَمَ هَا وَيُؤَقِّدُهَا لَا مَهْبَلًا إِنَّمَا ❖  
 كَلَمَ هَمْزُ حَمَ وَيُحَصِّنُ مَحْقَقًا مَعَ كُتَّةٍ يَوْمَهُ :  
 لَا إِنَّمَا تَلَامَلَا تَلَسَّصَ كَمَ حَسَلَسَ يَوْمَهُ ❖

84. حَكَمَهُ أَجَنَّهُ أَمَ وَيُؤَقِّدُهَا وَلَا لَاهَلَسَعَهُ :  
 كَمَ هَمْزُ مَبَسَلًا وَيُسَكِّدُ مَصَحَقَهُ هَا وَيُؤَقِّدُهَا ❖  
 لَامَكَلَبَ إِنَّمَا وَمَعَقَلًا وَيُمَكِّدُ لَا سُهْمَنَ كَمَ :  
 هَا مَعَ مَبَسَبَ مَعَاوَصًا يَوْمَهُ مَعَ مَكْتَنَقَهُ ❖

85. أَمَا هَمَهُ وَيَوْمَهُ وَيُحَصِّنُ نِإْوَهُ هَاوَصَلًا إِنَّمَا :  
 وَلَا سُهْمَنَ كَمَ أَوْجَلًا وَيُصَدِّدُ هَاوَصَلًا إِنَّمَا ❖  
 صَمًا وَيُحَرِّجُهُ حَلَمًا قَنَسَدَ مَعَ هَمْزًا كَمَ :  
 هَمْزُ وَيَوْمًا وَيَكُ هَمَهُ سَلَامًا وَيُجَوِّدُكَ نَعْمَهُ ❖

86. If he desired to separate me from him, it would be impossible,  
and he could not, for he would have to deny himself<sup>90</sup> because he  
is with me.  
She who leaves will lay claim to her dowry, for it is hers,  
and will take with her everything written in the [marital] bonds.
87. How can I leave when my dowry is the Bridegroom?  
Even if I left — God forbid that I would leave — he would come  
with me.  
I am joined to him, and there is no way that I separate from him,  
for I am with him whether in life or death!
88. Since I am thus joined to him, and he is laying holding of me,  
why will you, Learned, drag my Bridegroom in a dispute?"

### *VIII. The Poet's Supplications*

89. Virgin Girl, bring your account to a close. I regard you with  
wonder.  
No one comes between you and your Bridegroom. Do not let go  
of your Husband!<sup>91</sup>  
Behold wonder fell upon the assemblies by your eloquence.  
With confidence, we pronounce your verdict, "You are  
victorious!"
90. Behold you abandoned the Disputants to defeat.  
The side of the learned raised its finger, yet you triumphed.  
Do not lay blame on me, for I did not investigate your Lord.  
He testifies that I did not arrogantly violate his concealed things.

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90. See 2 Tm 12-13.

91. "Kein anderer geh zu dir ein als nur dein Bräutigam," Grill, "*Heiligtum der Kirche*," 51.

86. הלא חָכְמָה נָחַל וְנִתְּנָה מִלֵּה אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְחַיִּים :  
 הלא מִמְּחֶסֶד אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד נִתְּנָה וְהַלּוּ נִתְּנָה אֱלֹהִים \*  
 אֲבָלָה וְנִתְּנָה אֶל אֱלֹהִים וְנִתְּנָה אֱלֹהִים :  
 הֵכָלָה וְנִתְּנָה אֶל אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְחַיִּים \*  
 87. אֲבָל מִכִּי נִתְּנָה אֱלֹהִים וְנִתְּנָה מִלֵּה אֱלֹהִים :  
 וְנִתְּנָה אֱלֹהִים מִלֵּה אֱלֹהִים וְנִתְּנָה אֱלֹהִים \*  
 מִלֵּה אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְחַיִּים אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְחַיִּים :  
 וְנִתְּנָה מִלֵּה אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְחַיִּים \*  
 88. הֵכָלָה מִלֵּה אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְחַיִּים :  
 אֲבָלָה מִלֵּה אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְחַיִּים \*  
 89. הֵכָלָה מִלֵּה אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְחַיִּים :  
 חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד \*  
 הֵכָלָה מִלֵּה אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְחַיִּים :  
 אֲבָלָה מִלֵּה אֱלֹהִים חֶסֶד וְחַיִּים \*  
 90. חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד :  
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 חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד חֶסֶד :  
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91. Know what I mean based on my sayings,  
for they plainly utter hymns that please you.  
I have never pressed on speaking cunningly  
nor have I given dispute an opportunity to dwell in me.
92. May whoever seeks to divide you, Church, leave you,  
and whoever exalts themselves to inquire into your Lord not  
adore him.  
May whoever causes a schism among your assemblies not enter  
you,  
and whoever disturbs your simplicity be entangled.
93. May whoever ruffles you by their counterarguments not be  
received,  
and the word of the one who disputes in you to cause harm come  
to an end.  
May whoever stretches their hand to controversy be reproached  
in you,  
and the soul of the one who causes quarrel in you be damned.
94. May whoever incites dangerous billows against you be drowned  
in them,  
and the life of the one who finds fault in your faith end.  
May whoever turns you away from the truth become a  
laughingstock  
and your Lord hate the one who innovates your truth with time.
95. May the voice of the one who goes back on their word for the sake  
of someone be silent,  
and whoever deride your simplicity be reviled.  
May the feet of the one who plays the wise within you to stir up  
his [horde] buckle,  
and whoever troubles you bear judgment.<sup>92</sup>

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92. See Gal. 5:10

91.  $\text{وَأَمَّا مَنِعٌ مِّنْكَفٍ وَحُسٍّ وَأَسْفٍ أَلَا هِيَ} :$   
 $\text{وَقَعْلُهُمْ أَمَّا قَلِيلٌ وَهَسْبُ حَسٍّ} \diamond$   
 $\text{أَلَا مَدَامَ مَحْتَلٍّ كَلِّ مَحْتَلٍّ وَأَمَّا هُ} :$   
 $\text{هَلَّا كَبُرُهَا مَدَامَ أَلَا وَبَبَبٍ كَلِّ} \diamond$
92.  $\text{أَمَّا وَجَدًا بَعْدَ حَسٍّ حَبَالٍ تَعْلَمُ مَحْتَلٍّ} :$   
 $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلَّا وَتَحْتَلٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟ كَلِّ} \diamond$   
 $\text{وَوَدَّ مَحْتَلٍّ حَسٍّ تَعْلَمُ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟ كَلِّ} :$   
 $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ كَلِّ مَحْتَلٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟ كَلِّ} \diamond$
93.  $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟} :$   
 $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟} \diamond$   
 $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟ كَلِّ مَحْتَلٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟} :$   
 $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ وَوَدَّ كَلِّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟} \diamond$
94.  $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ حَسٍّ كَلِّ مَحْتَلٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟} :$   
 $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟} \diamond$   
 $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟} :$   
 $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟} \diamond$
95.  $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟} :$   
 $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟} \diamond$   
 $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟} :$   
 $\text{وَقَدَّ كَلِّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ حَسٍّ أَلَا تَعْلَمُ؟} \diamond$

96. May the word on the tongue of whoever reproaches you cease,  
and death shut the mouth of whoever quarrels with and scorn  
you,  
May whoever draws a bow toward you be struck with its arrow  
and the spear enter the heart of whoever is hurling it at you.
97. May whoever establishes a side to weigh against you be scattered,  
and whoever summons you to strife retreat [in defeat].  
May the mount of the one who rides pride to pursue you be  
wearied out,  
and their neck break by their fall for threatening you.
98. May you trample on kings, may you not be conquered by rulers  
and your heel be lifted up higher than the shoulders of the  
governors of the earth.  
May your bosom be dilated larger than the edges of all the  
regions,  
and you close the gate, and all sovereignties be enclosed within  
you.
99. May your ropes be lengthened even longer than the seas and  
rivers  
and your poles not be entirely pulled out by any wind.<sup>93</sup>  
May your wall surpass even the firmament by its force,  
and you be a fortress and all nations be sheltered in you.
100. May you be a fishnet capable of catching the sea and land,  
and may the world be taken in your bosom to life at the hands of  
your Lord.  
May your head be exalted high above sovereigns and lords,  
and nothing reach you in greatness.

