

The History of Christian-Muslim Relations

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David Thomas



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Photo front cover: f.14r of Codex Sinaiticus Arabic, NF B, an early copy of the Gospels in Arabic, possibly eighth century, written on re-used parchment. This composite folio contains the text of Matthew 7:21-8:4, with Greek underwriting visible in the two right-hand portions.
Cover photo reproduced by kind permission of St Catherine's Monastery

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Christians and Muslims have been involved in exchanges over matters of faith and morality since the founding of Islam. Attitudes between the faiths today are deeply coloured by the legacy of past encounters, and often preserve centuries-old negative views.

The History of Christian-Muslim Relations, Texts and Studies presents the surviving record of past encounters in authoritative, fully introduced text editions and annotated translations, and also monograph and collected studies. It illustrates the development in mutual perceptions as these are contained in surviving Christian and Muslim writings, and makes available the arguments and rhetorical strategies that, for good or for ill, have left their mark on attitudes today. The series casts light on a history marked by intellectual creativity and occasional breakthroughs in communication, although, on the whole beset by misunderstanding and misrepresentation. By making this history better known, the series seeks to contribute to improved recognition between Christians and Muslims in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

The spectacular growth of culture that followed the Muslim seizure of former Byzantine and Sasanian territories in the seventh and eighth centuries was as deeply indebted to the existing cultures within which it took place as to its own native resources. And as Muslims developed distinctive forms of thinking, articulation of faith and systematization of belief, they did so in debate with Christians and others around them. Thus, the first surviving Muslim religious literature is replete with analyses of the beliefs of Christians, Jews and dualists as attempts to demonstrate what is deficient or wrong in them, and later works contain refutations of these beliefs alongside expositions of Muslim beliefs themselves. Muslim authors were intent on showing that any alternatives to the strict monotheism which they themselves followed were incoherent and logically unviable, with the obvious inference that any form that differed from Islam could not be sustained.

In this theological endeavour, which can be witnessed in Muslim writings from the earliest times through the tenth and eleventh centuries and later, Muslims were, of course, giving systematic form to suggestions in the Qur'an that religious communities which preceded them had neglected and mishandled the truth revealed to them and lapsed into error and confusion. A basic part of this accusation was that they had not only departed from the revealed scriptures they had been granted through the divinely appointed messengers sent to them, but had also lost those scriptures themselves in their pristine form. Thus, an important part of Muslim polemical literature was occupied with showing that the scriptural texts of Christians and others were no longer true to their revealed antecedents. Over a relatively short period of time it became the accepted view that these books were corrupt, often in the case of Christianity because they were reconstructions of lost originals into which alien doctrines from exotic places had been introduced, and so the teachings derived from them were bound to be wrong. Muslim polemicists tended to accept this as a norm and search for reasons to support it, and none challenged its basic premises.

Christians for their part came under increasingly powerful influence in the early Islamic centuries to relate to, and to some extent

that renders the Jewish reading of the Hebrew *Yahweh 'Elôhîm/ 'Elôhê*, reading *'Adonay 'Elôhîm/ 'Elôhê* in the way that Jews did and still do. The case of *Allâhumma Rabbî*, with inversion of the terms in the Syriac rendering of the original Hebrew *'Adonay Yahweh*, translates *Moryā 'Alohā*. Lastly, of interest in itself, the choice of *Ilāh Isrā'îl* (Ex 24.10) to render the Syriac *'Alohā d-'Isrāyîl* (< *'Elôhîm Yîsra'el*) involving the use of the singular *Ilāh* to translate *Moryā*, shows the translator is concerned to avoid a plural of majesty, but nevertheless indicates the difference in the original by employing an alternative to the more usual *Allāh* and *al-Rabb*.

BIBLICAL ALLUSIONS AND CITATIONS IN THE
SYRIAC *THEOTOKIA* ACCORDING TO THE MS SYR.
NEW SERIES 11 OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF
RUSSIA, ST PETERSBURG

NATALIA SMELOVA¹

The *Theotokion* (Gr. θεοτοκίον, plur. θεοτοκία) is a short hymn dedicated to the Mother of God (Gr. Θεοτόκος). It is one of the most ancient hymnographical forms, attested in papyri from the fourth century.² From the eighth century onwards the *Theotokia* were usually placed in the liturgical books of the Greek Church side by side with the odes of canons, *stichera* (versicles) and *kathismata* ('sitting hymns'), the hymns sung during Vespers and Matins after a verse of a psalm or after a canticle. Some time later, Greek *Theotokia* were translated into other languages—Syriac, Arabic, Slavonic—for liturgical use in other Chalcedonian churches.

