

## **The Holy Spirit as Feminine in Early Syriac Literature**

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### **Abstract**

In his commentary on the book of the prophet Isaiah, Ieronim quotes a passage of the Aramaic Gospel text, where Jesus says "My mother, the Holy Spirit took me... (and she took me on the Mount Tabor)". No one must be troubled of these words, for "The Spirit" is feminine in Aramaic, like men in "our language" (latin) and neuter in Greek, "for the Godhead there are not differences in the gender " (in Godhead enim nullus ex sexus ).

While the Holy Spirit as Mother, with God the Father, is a feature rarely found in Syriac literature, the use of the feminine image is more common.

Such an image is suggested, for example, whenever the term "cover / to put over" (English -hovering) is used in combination with the Holy Spirit - and apparently very common – because this term, based on what I saw in Genesis 1, 2, originally described the action of a mother bird (hen).

More than this explain, it is more important to note that the female image is not limited in any way to the Holy Spirit: so many examples can be found (this is also the case for the Greek and Latin literature, as well as to the Syriac) where the female image is used in conjugation with the Father and the Son.