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93. See Is 54:2; 33:20.

96.  $\text{לִחְסֵהָ מִחֲדָלָהּ מִי חֲמִינָה וְיִמְלִיכֶם חֶסֶד} :$   
 וְיִשְׁעֶהָ; מִיָּהּ אֶל חֶסֶדָּהּ וְיִזְרָא וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*  
 אֲשֶׁלָּהּ וְיִמְלִיכֶם מִמֶּלֶךְ חֶסֶדָּהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִחַד \*  
 וְיִחַדְכֶם אֶל חֶסֶדָּהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ לִחְסֵהָ \*
97.  $\text{חֲסִידָהּ וְיִמְלִיכֶם חֲסִידָהּ חֶסֶדָּהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד} :$   
 וְיִמְלִיכֶם חֶסֶד חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*  
 וְיִסְמְכֶם חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*  
 וְיִסְמְכֶם חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*
98.  $\text{לִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ לִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ} :$   
 וְיִסְמְכֶם חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*  
 וְיִסְמְכֶם חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*  
 וְיִסְמְכֶם חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*
99.  $\text{לִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ לִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ} :$   
 וְיִסְמְכֶם חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*  
 וְיִסְמְכֶם חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*  
 וְיִסְמְכֶם חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*
100.  $\text{חֲסִידָהּ מִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ לִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ מִיָּהּ} :$   
 וְיִסְמְכֶם חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*  
 וְיִסְמְכֶם חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*  
 וְיִסְמְכֶם חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ חֲסִידָהּ וְיִסְמְכֶם חֶסֶד \*

101. May you place your foot above the high necks of kings  
to trample every kingdom under that which belongs to you.  
May heaven be spread lower than your edifice, and you be raised  
up,  
and high mountains become depths before your habitations.
102. May the dense forests fall before your vegetation and your fruit  
sprout,  
you set fire to orchards, and you grow.  
May your horn be exalted above judges and their authorities  
and every horn that gores you be hewn down by you.
103. May your mouth be opened against your enemies surrounding  
you,  
the voices of those who quarrel with you be silent, and your  
[voice] thunder.  
May your harvest multiply while your seed produces a  
hundredfold<sup>94</sup>  
and fire consume the tares pricking you.
104. May the word spread among the nations that the Church is risen  
to high honors,  
while every power is despised, but your [power] remains.  
May the sick who were led astray by the schism be healed in you  
and possess the strong faith from your teaching.
105. May you lift up the hand of those who fell, and they stand in you  
while the rifts among your ranks may no longer be seen.  
May you be salt,<sup>95</sup> the tasteless be seasoned with you,  
and everyone possess a sweet taste from your meditation.

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94. See Mt 12:23, 19:29.

95. See Mt 5:13; Mk 9:50; Lk 14:34–35.

101.  $\text{לְהַשְׁמִיעַ} \text{ וְ} \text{לְחַכֵּם} \text{ חָכְמָה} \text{ מִן} \text{יְהוָה} \text{ וְ} \text{לְהַבְרִיחַ} :$

$\text{לְהַבְרִיחַ} \text{ חָכְמָה} \text{ אֶתְּנֶנְךָ} \text{ לְשֵׁם} \text{ יְהוָה} \text{ וְ} \text{לְחַכֵּם} \text{ } \diamond$   
 $\text{מִמֶּנּוּ} \text{ לְמַדְךָ} \text{ מִן} \text{חֲכָמֵי} \text{ עוֹלָם} \text{ לְאַכְכֵּב} :$   
 $\text{וְ} \text{לְהַבְרִיחַ} \text{ וְ} \text{לְהַבְרִיחַ} \text{ נִשְׁמָה} \text{ } \text{יְיָ} \text{ מִבְּרִיתְךָ} \text{ } \diamond$

102.  $\text{נִשְׁמָה} \text{ } \text{חֲכָמִים} \text{ מִמֶּנּוּ} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ עוֹלָמִים} \text{ נִשְׁמָה} :$

$\text{עוֹלָמִים} \text{ וְ} \text{נִשְׁמָה} \text{ וְ} \text{לְמַדְךָ} \text{ עוֹלָמִים} \text{ לְאַכְכֵּב} \text{ } \diamond$   
 $\text{לְאַכְכֵּב} \text{ מִמֶּנּוּ} \text{ חָכְמָה} \text{ וְ} \text{נִשְׁמָה} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ } :$   
 $\text{עוֹלָמִים} \text{ מִמֶּנּוּ} \text{ וְ} \text{נִשְׁמָה} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ לְאַכְכֵּב} \text{ } \diamond$

103.  $\text{עוֹלָמִים} \text{ לְאַכְכֵּב} \text{ חָכְמָה} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ וְ} \text{נִשְׁמָה} \text{ חֲכָמִים} :$

$\text{נִשְׁמָה} \text{ } \text{חֲכָמִים} \text{ וְ} \text{נִשְׁמָה} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ עוֹלָמִים} \text{ } \diamond$   
 $\text{לְאַכְכֵּב} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ מִמֶּנּוּ} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ לְאַכְכֵּב} \text{ } :$   
 $\text{עוֹלָמִים} \text{ וְ} \text{נִשְׁמָה} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ עוֹלָמִים} \text{ } \diamond$

104.  $\text{לְאַכְכֵּב} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ וְ} \text{נִשְׁמָה} \text{ חֲכָמִים} :$

$\text{מִמֶּנּוּ} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ עוֹלָמִים} \text{ } \diamond$   
 $\text{נִשְׁמָה} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ עוֹלָמִים} \text{ } :$   
 $\text{עוֹלָמִים} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ עוֹלָמִים} \text{ } \diamond$

105.  $\text{לְאַכְכֵּב} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ וְ} \text{נִשְׁמָה} \text{ חֲכָמִים} :$

$\text{מִמֶּנּוּ} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ עוֹלָמִים} \text{ } \diamond$   
 $\text{נִשְׁמָה} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ עוֹלָמִים} \text{ } :$   
 $\text{עוֹלָמִים} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ חֲכָמִים} \text{ עוֹלָמִים} \text{ } \diamond$

106. May your assembly increase with singing choirs  
until heaven, you sister, becomes envious of you and imitates  
you.  
May the hymns of praise ascend from you, the watchers rejoice,  
and your chants be an illustration to the companions Gabriel.
107. May your children praise the Lord in you without inquiry  
and the sayings of the heavenly beings be chanted in you.  
May a sea of praise gush out and thrust out of your lips,  
and the world bathe in holiness poured out in you.
108. May you, altogether, learn the sweet singing of the Seraphim  
and inquiry be not recited in your midst by the Disputants.  
May the Wise be reformed in you lest they may be puffed up  
and compose plain hymns to the delight of your assemblies.
109. May the priests responsible for your service be made to shine in  
you  
while they are kept pure from controversy like heavenly beings.  
May the Spirit enshroud the deacons ministering in you,  
and they distribute with great care the Mystery carried in you.
110. May chaste covenant be a diadem on your exalted  
and the oil in the guarded vessels of your virginity increase.  
May marriage, along with its purity, rejoice in you,  
and holiness and its respect be also exalted in you.
111. May you be the cause of virtues to all ranks  
and renew the world that grew old because of its sores.