It is well known that the term *Theotokia* is also used in the Coptic tradition to designate the daily service in praise of the Virgin Mary. The Coptic *Theotokia* are considered to be original hymns composed in the Bohairic dialect following the model of Greek hymnography and later translated into Arabic. Their texts have survived in numerous manuscripts from the fourteenth century onwards.³ It is, to the Coptic *Theotokia* that the Ethiopian service of the *Weddāsē Mariam*, praise to the Virgin Mary, goes back.

In the Syriac tradition the term *Theotokia* is not very widely used.

¹ I am grateful to Prof. Elena Nikitichna Mescherskaya of the University of St Petersburg and Dr Mary Cunningham of the University of Birmingham for reading the article and making valuable suggestions, and to my husband Dr Nikolai Lipatov for his great help in preparing the English translation of the article.

² A. Baumstark, 'Ein frühchristliches Theotokion in mehrsprachiger Überlieferung und verwandte Texte des ambrosianischen Ritus' *Oriens Christianus*, Neue Serie 7-8, 1918, pp. 37-61; D.M. Montagna, 'La lode alla Theotokos nei testi greci dei secoli IV-VII' *Marianum* 81, 1962, pp. 453-543.

³ A. Mallon, 'Les théotokies ou office de la Sainte Vierge dans le rite Copte', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 9, 1904, pp. 17-31; De Lacy O'Leary, *The Coptic Theotokia*, London, 1923; Y.N. Youssef, 'Une relecture des Theotokies coptes', *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 36, 1997, pp. 157-70.

The transcription *t'wtqy* of the Greek θεοτοκία was in use in the Syriac-speaking Melkite milieu and applied to the liturgical hymns to the Mother of God (which were undoubtedly translated from Greek), while Jacobites preferred to translate it as *dylt 'lh'* to designate hymns to the Virgin Mary. The term is also applied to Melkite collections of hymns to the Virgin. One of the few examples of such a collection may be found in the Catalogue of the Syriac fragments discovered in 1975 in the monastery of St Catherine on Mt Sinai, published by Sebastian Brock. These include a few separate bifolia from the ninth to the eleventh centuries containing hymns to the Virgin (Sp. 68, 69, 70) which Brock characterises as *Theotokia*.⁴

The only known independent and quite full collection of Syriac *Theotokia* is kept in the National Library of Russia in St Petersburg (Syriac New Series, 11). This is a parchment manuscript of 15 folios, the text of which was studied and translated into French in the 1920s by the Russian expert in the field of Syriac studies, Nina Viktorovna Pigulevskaya. But the translation has never been published, and the typescript of it is available only from the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg. In its short description in the Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts of Leningrad of 1960, the manuscript is called the Syriac *Akathistos* to the Virgin Mary and is dated from the tenth or eleventh century.⁵

There is no direct evidence of manuscript's origin. According to archival accounts, it was acquired in 1859 from the collection of C. Tischendorf who we know from his own account intended in his expedition of 1859 to acquire Greek and oriental manuscripts in the monasteries of the Middle East, and primarily to negotiate about *Codex Sinaiticus*, the celebrated early Greek manuscript of the Bible at the Monastery of St Catherine. As a result of his expedition, Tischendorf brought to St Petersburg both *Codex Sinaiticus* (which is now held in the British Library) and a collection of precious Greek and oriental manuscripts, among which there was a manuscript of the Syriac *Theotokia*. It is highly probable that this manuscript was also produced at St Catherine's, and its Melkite character is circumstantial evidence for this.

⁴ S.P. Brock, *Catalogue of Syriac Fragments (New Finds) in the Library of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai*, Athens, 1995, pp. 66-7, 268-71.

⁵ N.V. Pigulevskaya, *Katalog syrijskih rukopisei Leningrada (Palestinskiy Sbornik 6/69)*, Leningrad, 1960, p. 152.

From the time of its foundation, the monastery was a stronghold of Chalcedonianism and became a major centre of Christian book culture: in its library were concentrated numerous manuscripts of the Bible, homiletics, hagiography and hymnography from the Melkite monasteries of the Near East, mainly Syria and Palestine. At present, the library contains more than 5,000 volumes in twelve different languages, including Greek, Syriac, Arabic, Georgian and Slavonic.⁶

The St Petersburg manuscript of the *Theotokia* is undoubtedly of Melkite origin, which is demonstrated by its palaeographical characteristics and its contents. One can find in it numerous Christological formulas defining the unity of the divine and human natures in Christ against the Nestorians and the Monophysites. It is written in a well-defined Melkite hand using black ink and cinnabar for headings. The text has no vocalisation; diacritical points are used to indicate plurals and pronouns. The total number of folios is fifteen. Codicological analysis and examination of flesh- and hair-surfaces of the parchment have revealed two separate quaternions, the second of which lacks the last leaf.