106. تَحَلَّى وَصَبَّحَ حَقَّقَهُ لَأَوْحَتُهُ :  
 حَبَّطًا وَأَسْهَمَ مَعَهُ سُلَامًا هَلَاوًا حَبَّ

تَعَفَّيْتُ حَبَّطًا مَوْلَا هَلَاوًا هَبَّوًا حَبَّ :  
 هَلَاوًا حَبَّطًا تَحَلَّى نَبَّوًا وَحَبَّ حَبَّطًا

107. نَبَّوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا :  
 هَلَاوًا حَبَّطًا هَلَاوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا

نَبَّوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا :  
 هَلَاوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا

108. لَأَوْحَتُهُ حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا :  
 هَلَاوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا

نَبَّوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا :  
 هَلَاوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا

109. نَبَّوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا :  
 حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا

لَأَوْحَتُهُ حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا :  
 هَلَاوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا

110. نَبَّوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا :  
 هَلَاوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا

لَأَوْحَتُهُ حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا :  
 هَلَاوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا

111. لَأَوْحَتُهُ حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا :  
 هَلَاوًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا حَبَّطًا



IX. *The End*

112. And I, insignificant [servant], not worthy of your account,  
adjure you by the life of the Bridegroom to pray for me.  
Your Lord [is due praise,] you [are owed] victory, and I [ask for]  
forgiveness.  
O Bridegroom who betrothed the Church by his blood, have pity  
on me, a sinner.

The end of the *mimro Against the Scrutinizers and on the Sanctity of the Church* of  
446 hemistichs<sup>96</sup>

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96. The Syriac text Bedjan published contains only 444 hemistichs, two hemistichs less than what the end of the *mimro* claims.

112. ۛاٰنَا حَبْلًا وَلَا هٰٓءَا يَوْمَ ۛاَرٰنَا ۛحَبْلًا :  
 ۛسَّتْ سَلٰنَا مَعٰنَا اِنَا ۛحَبْلًا اَفَیْہَا سَکَفَ ۛ  
 ۛحَبْلًا مَعٰحَبْلًا ۛحَبْلًا اِنَا ۛحَبْلًا :  
 سَلٰنَا ۛحَبْلًا ۛحَبْلًا ۛحَبْلًا ۛحَبْلًا ۛحَبْلًا ۛ

مَحْمَدٌ مَّامِدًا ۛحَبْلًا ۛحَبْلًا ۛحَبْلًا ۛحَبْلًا :  
 ۛحَبْلًا مَعٰ ۛحَبْلًا ۛحَبْلًا ۛحَبْلًا ۛحَبْلًا ۛ

# **ZUSAMMENFASSUNG DER WISSENSCHAFTLICHEN ABHANDLUNG IN DEUTSCHER SPRACHE**

## **TYPEN UND SYMBOLE DER KIRCHE IN DEN WERKEN DES JAKOB VON SARUG**

Die vorliegende Studie behandelt in fünf Kapiteln und einem Anhang Typologien der Kirche in den poetischen Werken des syrischen Kirchenvaters Jakob von Sarug. Mit einer solchen systematischen Beschäftigung mit den Kirchenbildern bei Jakob von Sarug erfüllt die Arbeit ein Desiderat und ergänzt die Forschungen im Bereich der syrischen Ekklesiologie.

### **Kapitel 1: Leben und Werke des Jakob von Sarug**

Die zur Rekonstruktion des Lebens des Jakob von Sarug zu Gebote stehenden Quellen erweisen sich aufgrund der hagiographischen Stilisierung als kaum glaubwürdig. Es lassen sich aus ihnen nur wenige authentische Auskünfte gewinnen, die aber eine grobe Skizze seines Lebens erlauben.

Jakob von Sarug war der Sohn eines christlichen Priesters. Er wurde ca. 451 n. Chr. im mesopotamischen Kurtam geboren. Der Bericht über seine Geburt ist wundersam. Seine Mutter war unfruchtbar, doch empfing sie ihren Sohn, als Gott das Flehen der Eltern erhört hat. Hierbei handelt es sich vermutlich um eine Parallelisierung mit den biblischen Erzählungen von Abraham und Sarah sowie Zacharias und Elisabeth. Weitere Legenden, weisen auf die höhere Berufung von Jakob hin: Im Alter von drei Jahren betritt er, vom Heiligen Geist veranlasst, während der Epiklese, also beim Höhepunkt der Liturgie, den Altarraum und trinkt drei Mal vom Kelch mit dem Blut Christi. Einer anderen Legende nach fängt der zwölfjährige Jakob an zwölfsilbige Gedichte zu verfassen. Später wird ihm dieses bis dahin

unbekannte Versmaß zugeschrieben, als dessen Erfinder und Namensgeber er gilt.

Jakob erhält seine Ausbildung an der berühmten Schule von Edessa. Schon als Zweiundzwanzigjähriger genießt er das Ansehen eines hervorragenden Predigers und sein Ruhm erregt die Aufmerksamkeit der Kirchenhierarchie. Diese überprüft seine Rechtgläubigkeit, die er durch ein Stegreifgedicht auf den vom Propheten Ezechiel gesehenen Feuerwagen unter Beweis stellt; dieses soll das erste der Werke des Jakob von Sarug sein. Nach dieser Prüfung wurde ihm das Amt übertragen, in den Kirchen zu predigen.

Wahrscheinlich legte Jakob keine Mönchsgelübde ab, wird aber zum Priester und danach vor 503 zum Periodeut geweiht – die genauen Daten seiner Weihen bleiben unbekannt. Im Jahre 519 wird Jakob – schon in vorgerücktem Alter – zum Bischof von Batnan erhoben. Dieses Amt füllte er etwa zwei Jahre aus, bis er dann am 29. November 521 stirbt.

Jakob von Sarug gilt als ideenreicher Schriftsteller und als einer der bedeutendsten syrischen Kirchenväter. Mindestens 760 Gedichte hat er verfasst, wovon dreihundert erhalten sind. Daneben schrieb er u. a. theologische Traktate, biblische Exegesen, Hagiographien, Briefe und Lobgesänge. Aufgrund dieses reichen literarischen Schaffens erhielt er von Jakob von Edessa die Titel Flöte des Heiligen Geistes und Harfe der gläubigen Kirche.

Bezüglich der Adressatenfrage lassen sich den Schriften des Jakob von Sarug keine expliziten Aussagen entnehmen. Dennoch deuten die Gedichte an bestimmten Stellen auf einen Vortrag vor einer kirchlichen Gemeinde oder einer Mönchsgemeinschaft hin.

Insbesondere stellt sich die Frage nach Jakobs Haltung zur Annahme des Konzils von Chalcedon (451), zumal er sowohl von der Syrisch-Orthodoxen Kirche, die dem Konzils ablehnend gegenübersteht, als auch von der chalcedonischen Maronitischen Kirche in Anspruch genommen wird. In

der Forschung wird dieser Punkt kontrovers diskutiert und es gibt hierin keine Übereinstimmung. Jedenfalls geht die vorliegende Arbeit davon aus, dass man die Gedichte des Jakob auch im Sinne des Konzils von Chalcedon lesen kann. Es finden sich hier nämlich keine Aussagen, die eine Zwei-Naturen-Lehre explizit ablehnen, wenn dies vom historischen Kontext und Jakobs Herkunft aus der syrischen Kirche auch zu erwarten wäre.

Die Inhalte seiner Gedichte beanspruchen vielmehr, unabhängig von der nachchalcedonischen christologischen Kontroverse, zeitlose Gültigkeit. Ihre christliche Botschaft ist dem vorkonziliaren und nachkonziliaren Ohr zugänglich und selbst der moderne Leser kann daraus etwas Inspirierendes mitnehmen. Diesen Anspruch, auch für spätere Generationen zu schreiben, findet man in seinen Werken.

## **Kapitel 2. Kirche als Gebäude auf Golgotha**

Unter den Schriften des Alten Testamentes ist gemäß Jakob von Sarug die Botschaft Christi wie das Gesicht Mose verhüllt (vgl. Ex 34,35; 2 Kor 3,13–15). Verdeckt ist dort ebenfalls die Kirche schon erwähnt. Diese Verhüllung wurde vom Sohn Gottes weggenommen (vgl. 2. Kor 3,16), als er in die Welt gekommen ist und den Schleier zerriss. Die Sinnbilder der Kirche leuchten demzufolge vom Alten Testament heraus und sind klarer als die scheinende Sonne. Ein Gebäude auf Golgotha ist ein solches Bildsymbol. Und zwar betrachtet der Bischof von Batnan an vier verschiedenen Bibelstellen eine Art von Bau, der auf die auf Golgotha errichtete Kirche hindeutet.

Die erste Art von Bau ist ein Haus für die Heiligen auf Golgotha, dessen Errichtung Jakob von Sarug Melchisedek nachrühmte, obgleich die dazugehörige Bibelstelle (vgl. Gen 14, 18–20) von keinem Bau berichtet. Melchisedek ist ein Typus Christi, weil er König von Salem und gleichzeitig Priester des Höchsten Gottes war. Dieser bedeutsame Priester übte sein Amt wie keiner aus, insofern als er im Vergleich zu den anderen alttestamentarischen brandopfernden Priestern der einzige war, der Brot und Wein darbrachte. Melchisedeks Handlung führte einen neuen sakralen Ritus

ein, wodurch sich das vollkommene Priesteramt offenbart hat. Jesus Christus am Kreuz hat Melchisedek diese Tat gelehrt, als er durch das Auge der Propheten vor ihm auf Golgotha stand und aus seiner Seite das hervorströmende Wasser und Blut sah. Melchisedek ahmte darauf den Gekreuzigten, der dessen Leib und Blut der Welt hingab, nach, als er Brot und Wein darbrachte (vgl. Gen 14,18). Melchisedeks Darbringung verweist eindeutig auf die eucharistischen Gestalten. In diesem Kontext bezieht sich Jakob auf die Kirche als ein Haus für die Heiligen auf Golgotha. Dementsprechend entsteht eine sakramentale Kirche, deren unerschütterliches Fundament Jesus Christus auf Golgotha errichtet hat und deren Priestertum sowie Sakramente er mit seiner Kreuzigung verquickt hat.

Der von Abraham und Isaak gebaute Altar (vgl. Gen 22,9) ist ebenso ein Bauwerk, das die Kirche versinnbildlicht. Abraham hatte Sehnsucht nach dem Tag des Sohnes Gottes (vgl. Joh 8, 56). Um sein Ansinnen zu erfüllen, forderte Gott ihn auf seinen einzigen Sohn Isaak zu opfern. Der Allmächtige führte Abraham und Isaak zu einem Ort, an dem später die Kreuzigung des einzigen Sohnes Gottes geschehen wird. An dieser Stelle hat Abraham den Altar (vgl. Gen 22,9) gebaut, um darauf Isaak zu opfern. Es ist offensichtlich, dass Abraham und Isaak Typen des himmlischen Vaters und Sohnes in dieser Reihenfolge sind. Als Isaak erfahren hat, dass er die Opfergabe war, half er seinem Vater beim Aufbau des Altares. Diesen Altar nannte Jakob von Sarug das „Haus der Geheimnisse“, das die Kirche bezeichnet. Obschon in dieser Perikope Abraham allein den Altar errichtete, verdeutlicht Isaaks Teilhabe am Bau des Altares im Text des Jakob von Sarug die Bereitschaft Jesu, sich für die Welt zu opfern. Der Sohn Gottes wurde nicht dazu gezwungen, sondern aus freiem Willen stieg er aufs Kreuz. Abrahams Sehnsucht nach dem Tag des Sohnes wurde erfüllt, indem er das zukünftige, großzügige Opfer Gottes erlebte, wenngleich er Isaak nicht hingeben musste. Nun wird auch deutlich, dass sich der „Tag des Gottessohnes“ auf die Kreuzigung bezieht. Am Kreuz brachte der himmlische Vater seinen einzigen Erben für die Errettung der Welt dar. Dieses historische Ereignis ist zwar

einmalig, aber es wiederholt sich durch das eucharistische Sakrament, das die Kirche auf ihrem Altar feiert. Demnach nimmt Abrahams und Isaaks Altar Bezug auf die Kirche, das Haus der Geheimnisse.

Der von Jakob, dem Sohn Isaaks und Enkel Abrahams, eingeeölte Stein (vgl. Gen 28,10–22), das dritte Bauwerk bei Jakob von Sarug, weist ebenfalls auf die Kirche hin. Erzvater Jakob begab sich nach Paddan-Aram, um sich eine Frau, eine von den Töchtern Labans, seines Onkels, zu nehmen (vgl. Gen 28,2). Auf dem Weg dahin machte er an einem bestimmten Ort Halt, um zu übernachten. Er nahm einen Stein, worauf er wie auf einem Kissen einschlief und von einer Leiter träumte, die auf der Erde stand und bis zum Himmel reichte, worauf Engel Gottes auf- und niederstiegen und hoch droben der Herr stand. Diese Übernachtungsstelle befand sich gemäß Jakob von Sarug auf Golgotha; dieser legte die Leiter als ein Symbol des Kreuzes aus und fasste den Herrn an ihrem Ende als Jesus Christus am Kreuz auf. Außerdem bezeichnet die Länge der Leiter, dass das Kreuz Jesu den Scheol und die Erde mit dem Gottesreich verbindet. Als Jakob aufstand, goss er Öl auf den Stein, das die Kirche symbolisiert. Und zwar deutet diese Tat Jakobs auf ihre Festlegung, und der gesamte Ort wird zum Haus Gottes, in dessen Mitte die Kirche und das Kreuz, worauf der Herr Jesus Christus herrscht, stehen.

Der Stein, worauf Moses sitzt, liefert das vierte Bauwerk als ein Sinnbild der Kirche. Es wird in Ex 17,8–16 berichtet, dass die Israeliten, an ihrer Spitze Josua, gegen Amalek und sein Heer kämpfen. Moses befindet sich zusammen mit Aaron und Hur währenddessen auf dem Gipfel eines Hügels, diese militärische Auseinandersetzung betrachtend. Solange Moses seine Hände erhoben hält, erweisen sich die Israeliten als stärker. Als Moses müde wird, lässt er die Hände hinab. Die Amalekiter setzen sich infolgedessen gegen die Israeliten durch. Damit Moses seine Müdigkeit bekämpfen kann und die Israeliten die Schlacht gewinnen können, schieben Aaron und Hur unter Moses einen Steinbrocken und stützen seine Arme, der eine rechts, der andere links. Diese Szene stellt laut Jakob von Sarug die Kreuzigung auf

Golgotha bildhaft dar: Moses mit hocherhobenen Armen als das Kreuz. So konnten die Israeliten wegen des Gekreuzigten endgültig den Kampf gegen die Amalekiter gewinnen. Der Stein, worauf er sitzt, erweist sich als die Kirche am Ort der Kreuzigung. Durch das Kreuz, das an der Spitze der Kirche steht, gewinnt die Kirche den Kampf gegen das Böse der Welt und bleibt immer siegreich, weil Jesus Christ, der Gekreuzigte, für immer seine Arme erhoben hält.

### **Kapitel 3. Kirche als Fischer und Fischernetz**

Jakob von Sarug fasste das Fischernetz Petri (vgl. Jn 21, 2–14) als ein Bild für die Kirche auf. Nun gilt die Kirche ebenso als der von Christus gesandte Fischer (vgl. Mt 4, 19; Mk 1, 17; Lk 5, 10). Zunächst ist der Sohn Gottes ein Fischer in höchster Vollendung. Der Name, Fischer – ṣayādā (ܣܝܝܕܐ) auf Syrisch – gehört zu den biblischen Titeln, die Jesus seinen Jüngern verleiht. Jakob von Sarug verwendet diesen Name nicht nur im Sinn von „Fischer“, sondern auch von „Fänger“.