The text begins with the words *ktbynn t'wtwqy* (f. 1v), 'We write *Theotokia*'. It contains at least 51 readable hymns to the Virgin Mary, divided into eight general parts entitled *ql'* ('voices', 'sounds'), which here means 'modes'. Each mode consists of a different number of strophes, from five to nine. This indicates that the text has an obvious octonary structure, which suggests a relation with the Byzantine *Octoechos*. The Greek ὀκτώηχος literally means 'eight voices', but in fact it has three meanings (according to Aelred Cody) that should be distinguished carefully: the musical system of eight modes, hymnographic texts arranged in eight sets according to the eight-week cycles within the ecclesiastical year (the arrangement of which is attributed to St John of Damascus in the eighth century), and finally a book containing texts arranged in eight sets.⁷

⁶ See M. Kamil, *Catalogue of All Manuscripts in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai*, Wiesbaden, 1970.

⁷ A. Cody, 'The early history of the octoechos in Syria', in N. Garsoian, ed., *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, Washington DC, 1982, [pp. 89-113] p. 89; E. Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, Oxford, 1961 (repr. 1998), pp. 44, 69-71.

The text in our manuscript appears to follow the structure of the hymnographic *Octoechos*. At the same time it represents a kind of liturgical book—a separate collection of eight sets of hymns to the Virgin, which is probably a special type of the *Octoechos*. The liturgical pieces were translated from the original Greek (which is clear from their syntactical and lexical structure) into Syriac at some stage.

The *Theotokia* arranged in eight modes along with *stichera* and *kathismata* usually constitute a part of the book of the *Octoechos*. The earliest known manuscript of the *Octoechos*, which contains extensive sets of the *Theotokia* divided into eight modes, is a Greek manuscript kept in St Catherine's Monastery (Sin. Gr. 1593). It originates from a Melkite milieu in Palestine (probably from the Great Lavra of St Sabas) and can be dated to the late eighth or early ninth century on the basis of its palaeographical features. This manuscript contains the Greek texts which are the archetypes for most of the Syriac hymns in the St Petersburg manuscript. Similar sets of hymns to the Virgin can be found in more recent Greek manuscripts of the *Octoechos* dating from the tenth century onwards, also kept in St Catherine's Monastery (for example Sin. Gr. 778).

Selected Greek *Theotokia* can be found in the various editions of the *Parakletike*, the Great *Octoechos* containing hymns for every day of the week, which continue in liturgical use in the Greek Church to the present.⁸ The most complete scholarly edition of the texts contained in the *Octoechos*, with music scores transcribed from the so-called Codex Dalasseni and other Greek liturgical manuscripts, was produced in 1940 and 1949 by H. Tillyard as part of the *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae* Project.⁹

As for the Syriac translation of *Theotokia*, I would like to offer an outline of its history based on the recent study of manuscripts. The earliest Syriac translation is found in the above-mentioned newly discovered Sinai fragment published by Brock (Syriac Sp. 68), which is dated on the grounds of its script to the ninth century.¹⁰ I can-

not yet say to which liturgical book this bifolium might belong, but there are two strophes in this fragment that I have managed to identify as *Theotokia* in the first mode, the text of which corresponds almost entirely to that of the St Petersburg manuscript with a few insignificant variants.

St Petersburg manuscript Syriac New Series 11, the only separate and almost complete collection of Syriac hymns to the Mother of God, can also be assigned to the same stage of development of the Syriac text of the *Theotokia*. There are no attested parallels to this phenomenon in the Greek tradition. As I have already stated, it has previously been tentatively assigned to the tenth or eleventh century, though in my judgment, palaeographic features suggest an earlier dating, probably the ninth century. This conclusion has been supported by Brock and A. Desreumaux, specialists in Syriac palaeography. Although the possibility that the present collection of hymns formed an attachment to another liturgical book (*Menaia*, *Heirmologion* or *Psalter*) cannot be completely excluded, the codicological structure of the St Petersburg manuscript—two well-defined quaternions—is more characteristic of a separate manuscript. Thus one can postulate the *terminus ante quem* for the Syriac translation of the *Theotokia* as the ninth century. It is difficult to locate the translation, but taking into consideration the provenance of the fragments and the St Petersburg manuscript, I suggest that it might be linked with the local tradition at St Catherine's Monastery.

From the eleventh century on, Syriac translations of the whole book of *Octoechos* containing *Theotokia* along with other numerous hymnographical pieces can be found. I tend to identify the appearance of the complete Syriac *Octoechoi* as the next stage of Melkite translation activity. A great number of such manuscripts dating from approximately the eleventh to the sixteenth century, are to be found in various collections, in particular in the British Library (Add. 14508, Add. 17133, Add. 14710, Add. 17240), St Catherine's Monastery (Sin. Syr. 25, Sin. Syr. 208, Sin. Syr. 210), the Bodleian Library, and the University of Birmingham Library (Mingana Collection). Examination of the text of these items reveals the same translation of the *Theotokia* as that preserved in the St Petersburg collection.