Jesus Christus, der Fischer, steht mit dem Fischernetz als Symbol der Kirche in Zusammenhang, weil er derjenige ist, der das Netz sozusagen in das Meer der Welt auswirft. Sein Zweck besteht darin, dass es die Menschen zu Jesus Christus zieht und sie einfängt, um ihnen das ewige Leben zu spenden. Dafür benutzt er verschiedene „Fallen“. Was für Bedeutung dieser Ausdruck hat, verdeutlichen die folgenden zwei Beispiele.

Im Ersten geht es darum, wie Jesus Christus die Magier (vgl. Mt 2,1–12) fängt. Diese interessieren sich für Planeten, Gestirne, Himmelskörper und Zodiakalastrologie, und zwar für alles, was sich am Himmel befindet und sich bewegt. Genau in der Himmelsgegend stellt der Sohn Gottes seinen Köder bzw. seine Falle auf, um sie einzufangen, weil er ein Meisterfänger ist. Er verbirgt sich mittendrin und liegt in Lauerstellung. Der Meisterfänger weiß, was der exakt passende Köder ist. Wenn er den Magiern Propheten geschickt hätte, würden sie die Gottgesandten steinigen und umbringen. Ihre Botschaft wäre der falsche Köder. Für die Sterndeuter ist der leuchtende Stern



der richtige Köder. Tatsächlich folgen die Magier dem Stern, kommen zu Jesus Christus, und fallen vor ihm nieder.

Das zweite Beispiel zeigt, wie Jesus Christus das Wasser als Köder verwendet, um die Samariterin und durch sie die Samariter (vgl. Joh 4,1–42) zu fangen. In der Absicht, ein Gespräch mit der samaritanischen Frau zu halten, kommt Jesus zum Brunnen. Er wusste vorher, dass sie dahin kommt. Seine Müdigkeit und sein Durst sind bloß eine Ausrede, damit er sie treffen kann. Außerdem, weil er sie allein anreden will, verwendet er seinen Hunger als Vorwand und schickt seine Jünger, ihm Essen zu besorgen. Als die dürstende samaritanische Frau an den Brunnen kommt, fängt Jesus an sie anzusprechen und sie um Wasser zu bitten. Seine Unterhaltung mit ihr ist die Falle und das Wasser der Köder. Er offenbart ihr, dass er Christus ist und ihr lebendiges Wasser gibt, damit sie nie mehr durstig wird. So fängt er sie und sie glaubt an ihn. Infolgedessen kehrt sie sofort ins Dorf zurück und brachte zu ihm die Samariter, die ebenso an ihn glaubten.

Im Gegensatz zu dem wohltätigen Jesus Christus, der den Menschen das ewige Leben spendet und die Erlösung verleiht, gibt es aber auch einen Gegenspieler: einen blutdürstigen Fänger, das Böse, um die Menschen, wie schon im Paradies, zu vernichten. Die folgenden zwei Beispiele zeigen, dass der Böse auch ein Meisterfänger ist und erklären weiter, dass er sich mit der Absicht trägt, die Menschen zunichtezumachen. Aber weil Gottvater barmherzig ist, schickt er seinen Sohn, damit er die Menschen von ihrem Unglück erlöst.

Das erste Beispiel für den bösen Meisterfänger ist die Darstellung vom Mann, der von der Legion Dämonen besessen ist (vgl. Lk 8,26–39). Das Böse verabscheute die Menschheit, seitdem Adam und Eva geschaffen sind. Der unversöhnliche Hass des Bösen auf die Menschen führt zahlreiche böse Geister, die sich normalerweise verachten, zusammen. Sie vereinigen sich, um einen Mann zu fangen und von ihm Besitz zu ergreifen. Sie quälen ihn zu Tode und ihretwegen lebt er nicht mehr wie ein normaler Mensch zu Hause,

sondern entblößt und gefesselt befindet er sich in den Grabhöhlen unter den Toten. Damit wird betont, dass die Dämonen seine menschliche Würde wegnehmen und er, obgleich weiterhin atmend, tot ist. Dieser Besessene stellt Adam und seine Kinder, die der Schlange wegen aus dem Garten von Eden weggeschickt wurden, dar. Da kommt Jesus Christus, befreit ihn aus den Händen der Dämonen, heilt ihn und schickt ihn nach Hause. Das heißt, dass der Sohn Gottes Adam und Eva zum Garten von Eden zurückführt.

Im zweiten Beispiel geht es um die Begegnung Jesu mit der Sünderin (vgl. Lk 7, 36–50). Diese wurde vom Bösen gefangen und ausgenutzt, um andere Menschen einzufangen. Wie ein Löwe lauert das Böse in Hinterhalt und sieben böse Geister nehmen sie gefangen. Diese arme Frau wird zu einer Prostituierten und verursacht Spaltungen zwischen Ehemännern und ihren Gattinnen. Diese Besessene erlangt Heilung und kommt deswegen zu Jesus, dem Arzt, damit er sie heilen kann. Er fängt sie durch die Falle der Barmherzigkeit und dem Köder der Sündenvergebung. Im Widerspiel mit dem Bösen, der die Menschen zum Sündigen führt, verzeiht Jesus ihre Frevel und überschütten sie mit Liebe.

Die Kirche ist das lebensspendende Fischernetz, weil der Menschenfischer, Jesus Christus, sie in die See der Welt auswirft. Die Absicht Jesu ist es, die Welt zu sich selbst zu ziehen, denn er möchte die ganze Menschheit durch sein Fischnetz fangen und ihr das ewige Leben verleihen. Dieses Fischnetz ist die Kirche, deren Symbol biblisch ist und die das Netz Simons (vgl. Joh 21,1–14) laut Jakob von Sarug ist.

Die Kirche ist nicht nur ein Fischnetz, sondern auch eine Menschenfischerin, insofern sie den Fischer, Jesus Christ, nachahmt. Sobald er Menschen fängt, schickt er sie, damit sie seine Botschaft weitergeben. Die Magier und die Samariterin sind zwei Beispiele dafür. Als die Magier zu Herodes mit der Botschaft der Geburt Christi kamen, waren sie schon zu neuen Aposteln Christi geworden. Der irdische König lehnte ihre Kunde ab und versuchte den himmlischen König umzubringen. Sie kehrten trotzdem in

ihr Land zurück und gaben die frohe Botschaft Christi ihren Landsleuten weiter. Die samaritanische Frau ist auch zu einer Apostelin Jesu geworden, als er sie zu den Samaritern geschickt hat. Es ist ihr gelungen, ihr Netz voll von Fischen zu Jesus zu bringen. Dieser Ausdruck heißt, dass sie die Samariter zu ihm geführt hat.

Als Sinnbild der Kirche sind auch Petrus und die Jünger Jesu zu Menschenfischern berufen (vgl. Mt 4,19; Mk 1,17; Lk 5,10). Petrus traf die falsche Entscheidung, als er und einige Jünger zum Fischen gingen. Sie hätten keinen Fisch fangen können, weil das Fischen nicht mehr ihr Beruf war. Am Ufer fordert sie Jesus aufs Neue auf Menschenfischer zu werden. Dieses Mal legen die Apostel Jesu ihren Fischerberuf ab und nehmen endgültig die neue Berufung an.

Jesus fängt auch Paulus für den Dienst der Heilsbotschaft. Mit großem Eifer diente Paulus Gott, sodass er die Christen verfolgte. Dieser Eifer verwendet Jesus, um Paulus an sich zu reißen. Diese Gefangenschaft aber veranlasst der Herr, ohne die Person zu zwingen, und damit wird der Verfolger zum Verfolgten, insofern als Paulus nach seiner Bekehrung zum Christentum, die Botschaft Christi in die Welt verbreitet.

#### **Kapitel 4. Kirche als Garten von Eden auf der Erde**

Drei pflanzliche Symbole versinnbildlichen die Kirche in den poetischen Werken des Jakob von Sarug: der Weingarten, der Feigenbaum und der Ölbaum.

Der vom Gott gepflanzte Weinstock ist Adam, dessen Nachwuchs, Kain und Abel (vgl. Gen 4,1–7), seine Früchte, Sprosse und Weinbeeren darstellen. Wegen des Sündenfalls zertrampelt Adam die Weinrebe, die trotz Adams Handlung Trauben trägt und zu einem großen Weingarten wird, weil Adams Sünde nicht vernichten kann, was Gott erschaffen hat. Des Weiteren bringt dieser Weingarten wilde, saure Weinreben, weshalb ihn eine Sintflut (vgl. Gen 8) überflutet und den ganzen Stock – außer einer süßen Weintraube,

eines Sprosses: Noah und seine Familie – vernichtet. Durch diesen Spross, Noah, wird der zerstörte Garten, die ausgelöschte Menschheit, noch einmal aufgebaut.

Einer der Nachkommen Noahs ist Israel, eine ungeheure zwölfästige Weinrebe (vgl. Ps 80,9–20), dessen Stamm Abraham ist. Gott versorgt diesen Weinstock, errettet ihn aus der ägyptischen Tyrannei und pflegt ihn. Trotz allem versagt Israel, indem dieser Weingarten Gottes (vgl. Jes 5,1–7) die unverzeihliche Tat verübt: er bringt den Erbe des Weingartens (vgl. Mt 21,22–41), den geliebten Sohn Gottes, um. Infolgedessen entwurzelt Gott diese Weinrebe, erteilt Israel eine Absage und übergibt den Garten (vgl. Mt 21,41) neuen Pächtern, der Kirche. Die Kirche ist an Israels statt der Weinstock und bringt köstliche Weintrauben hervor, die auf den Glauben und die Bundestreue Bezug nimmt.

Auch der Feigenbaum versinnbildlicht gemäß Jakob von Sarug die Kirche. Der von Jesus verfluchte Feigenbaum (vgl. Mt 21,18–22; Mk 11,12–14; Mk 11,20–25) stellt Israel dar, weil er ihm die Frucht des Glaubens verweigert. Hingegen ist der Feigenbaum, worauf Zachäus klettert, um einen Blick auf Jesus werfen zu können (vgl. Lk 19,1–10), ein Symbol für die Kirche, indem Zachäus die köstliche Frucht dieses Baumes ist. Seine Tat bezeugt seinen Glauben an Jesus Christ.

Der Ölbaum, das dritte pflanzliche Bild für die Kirche, bildet auch das verworfene Israel und gleichzeitig die Kirche ab. In der Perikope Röm 11,13–24 fasst Jakob von Sarug die gebrochenen Zweige als Volk Israel auf und den in den edlen Ölbaum eingepfropften Zweig vom wilden Ölbaum als die Kirche der Nationen. Der Baumstamm des edlen Ölbaumes ist Abraham. Jakob von Sarug stellt Jerusalem und die Kirche von Edessa gegenüber: Zion wird verworfen und Edessa, das den Glauben der Nationen an Jesus Christus darstellt, auf den edlen Baumstamm eingepfropft, weil das Erstere ihn verschmäht und die Letztere ihm huldigt.

Pflanzungsbilder gelten nicht nur für die Kirche, sondern auch für Jesus Christus, den die Weintraube, der Ölbaum und der Baum des Lebens symbolisieren. Diese Sinnbilder sind mit der Kirche verbunden, indem Jesus Christus die Quelle des Lebens der Kirche ist.

Die Weintraube ist ein christologisches Bild, das die Typen Christi sowohl im Alten Testament als auch im Neuen Testament darstellt. Isaak, der Sohn Abrahams, ist z. B. eine Weintraube, die Abraham pflückt, um sie Gott zu opfern. Dieses Bild der Weintraube weist schon zu der Eucharistie hin. Im Neuen Testament benennt Jakob von Sarug auch Johannes der Täufer, der enthauptet wird (vgl. Mt 14,9–11; Mk 6,27–28; Lk 9,9), eine Weintraube, weil sie in die wahre Weintraube schon eingepfropft ist.

Jesus Christus, auf den dieses Bildsymbol verweist, ist diese wahrhaftige Weintraube, die zum Heilmittel der Welt wird, wenn sie auf Golgotha ausgepresst wird. In dieser Ansicht geht es eindeutig um das Wasser und Blut, die aus der mit der Lanze durchstoßenen Seite Jesus herausflossen. Dieses eucharistische Blut, das die niederfallende Kirche trinkt, ist die Arznei der Welt. Die Seite Christi ist dementsprechend die Quelle des sakramentalen Lebens der Kirche. Das heißt, dass Jesus Christ das Ursakrament ist.

Der Titel Christus, der der Gesalbte heißt, enthält schon das Symbol des Ölbaumes. Das Öl befindet sich in den Werken des Jakob von Sarug als ein ungewöhnliches Symbol der Eucharistie. Die Witwe in 2 Kön 4,1–7 versinnbildlicht die Kirche, ihre Kinder die Gläubigen und das Öl den Leib und das Blut Christi. Jedoch stellt das Öl häufiger auch die Taufe dar. Den Olivenzweig in Gen 8,11 interpretiert der Bischof von Batnan als ein Taufsymbol. Der Zusammenhang zwischen der Taufe und der Taufsalmung deuten gemäß ihm das wohlriechende Öl und die Tränen der Sünderin, die damit die Füße Jesu gesalbt und gewaschen hat (vgl. Lk 7,36–50). Dass Jesus Christus der Ölbaum und das Öl ist, wird auf dem Olivenberg, worauf der Sohn Gottes zu seinem Vater zurückgekehrt ist, offenbart. Auf diesem Berg

beauftragt er seine Jünger, alle Menschen zu seinen Jüngern zu machen und sie zu taufen (vgl. Mt 28,19).

Der Baum des Lebens, der in der Mitte des Gartens von Eden verborgen steht (vgl. Gen 2,9), wird dem Adam enthüllt. Dieser Baum und seine Frucht bezeichnen Jesus Christus, der das Leben ist (vgl. Joh 11,25). Adam veranlasst seine Ausweisung aus dem Garten von Eden, als er gegen das Gebot Gottes die Frucht des Baumes der Erkenntnis von Gut und Böse gegessen hat (vgl. Gen 2f). Als Folge dieser Verbannung ist für ihn der Baum des Lebens, dessen Frucht das ewige Leben spendet, nicht mehr erreichbar. Deshalb kommt diese lebensspendende Frucht, die Jesus Christus andeutet, zu ihm, um ihn in den Garten zurückzuführen und ihm die Erlösung zu verleihen. Diejenigen, die seine Frucht essen, werden für immer leben. Die Frucht ist der Leib und das Blut Christi.

In diesem Sinn ist es gemeint, dass die Kirche der Garten von Eden auf der Erde ist. Durch sie wird die Eucharistiefeier gehalten und sie spendet den Gläubigen die Frucht des Lebens. Der Baum des Lebens befindet sich auf dem Altar der Kirche und die Eucharistie ist seine Frucht. Diejenigen, die daran teilnehmen, werden schon in diesem Leben von Jesus Christus in den Garten von Eden in Erwartung von der eschatologischen Rückkehr zurückgeführt.

Der von Ezechiel gesehene Feuerwagen (vgl. Ez 1;10) ist laut Jakob von Sarug ein Sinnbild der Kirche, in dessen Mitte die Liturgie gefeiert wird. Dieser ist auch der Ort, wo sich Adam vor seinem Fall befand. Das heißt, dass der Feuerwagen das Paradies ist. Die Kohlen im Feuerwagen versinnbildlichen die Eucharistie. Im Vergleich zu der Vorstellung Ezechiels ist die Kirche der reale Feuerwagen und sind die realen Kohlen der Leib und Blut Christi auf deren Altar. Die Realpräsenz verwirklicht die Begegnungsstätte zwischen Gott und der Menschheit. Der Baum des Lebens, Jesus Christus, steht in der Mitte des Gartens von Eden, der Kirche, und aus ihm entspringt nun statt der vier Hauptflüsse (vgl. Gen 2,10–14) ein Strom, der die ganzen Menschen von Golgotha aus bewässert.