The next stage in the history of the *Theotokia* is marked by evidence of penetration of Melkite Greek and Syriac texts into the West Syrian tradition. It is represented by *tkšp'* ('supplications'), also divided

⁸ The most reliable edition, based upon a great number of manuscripts, is Παρακλητική ἤτοι Οκτώηχος ἡ Μεγάλη, Rome, 1885. I have used this edition along with the most recent one: Παρακλητική ἤτοι Οκτώηχος ἡ Μεγάλη, Athens, 2003.

⁹ *The Hymns of the Octoechos*, transcribed by H.J.W. Tillyard (*Monumenta Musica Byzantinae*, *Scripta* 3 and 5), Copenhagen, part 1, 1940, part 2, 1949.

¹⁰ Brock, *Catalogue of Syriac Fragments*, pp. 66, 268-9.

into eight modes attested in West Syrian collections of hymns (*byt gz'*) dating from the beginning of the eleventh century. The earliest manuscripts containing *tkšpt' dylt' 'lh'* ('supplications to the Mother of God') are kept in the Vatican Library (Vat. Syr. 94, between 1010 and 1033 AD) and in the British Library (Add. 14714, 1074-5 AD).¹¹ In some more recent manuscripts these hymns are attributed to Rabula, Bishop of Edessa (d. 435)¹² and even to Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373) (in the mid-fourteenth century manuscript in the Mingana Collection, Mingana 372). Among West Syrian hymns dedicated to the Virgin there are some texts having the same Greek archetype as Melkite *Theotokia* in the St Petersburg manuscript. Scholars such as H. Hussman and A. Cody have noted that the Jacobite liturgical tradition was influenced by Melkite liturgy and Greek hymnography.¹³ The evidence for this is Melkite *Theotokia* transformed into Jacobite *tkšpt'*.

This is a short outline of the textual history of the *Theotokia* which can be traced from the late eighth century onwards on the basis of various manuscripts. The fact of borrowing of the Melkite texts in Jacobite circles testifies to the close links between Orthodox and Monophysite communities (usually thought to be hostile towards one another) in the Near East in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Being a pure product of Byzantine hymnography, the *Theotokia* contain numerous supplications to the Virgin as *yldt' 'lh'* (Θεοτόκος), Mother of God. They also contain Christological statements about the unity of two natures in Christ without conjunction, his birth and Incarnation, which became the dogmas of the Orthodox Church. That is why some of the *Theotokia* are called *Theotokia dogmatica*.¹⁴

¹¹ I studied the manuscripts during research fellowships in Rome and London kindly offered to me by the French School in Rome (2003) and the Warburg Institute, London (2004-5). I completed a comparative study of the manuscripts based upon copies and microfilms held there.

¹² Brit. Lib. Add. 17238, cf. J. Overbeck. *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae Episcopi Edesseni, Balaei aliorumque opera selecta*, Oxford, 1865, pp. 245-6; Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana Cod. Orientalis 308 (XL), fol. 32v, cf. S.E. Assemani. *Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurenzianae et Palatinae codicum MSS Orientalium Catalogus*, Florence, 1742, p. 78.

¹³ H. Husmann, 'Die melkitische Liturgie als Quelle der syrischen Qanune i-onaie (Melitene und Edessa)', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 41, 1975, pp. 5-56; idem, 'Syrischer und Byzantinischer Oktoëchos. Kanones und Qanune', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 44, 1978, pp. 65-73; Cody, 'History of the Octoechos', pp. 97-9.

¹⁴ A great number of the *stichera dogmatica* are published in Tillyard, *Hymns of the Octoechos*, part 2, pp. 103-62.

As the liturgical aim of the *Theotokia* is to accompany the verses of Psalms or Old Testament canticles, it is natural that they contain numerous allusions to the Bible. It is well-known that many Old Testament prophecies were applied to the Virgin Mary by early Christian writers and hymnographers.¹⁵ This typology may be observed from the second century when Justin Martyr (c. 100-c. 165) and Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130-c. 202) saw the Old Testament figure of Eve as a type of the Mother of God, whose obedience was opposed to Eve's disobedience. This type, as well as many other types of the Virgin Mary, can be found in the hymns of St Ephrem the Syrian who became a forefather of Syriac hymnography¹⁶ and in the homilies of St Proclus of Constantinople (d. 446),¹⁷ who together with St Romanus influenced later preachers and hymnographers such as St Andrew of Crete (c. 660-740), St Germanus of Constantinople (d. 730 or 742) and St John of Damascus.¹⁸ A great number of *Theotokia* of the *Octoechos*, in particular the above-mentioned *Theotokia dogmatica*, are attributed to St John, who made the most considerable contribution to Byzantine Mariology.

Clear evidence of a well-elaborated typology of the Virgin Mary is presented by the Syriac *Theotokia* containing a large number of Biblical allusions. I offer short survey of these below.¹⁹

The first *Theotokion* of the first mode which is preserved in the

¹⁵ See M. Cunningham, 'The meeting of the old and the new: the typology of Mary the Theotokos in Byzantine homilies and hymns', *Studies in Church History* 39, 2004, pp. 52-62; E. Lash, 'Mary in Eastern Church literature', in A. Stacpoole, ed., *Mary in Doctrine and Devotion*, Dublin, 1990, pp. 58-80; G.R. Woodward, *The Most Holy Mother of God in the Songs of the Eastern Church*, London, 1919.

¹⁶ S.P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem*, Rome, 1985 (repr. Kalamazoo MI, 1992); idem, *The Bride of Light: Hymns of Mary from the Syriac Churches*, Baker Hill, Kottayam, 1994.

¹⁷ N. Constat, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity*, Leiden, 2003; *Proclus, Bishop of Constantinople: Homilies on the Life of Christ*, trans. J. H. Barkhuizen, Brisbane, 2001.

¹⁸ See *On the Dormition of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies*, trans. B.E. Daley, Crestwood NY, 1998.

¹⁹ For the Peshittā translation of the Old Testament I used the edition of the Leiden Peshitta Institute: *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshittā Version*, Leiden, 1977- (OTP); for the Peshittā translation of both New and Old Testaments I used *ܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ*, London, 1979 (repr. 1999). For the Septuagint I used *Septuaginta id est Velus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX interpretes*, ed. A. Rahlfs, 8th edn, Stuttgart, 1965; and for the Greek New Testament, *The Greek New Testament*, ed. B. Aland et al., 4th rev. edn, London, 1998.

the *Theotokia* collection of the National Library of Russia more than twenty allusions to the Old and New Testaments are to be found. The vocabulary and phraseology of these often follow the Peshittā translation of the Bible, though from time to time the translators preferred to transcribe the words from the original Greek text of the hymns or even from the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament than to use the traditional Syriac vocabulary of the Peshittā.

When quoting from the Bible (in the *Theotokia* there are no more than five direct quotations) the ninth-century translators of these *Theotokia* did not aim to use exact quotations from the existing Syriac versions of the Bible, the most common of which was the Peshittā as far as the Old Testament is concerned. For the New Testament, some quotations are closer to other Syriac translations, in particular the *Syrus Sinaiticus*, than to the Peshittā. The translators' main purpose was to give as powerful an expression of the biblical images as possible. This often involved making changes to both the original Greek text of the *Theotokia* and the text of the Holy Scriptures.

The Melkite hymns examined here are not alone in their wide use of biblical typologies of the Mother of God. It is also very common in Syriac and Greek hymnography and homiletics from the fifth century onwards. This article is just one part of a wider comparative study of parallel development of literature devoted to the Mother of God in Greek, Syriac, Coptic and Arabic traditions, their possible interactions and mutual influences.

Theotokia translated from the St Petersburg manuscript

...we write *Theotokia*, firstly the [first] mode

1. Hail to you, Virgin, the most holy of us all, the Mother of God,⁴⁷ the abode of humility in which every creature finds life. [Hail] to you, an unquenchable lamp, the receptacle of the fair and inconceivable One, temple glorified and indestructible. Hail to you, for the Lamb of God who accepted the sin and impiety of the world was born from you.

2. In your conception and birth, O Holy Virgin Mother of God, all

⁴⁷ *yldt 'lh'*, Θεοτόκος (lit. 'God-bearer'), translated as Mother of God.

the prophecies of the righteous God-clad men find their limit and completion. David the forefather named you the ark, O Holy One, for the rod came forth and a branch grew out of the root of Jesse as it is written in Isaiah. You showed forth the spiritual mountain, as Daniel depicted [it]. Besides, Ezekiel miraculously saw you in the image of a shut and illuminated gate. For the great sun of righteousness, the Christ, rose from you and enlightened the believers, and His is the abundant grace.

3. To the Mother of God and Virgin all of you, O tribes of the earth, bring honour and veneration, because from the confines of her holy womb God the Word was born, who is her son. He made her become the one who she is from the one who she was not. He willed and sometime came down from heaven to the glorified Mount Sinai to speak with Moses in smoke, mist and tempest, with sounding of horns, and He filled and covered the summit of the mountain. And upon you, O Virgin, spiritual mountain, in the image of dew upon the fleece He descended, rested and dwelt in you. Truly blessed is your holy womb, which bore the incarnate God the Word. Therefore pray to Him with us saying: You, who willed and came into the world, but did not remove and detach yourself from the Father, Glory to You, who can do everything You will, and the Lover of mankind.