Der Schlüssel des Gartens von Eden steht in Zusammenhang mit der Kirche, indem er ihr gehört. Mit diesem Schlüssel besitzt die Kirche die Vollmacht, sowohl auf der Erde als auch im Himmel zu binden und lösen (vgl. Mt 16,19). Diese Berechtigung übergibt Jesus nicht nur Petrus, sondern auch seinen Jüngern (vgl. Mt 18,18). Diese Autorität der Kirche fasst Jakob von Sarug als eine Vollmacht, zu taufen, auf. Darüber hinaus ist sie für seine eschatologische Vorstellung von Bedeutung.

In der Szene der Verklärung des Herrn (vgl. Mt 17,1–19; Mk 9,2–10; Lk 9,28–36) stellt Jakob von Sarug Moses und Elija als diejenigen hin, die schon diesen Schlüssel besaßen. Diese Propheten überliefern ihre Schlüssel, ihre Vollmacht, den Aposteln, Johannes und Petrus. Der Ausdruck „Im Anfang“ (vgl. Gen 1,1; Joh 1,1) ermöglicht die Verknüpfung zwischen Moses und Johannes, die beauftragt werden zu schreiben, und der von „binden und lösen“ zwischen Elija und Petrus, die Macht über die Schöpfung ihnen vergönnt ist (vgl. 2. Kön 2,1–14).

Der Schlüssel Petri ist nach Maßgabe des Jakob von Sarug kein Sinnbild des päpstlichen Primats, sondern der Sakramente. Petrus, die Apostel, und die Bischöfe besitzen diese Schlüssel. Das heißt, dass sie die Vollmacht haben, um die Taufe, die Eucharistie und die anderen Sakramente, die als der Schatz Gottes bezeichnet werden, zu spenden. Durch die Auflegung der Hand wird der Schlüssel zu den kommenden Generationen weitergegeben.

Der bedeutendste Schatz der Kirche ist dieser Schlüssel, weil er Jesus Christus symbolisiert. Als die Besitzerin dieses Schlüssels kann die Kirche nicht nur die Tür der unerschöpflichen Schatzkammer Gottes auf der Erde entsperren und öffnen, sondern auch die Tür des himmlischen Gartens von Eden. Die Tür dieses Gartens scheint endgültig geschlossen zu sein (vgl. Gen 3,23–24) und keine Macht existiert, die sie aufschließen kann. Deshalb war der Cherub überrascht, als er den guten Schächer (vgl. Lk 23,39–43) an der Pforte des Gartens von Eden sah. Die Umzäunung und die Pforte bestehen aus

unauslöschbarem Feuer. Mit dem feurigen Schlüssel, den Jesus Christus dem Verbrecher gegeben hat, macht er aber die Pforte des Paradieses auf und tritt hinein. Das bedeutet, dass Jesus Christus, der Sohn Gottes, auf Dauer Gott und die Menschen versöhnt hat und gestattet, dass Adam und seine Nachkommen in den Garten von Eden zurückkehren dürfen.

### **Kapitel 5. Kirche als Jungfrau Braut Christi**

Schließlich wird nach Jakob von Sarug in der Heiligen Schrift sinnbildhaft der Entschluss des Sohnes Gottes offenbar, sich mit der Kirche der Völker zu verloben. Von dieser Verlobung handelt das letzte Kapitel.

Der Abstieg Gottes auf den Berg Sinai (vgl. Ex 19) deutet nach Interpretation des Bischofs von Batnan auf die Absicht des himmlischen Vaters hin, seinen Sohn mit der Menschheit zu verloben. Aber die Verlobte in der Wüste Sinai war nicht die Kirche, sondern Israel, das Volk, das Moses durch die Macht Gottes von der pharaonischen Tyrannei befreit hat, aus Ägypten zum Sinai, dem Ort der Verlobung, geführt hat, und zu ihrem Verlobten gebracht hat. Dort machte Moses drei Tage lang das Volk Israel, die Braut, bereit, die schon die auf das Bundesangebot Gottes deutende eheliche Verbindung angenommen hatte, indem er sie reinigte (vgl. Ex 19,10). Darauf ist Gott, mit dunklen, dichten, schweren Wolken (vgl. Ex 19,9) verhüllt, von lautstarkem Donner und furchterregenden Blitzen (vgl. Ex 19,16) begleitet, endlich auf die Bergspitze herabgestiegen, währenddessen der Berg schon in Rauch und Flammen gehüllt war und gewaltig bebte (vgl. Ex 19,18–19). Auf der Bergspitze Sinai hat Gott für seine Verlobte das Brautgemach, wo die Vereinigung Gottes mit der Menschheit geschehen sollte, vorbereitet. Die Verlobung hätte in der Wüste Sinai stattfinden können, aber diese gewaltigen Erscheinungen haben die Braut so in Schrecken versetzt, dass sie den Bräutigam abgewiesen hat, indem sie ihn des Nachts um die Verlobung betrog. Diese Untreue bezieht sich auf die Handlung des Volkes Gottes, das ein von Menschen hergestelltes goldenes Kalb angebetet hat (vgl. Ex 32,1–6); damit ist es von dem Weg abgewichen, den Gott ihm vorgeschrieben hat (Ex



32,8): „Ich bin Jahwe, dein Gott, der dich aus Ägypten geführt hat, aus dem Sklavenhaus. Du sollst neben mir keine anderen Götter haben“ (Ex 20,2–3). Aufgrund dessen verstieß Gott die Braut Israel.

Auf die Verlobung Christi mit der Kirche weisen laut Jakob von Sarug Isaaks Verlobung mit Rebekka am Brunnen (vgl. Gen 24) und Jakobs Verlobung mit Lea und Rahel (vgl. Gen 29) hin. Das erste Ereignis ist mit der Taufe und Verlobung Jesu mit der Kirche verbunden und das Letzte mit seiner Kreuzigung und Verlobung mit der Kirche.

Am Brunnen hat Eliëser Abrahams Sohn, Isaak, mit Rebekka verlobt. Dieser Vorgang nimmt auf die Taufe Jesu, seine Verlobung mit der Kirche im Jordan, Bezug, insofern als Abraham und Isaak Typen des Gottvaters und Gottessohnes in dieser Reihenfolge sind, derweil Eliëser und Rebekka des Johannes der Täufer bzw. der Kirche. Ebenso wie Abraham Eliëser geschickt hat, damit er dem Sohn seines Herrn eine Frau holt, hat der himmlische Vater den Johannes den Täufer zum Jordan geschickt, damit er den Gottessohn mit der Kirche verlobt. Als ein Abbild der Kirche, die eine Sammlung der unreinen Völker ist, zeigt Rebekka, eine Heidin, den heidnischen Ursprung der Kirche an. Dies heißt, dass die verlobte Kirche den Göttern huldigte. Jakob von Sarug bezeichnet diese Götzenanbetung als Ehebruch, dadurch war die Braut unrein und unkeusch. Aber durch die Verlobung Christi mit der Kirche wird sie rein sein und zur Jungfrau.

Der Stab, den Jakob auf dem Weg nach Paddan-Aram mitnahm (vgl. Gen 32,11), ist ein Symbol des Kreuzes Jesu und war Jakobs einzige Brautgabe, womit er Lea und Rahel zu seinen Frauen gemacht hat. Ebenso besaß der Sohn Gottes nur das Kreuz als seinen Besitz, das für seine Verlobung mit der Kirche im höchsten Maße ausreichend war. In Paddan-Aram wurde Jakob durch Täuschung dazu veranlasst, Lea und Rahel zu heiraten. Jakobs Verlobung mit den beiden Töchtern seines Onkels, Laban, weist aus sie Verlobung des Sohn Gottes mit Israel und der Kirche hin.