4. Hail to you, Mother of God, the Virgin, for you have borne us the King of kings, the Christ who is Enlightener, Redeemer,⁴⁸ and Saviour of our souls.

5. Hail to you, O Virgin full of grace, Mother of Christ, because the great King of praise willed and dwelt in you. He came and sanctified [you], and the living and Holy Spirit descended upon you, and used to be with you freely. Offer Him supplications for our salvation.

Second mode

6. Hail to you, most pure Virgin, for you gave birth to the incarnate Word. Beseech for us with your supplication and pray for the salvation of our souls.

⁴⁸ The verb *šwzḅ* (lit. 'deliver') in some cases is translated as 'redeem'.

7. Who will not proclaim you blessed, pure and holy Virgin! Who will not magnify and worship the One who was born from you without intercourse, who has shone from the pre-eternal Father and came to us, the only-begotten Son, who was incarnate and was born inexplicably from your pure womb? Being God by His nature, He truly became man for the sake of love towards us; not being divided into two persons, but in two natures in their unity without conjunction worshiped and glorified. And therefore pray and supplicate, O humble one and full of grace, for the salvation of our souls.

8. It is you that we magnify, Mother of God, Virgin; and it is you that we laud, O one filled with every blessing and joy. You are the haven from all our afflictions, and from your hand all the diseased are healed. Supplicate, O most glorified one, Him who was born from you to give rest and peace to our souls.

9. Hail to you—every creature shouts to you. Hail to you, Mother of God, Virgin. Hail to you, pure Mary. Hail to you, the one who contained in her womb the Creator of all the creatures. Hail to you, gate of heaven. Hail to you, the armaments of David the prophet. Hail to you, shining jewel of all jewels. Hail to you, joy of all. Hail to you, salvation of the people. Hail to you, intercessor and refuge of our souls.

10. All of us divinely accept you as the Mother of God and rightly proclaim you blessed, for you are the ornament of the Holy Church, O pure one. You alone bore in your womb the One who is God the Most High, and at the same time He is man, to whom you gave birth, all-pure Mary. That is why we call out, raising our voices together with the incorporeal angels: glory to your virtue, O one full of grace!

Third mode

11. Pure Mother of Christ, you are the only blessed one. Save and deliver from all diseases and sufferings those who take refuge in you.

12. Great is this wonder: the Virgin conceived and gave birth. And the One who was born is pre-eternal God. His birth and coming from the perfect nature are revealed and are visible. O great and amazing mystery, which remains inexplicable even being expressed;

visible to the eyes, it is incomprehensible and inaccessible to cognition. Blessed are you, undefiled Maiden. Being daughter of earthly Adam, you became and are named Mother of God the Most High. Supplicate Him to grant abundant grace to the world.

13. [Hail to you], place which received God, Virgin, the only one without intercourse. Through her the unattainable light rose and shone for us. All generations call her blessed, raising voices: Hail to you, O humble one! Hail to you, O pure one! Hail to you, who brought eternal life to our kind!

14. You have boundlessly enlightened the world, the only blessed one, as you gave birth to Christ the Saviour. Hail to you, Mother of God, Virgin.

15. Without seed, you received in your womb from the most-Holy Spirit. Therefore we glorify you, saying: Hail to you, most-holy Virgin.

16. You who are filled with every goodness, beseech and pray for us, truly your servants, to the One who was born from your womb, to purify us from all iniquities that we have committed and to keep us henceforth from committing anything that contains ruin. Our Lady, do not reject us.

17. Above nature you conceived, O Virgin and pure Mother, and above reason you bore miraculously God the Word who is not [contained] within the world's limits. Therefore, at every moment we call to you, O entirely unblemished one: Save us, your servants.

18. Who can describe the birth you gave, which is supernatural, O Mother of Christ, God? Since it was through you, pure one, that God has liberated and saved us people from the curse. And let Him save those who call [to Him]: My Deliverer, Glory to You!

Fourth mode

19. Save and deliver us from all sufferings which surround us, Mother of Christ, God. You have borne us the Saviour of the whole world. Therefore, we all call to you: Hail to you, holy one and full of grace.

20. How shall we glorify you, Mother of God, the root of all glory? How shall we magnify and venerate you? For being the pure Virgin, you were not polluted as mothers are; and having endured the

miraculous birth, you have preserved the purity of your undefiled body. Who will be able to express truly your mystery, which is the most concealed and exalted of [all] miracles? Embarrassed and humbled is now all the vain haughtiness of the Jews. For who is entrusted with the service in the sanctuary of the glorious tabernacle of testimony if not the Cherubim, though they are also servants of Emmanuel? And you are the Virgin full of beauty, and Mother of the Saviour of us all who is raised on the backs of the Cherubim and glorified. You held Him in your arms when he was feeding on the milk of your breast. Ask Him before whom you have confidence, and pray [to Him], O most-holy one, that He may grant our souls every repose and abundant grace.

21. Hail to you, animated temple of God the Word, truly Virgin full of grace. Hail to you, ewe intelligent and blessed. For from you the Creator of all came to the world, having clothed Himself with flesh. Hail to you, adorned chariot of the earth, and likewise height of the sky. It is through you that the power of the Trinity that sanctifies all is revealed. How [shall we] proclaim you blessed, Mother without a husband? How [shall we] glorify you, for you are truly the mother of Emmanuel, at whom even the Cherubim dare not look. As for you, you inexplicably contained and bore Him within your pure womb. Pray to Him and ask, O unblemished one, for the salvation of the souls of us all.

22. Hail to you, O chosen one, selected to be the holy vessel⁴⁹ of heaven. Hail to you, spiritual altar of faith. Hail to you, fount in which the Father, the only-begotten Son and the living and Holy Spirit [abide] for the joy of people (...) Hail to you, O humble one, for you have cleansed and washed our conscience from all the defilement of shameful passions and enlightened our minds. Therefore, we call to you: Hail to you, O one full of grace, the Lord is with you!

23. You are the spiritual ark and the burning bush.⁵⁰ Mother of Christ, blessed now, raise your prayer to Him for all of us. Naming you Mother of God and taking refuge in your mercy,⁵¹ we sinners are saved.

⁴⁹ Lit. 'vessels'.

⁵⁰ Lit. 'unburned', 'unsinged'.

⁵¹ Another possible meaning is: 'to your womb'.

24. Since you are exalted among all living beings, we do not even dare to praise you, Mother of God, but we pray to you: Justify us freely and have mercy upon us.

25. Holy and blessed Virgin, Mary ever full of grace, Mother of God! [You are] the new heaven and the new earth, workshop of the universal salvation,⁵² treasury of all heavenly good things, sanctuary of all humility, firm establishment of orthodox people. You are the haven and redemption of all who seek refuge in you. We cry out to you, saying: O limit of mysteries, types and symbols of Christ the God, pray and supplicate for the salvation of our souls.

26. Offer supplications for our salvation, O pure one and full of grace, to God who was born from you, for He willed, and by His grace He put on flesh in order to free and deliver us who praise you.

Fifth mode

27. Under the cover⁵³ of your mercy we find protection of your mercy, Mother of God, and we offer our supplication to you: Do not reject the prayer of your servants, but deliver us from every suffering, as you are the only pure and blessed one.

28. From your womb, O Virgin flawless and pure, humble Bride of God, in these last times the pre-eternal Son of God the Father was born when He willed, and has truly put on flesh. Therefore, all the choirs and ranks of lofty angels magnify you, offering praise together with us, sons of your race...and extol your humility, Mother of God, blessed Virgin.

29. O pure Virgin. We do believe that she who bore the incarnate Word of life, miraculously remained Virgin after the birth; and carrying Him, as an infant, in her arms, she besought Him on behalf of all the living. Praising her, we call out: Hail to you, humble one and full of grace.

⁵² Here and in *Theotokion* 51 *byt t'gurt* literally means 'market' or 'fair'. The translation 'workshop' is based on the meaning of *εργασία* given in R. Payne Smith, ed., *Thesaurus Syriacus*, Oxford, 1901, vol. II, col. 4389.

⁵³ Lit. 'wing'.

30. Mother full of grace, plead for us by voicing your prayer and beseech [your Son], as you are exalted, to grant our souls [His] great mercy and also forgiveness for the great multitude of offences that we have committed, we pray to You.

31. We take refuge now under the cover of your prayer, where all of us diseased clothe ourselves in force and might. Therefore, we call to you: Hail to you, the great bridge leading and transferring from death to life those who truly confess you to be Virgin and Mother of God.

32. O pure Virgin, Mother of God, full of grace! You have borne Light, Life and Repose for the world, since for us, the Orthodox, you are a calm haven, healing and succour, and we take refuge in you, having been delivered from temptations. O humble one, full of every fairness, union of all good things, source of blessings, consummation of all mysteries and symbols! Pray, beseech and supplicate for the salvation of our souls.

Sixth mode

33. We glorify God who was incarnate from you, Mother of God, Virgin. Supplicate and pray to Him for the salvation of the souls of all of us.