Bei der Taufe Jesu im Jordan wurden die Völker, Israel, und die heidnischen Nationen, die Kirche, Israels jüngere Schwester, gerufen. Die beiden Schwestern wurden berufen zu Umkehr und Bekehrung, die die Voraussetzung der Verlobung sind. Die ältere Schwester wiederholt ihre Tat, die sie bereits in der Wüste Sinai getan hat, indem sie nicht nur den Bräutigam, den Gottessohn, grundsätzlich verschmähte, sondern ihn auch kreuzigte. Dies hat zur Bedeutung, dass Israel Gott eindeutig und endgültig ablehnte.

Im Gegensatz zu Israel verliebte sich die Kirche der Nationen in Jesus Christus. Gott auf dem Berg Sinai hatte die Absicht Israel mit den wundervollen, prachtvollen Erscheinungen zu erfüllen. Dagegen bewirken sie das Gegenteil: das befreite Volk hatte Angst vor Gott und hat sich für die Götter entschieden. Obgleich diese Herrlichkeit Gottes der Kirche nicht offenbart wurde, hat sie sich Jesus Christus angeschlossen. Dieser hatte eine bescheidene Geburt (vgl. Lk 2,7.12), war hungrig (vgl. Mt 4,2) und durstig (vgl. Joh 19,28), und musste arbeiten (vgl. Joh 5,17). Außerdem wurde er in Versuchung geführt (vgl. Mt 4,1–11), Anführer der Dämonen genannt (vgl. Mt 9,34), geschmäht, weil er mit Zöllnern und Sündern aß (vgl. Mt 9,11). Darüber hinaus hatte er keinen Ort, wo er sein Haupt niederlegen konnte (vgl. Mt 8,20), wusch er die Füße seiner Jünger (vgl. Joh 13,1–11), wurde angespuckt und geschlagen (Mt 27,30; Mk 15,19; Lk 23,16; Joh 19,1), mit einem Kranz aus Dornen gekrönt (vgl. Mt 27,29; Mk 17,17; Joh 19,2,5), trug er sein Kreuz (vgl. Joh 19,17), wurden seine Füße und Hände ans Kreuz genagelt (vgl. Mt 27,35; Mk 15,24; Lk 23,33; Joh 19,18; 20,25; 20,27), wurde seine Seite mit einer Lanze durchbohrt (vgl. Joh 19,34), wurde er begraben (vgl. Mt 27,59–60; Mk 15,46; Lk 23,53; Joh 19,39–42). Trotz alledem halte die Kirche sich an ihn und ist ihm stets treu. Infolgedessen erwählte sich der Bräutigam die Kirche und vermählte sich mit ihr am Kreuz.

Diese Ehe zwischen Jesus Christus und der Kirche ist unauflöslich. Moses hatte schon diese Ehe angekündigt, als er schrieb, „Darum verlässt der

Mann Vater und Mutter und bindet sich an seine Frau und sie werden ein Fleisch“ (Gen 2,24). Die Persönlichkeit dieses Mannes und dieser Frau ist im Buch Moses’ verschleiert. Aber der Apostel Paulus verriet dieses tiefe Geheimnis, indem er es auf Christus und die Kirche bezog (vgl. Eph 5,32). Paulus hat die Identität von Mann und Frau festgestellt: Der Mann deutet auf den Sohn Gottes hin, und die Frau auf die Kirche. Ohnegleichen ist diese Ehe, weil die Hochzeit am Kreuz geschehen ist und das Hochzeitsmahl der Bräutigam ist. Der Bräutigam ist um der Kirche willen gestorben und sie hat sich in einen Toten verliebt. Weil Christus der Braut, der Kirche, zuliebe sein Leben opferte, wird er zur Brautgabe, die die Unauflöslichkeit der Ehe gewährleistet.

Das Hochzeitsmahl fand auf Golgotha statt und das Ehepaar bietet den Bräutigam, die Eucharistie, den Leib und das Blut Christi, als die Hochzeitsspeise. Alle sind eingeladen, aber diejenigen, die kommen werden, sind die, die an Jesus Christus glauben. Das Kleid der Braut ist gleichzeitig weiß und rot. Diese Farben weisen auf das von der Seite Jesu hervorströmende Wasser und Blut, auf die Taufe und Eucharistie, hin.

Die Kirche erlebt immer wieder diese Hochzeit, immer wenn sie die Eucharistiefeier zelebriert. Demzufolge nehmen die Christen am Altar der Kirche an dieser Vermählungsfeier teil. Ferner ist diese Vermählung immerwährend, insofern als sie die eschatologische Hochzeit entspricht. An dieser Vermählungsfeier nehmen z. B. die Märtyrer teil. Jakob von Sarug identifiziert das Grabmal Jesu mit dem Brautgemach, das ein Symbol des Himmelreiches ist.

#### **Anhang. Gedicht 134: Die Forschung und das Heiligtum der Kirche**

Zum ersten Mal in englischer Sprache wird das 134. Gedicht des Jakob von Sarug, dessen Titel die Forschung und das Heiligtum der Kirche lautet, veröffentlicht. Dieses Gedicht ist Teil dieser wissenschaftlichen Abhandlung, da die Kirche seine Hauptprotagonistin ist und einige von ihren Sinnbildern sich in diesem Gedicht wiederfinden. Außerdem ergänzt dieser englische

Text die von Severin Matthias Grill angefertigte deutsche Übersetzung, indem sie für eine noch größere Leserschaft dieses Gedicht des Bischofs zu Batnan zu Verfügung stellt. Es ist den Wissenschaftlern weiterhin das Jahr, in dem Jakob von Sarug dieses Werk dichtete, und seine Zielgruppe unbekannt.

Jakob von Saurg personifizierte die Kirche und stellte sich vor, dass die Kirche in eine heftige Auseinandersetzung mit Grüblern, die den Gottessohn erforschen, geraten ist. Der historische, theologische Hintergrund dieses Gedichtes ist eindeutig das Konzil von Chalcedon (451), aber die Persönlichkeit dieser Grübler ist unklar.

Jakobs Werk spricht mehrere Themen an: die philosophische Erforschung, Christologie, Mariologie und Ekklesiologie. Die philosophische Erforschung soll Jakob von Sarug zufolge keine Rolle in der Theologie spielen, weil sie zum Scheitern führt. Im Kontext der Christologie hat der syrische Dichter die Begriffe von „Immanuel (Gott mit uns)“ (Jes 7,14) und „Wunderbarer“ (Jes 9,5) verwendet, um die Gottheit und Menschheit Christi zu verteidigen. Mit der Christologie ist die Mariologie verbunden. Maria empfing ihn durch das Ohr und gebär ihn. Bei seiner Geburt litt sie an Geburtswehen, und trotz der Geburt bestand sie als Jungfrau fort. Schließlich ist Folgendes die Lehre der Kirche. Die ist eine Jungfrau, die die Verkünder des Gottessohnes den Sohn Gottes mit ihr verlobt haben. Deswegen bezeichnet sie sich als die Verlobte und Braut der König. Weil die Kirche schon die Braut ist, wird sie ihn nicht mehr erforschen. Die Hochzeit fand auf Golgotha statt und der Bräutigam bat sein Leib als Speise und sein Blut als Trank am Hochzeitsmahl an. Das Opfer Jesu ist seine Brautgabe, deshalb kann er sich von ihr niemals trennen. Das Bild des Fischnetzes ist auch in diesem Gedicht vorhanden. Das christliche Priestertum ist keine Fortsetzung des levitischen Priestertums. Bei seiner Taufe reinigte der Herr das Wasser des Jordan und verlieh der Kirche, die Autorität die Menschen zu taufen. Wegen ihres Bräutigams ist die Kirche die Siegerin über den Tod und nichts kann sie überwältigen.

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