34. Mystically we glorify you, Mary, Mother of God, because you have appeared as the throne of glory of the great King, the most-holy tabernacle wider than the heavens, the chariot of Cherubim, the one higher than all the Seraphim. For the glorious Bridegroom, our God, was born from you as He was incarnated. Supplicate and pray to Him for the salvation of the souls of all of us.

35. It is proper and right truly to call you blessed, Mother of God. The Word, Creator of all, came to your undefiled womb. He willed and He became flesh without changing by His nature. His providence was inaccessible to cognition, but the flesh that He has assumed from you is completely animated and intelligent. Remaining in it and establishing Himself, He assumed it and took possession of it. According to His hypostasis He was one [and the same]. Therefore, we who believe in Christ confess piously two natures in a single Word, as a sign of alteration. But by this we do not make union in a mixture and confusion and do not speak about division [leading to an] alteration in nature. Pray and supplicate to Him,

O Virgin pure and holy, that He may send down to us repose and abundant grace by His mercy.

36. Who but you was sometime previously shown symbolically by Daniel, when from your mountain, Pure one, the stone was hewn, which is Christ, our God; and by Ezekiel who saw [you] in the image of the throne of fire; and Moses when he saw you on Mount Sinai as the burning bush.

37. Mother of God, Virgin, you are the true vine of life that carried and bore fruit, the Giver of life. We bring you our supplication: pray and beseech, O glorified one, with the choir of the Apostles, for the deliverance of our souls.

Seventh mode

38. After the birth which you gave we name you pure and holy Virgin, as you conceived the Lord of all without intercourse. Pray to Him and supplicate for the salvation of the souls of all of us.

39. Mother of God, you are called Mother above nature, you have remained and stayed a Virgin beyond word and thought. The tongue does not have the power to explain the miracle of your glorious birth. Therefore, O pure one, our race is delighted by your conception. The way of your marvellous birth is incomprehensible. For as God willed, the order of nature submitted to Him, and because of that we all name you Mother of God and pray to you incessantly: Pray and beseech for the salvation of our souls.

40. We give praise to you, Mother of God, worthy of exaltation, because you are the only one among women who remained Virgin after birth and you have borne God the Word, and have become for Him [both] mother and servant. Therefore, we say together with Gabriel: Peace be with you. Hail to you, O one full of grace. Supplicate to the One born from you that He may deliver from the curse the souls of all of us.

41. Pure Virgin, unblemished Mother of God, by your supplication deliver and free [us] from temptations. We exalt you at every moment.

42. Hail to you, peace be with you, holy Mary. Mother without a husband, Virgin Mother of God. For you are the triumph of the Orthodox and the helper of those who are in danger. Pray to

Christ who has shone from you and beseech for the pacification of the world by His mercy and for the salvation and redemption of our souls.

43. You, the only one, contained the infinite One, and miraculously bore the incarnate God, the Word. Hail to you, O husbandless one.

Eighth mode

44. All praise is proper to the Mother of God and ... to the humble one delightfulness of the wreath of lauds. He who dwelled always with His Father made her become everything she is from what she was not. And He was born from her by His mercy and was an infant by His will, the One who was from the ages. He kept her virginity unspoiled and showed her as the Mother of God to all. Having audacity [to Him], she is praying to her Son for the world and for our souls.

45. Hail to you, Mother and Servant of Him who is our Saviour. When we utter your name, we name you the Heaven, for you contained Him who cannot be contained. The Cherubim praise you, for you were bearing the Light which illuminates us, and the fire which was lit up but did not burn your holy womb, O perfect one. He who came from her by the flesh has become flesh and remained among us, as John testified. Merciful Lord of all, glory to You!

46. [You] who are more glorious than the highest powers and who have borne for us the Lord Word incarnate, beseech, O Mother of God, for the salvation of our souls.

47. To Her the Archangel Gabriel with the Good News called out, saying: Hail to you, Mother and Virgin, for you have borne the Creator of all and our Lord!

48. Intelligible Word ... ancient burning bush. Hail to you, jar of pure gold. Hail to you, flower of the faith. Hail to you, rod which blossomed and grew. Hail to you, for you are ... and the pearl. Hail to you, mountain of God ... you have performed. Hail to you ...release of life. Hail to You, throne of the Lord. O glorified one...

49. ...Mother of God, deliver and save us from various temptations those who have recourse to you with faith.

50. Hail to you, O one full of grace, gladness and rejoicing of angels. Hail to you, Mother of God, the message of all the prophets. Hail to you, blessed Virgin, our God the Lord is with You.

51. Hail to you, magnificent workshop of Christ,⁵⁴ who is elevated above all. Hail to you,... Mary the Bride. Hail to You, ... gladness and adornment of the Orthodox ... Beseech [Him] and pray to Him born from you for ... and redemption of our race.

⁵⁴ See note to *Theotokion* 25.