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**Virgin Mary's Importance in Islam and its Reflection on Classical Turkish Literature and Turkish Language**

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**ABSTRACT**

The language used by a poet or an author in a literary work in verse or prose, and the way he uses idioms, proverbs and literary arts in that language indicate the success of his art. The achievement of author in this matter makes him well known in the country where he lives. However, the topic choice is as important as an artist's language skills. That's why poets and authors prefer universal subjects such as love, death, religion, religious personalities (like prophets, saints, etc.) and humanity (man's way of living and right to live) in their works. If artists produce universal subjects with a clear language, a fluent wording and a strong story line, this achievement makes them famous both nationally and internationally. This fact can also be applied to the literature of any nation. Literary works containing local subjects cannot take their place in the world's literary history.

Classical Turkish literature (Ottoman Period Turkish Literature) is extremely rich in subject matter. The period in which Classical Turkish Literature continued its existence was the period when the Ottoman state dominated large geographical regions in Asia, Europe and Africa. Accordingly, the lifestyles, beliefs, traditions and customs of people from different religions, races and cultures living in these geographies; in other words, the issues that are important to these people were also reflected in the literature produced in this period. The subject of this article Virgin Mary is an important religious and a historical personality primarily for the Ottoman state's Christians and Muslim subjects as well as those who weren't the subjects of Ottoman Empire.

In this article, first how Virgin Mary took part in the two most important sources of Classical Turkish literature, Koran and the hadiths will be summarized. Secondly, Virgin Mary's place in Classical Turkish literature and the vocabulary and concepts that Turkish language gained through Virgin Mary will be tried to be detected by using the examples identified as related to Virgin Mary in collected poems of Classical Turkish literature's main poets.

In the end of the article, the results that are concluded to be related to the places of these two religious and historical personalities in Islam and their place in Classical Turkish literature under the influence of Islam will be presented point by point.

**Keywords:** Virgin Mary, Mary, Mother Mary, Sura Mary, Sura İmrân, Jesus, Mary's son Jesus, Messiah, Jesus the Messiah, Turkish literature.

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## **Introduction**

The only woman mentioned in the sacred book of the Islamic religion Koran and named after one of the 114 surahs in it Koran (Sura Mary, No: 19) is Virgin Mary. Also, Sura Family of İmrân in Koran (No:3) was named after İmran where it was descended, and it is mentioned in İmran and relatives. Virgin Mary who is mentioned several times in Koran has an important place in the culture of Islam and in the languages and literatures shaped by Islam. One of these literatures is the Classical Turkish literature that was shaped by the poets and writers of Ottoman state which ruled for seven hundred years in Europe, Asia and Africa.

Although resources giving information about Classical Turkish literature started the foundation of this literature in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, first examples of this literary tradition were produced in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. This literary tradition completed its foundation in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and it flourished in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries in terms of form and content; it became able to compete with the world literature's artistic and aesthetics features. Classical Turkish literature began to lose ground gradually from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century while leaving its place to Turkish literature under the Western influence at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As it is known, Western literature is a literature, was born and developed in a geographical region where the Christian religion was active. Therefore, its content was determined in accordance with this religion.

The purpose of this study is to identify the importance of Mary for Islam; to reveal and evaluate Virgin Mary's reflection on Classical Turkish literature and Turkish language developed under the influence of the Islamic religion. Virgin Mary has a very important place in Western (Christian) and Eastern (Islamic) civilizations, that's why prose and poetical works of the Classical Turkish literature that Koran shaped, and hadiths were grounded on this imagery and subject matter.

### **Goal of the Study:**

The goal of this study is to show how Virgin Mary is viewed in Koran, the holy book of Islam, in the hadiths of the Prophet and in the Classical Turkish literature, as well as identifying and evaluating the words and concepts that have been borrowed to our language related to Virgin Mary.

### **Study Method:**

This study will start by identifying the verses of the Koran about Virgin Mary, words said by the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w) about Virgin Mary, and hadiths about this subject in authentic sources will be tried to be detected.

In order to express their reflection on language and literature, the first prose works written about this subject in Classical Turkish Literature and scientific studies will be examined. Moreover, some couplets that mention Virgin Mary in the poems of the main poets of this period and words and concepts related to it in our language will be given as examples to be evaluated.

Because the study area of this paper is to determine Virgin Mary's place in Islam and her reflection on Classical Turkish literature and Turkish language, the question of how Virgin Mary is involved in Christianity will not be dealt with. Additionally, how Virgin Mary is involved in Islamic literature outside the Turkish literature (Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Kurdish, Bosnian, etc. Islamic Literature) will not be evaluated either.

In the "Conclusion" section of the study, findings that are found in the examinations will be shown in the form of a list.

## **A- Virgin Mary's Importance in Islam**

Virgin Mary has an important place in Islam. She is the mother of Jesus who was created without a father as a miracle of Allah, and given a holy book. In the Koran, the sacred book of Islam, Prophet Adam's, Prophet Abraham's, Egypt's Saint's, Pharaoh's, Prophet Moses' and the last Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.a.w) wives; Prophet Moses's sister, Virgin Mary's mother, and the Queen of Sheba were mentioned positively without their names. Similarly, Prophet Noah's, Prophet Lût's and Ebu Leheb's wives were mentioned negatively without their names. However, the only woman about whom extensive information was given, and whose name was explicitly mentioned in the Koran is Virgin Mary.

In the same way, Virgin Mary is the only woman who was exposed to the revelation of Allah, and it is documented by the Koran that she talked to Angel Gabriel (Cibril, Ruhu-Jerusalem). With these qualities, she is regarded as a very special woman in Islam, not as a historical figure. For Muslim women she is a role model. Jesus whom she gave birth to without a father is accepted as Allah's subject and a Prophet who was given a book in Islam, and he is respected.

There are two surahs mentioning Virgin Mary in Koran; one of them mentions the Family of Imran which is her father's ancestry. That's why the sura mentioning Virgin Mary and her ancestry is called as "*Âl-i İmrân*" (*Family of İmran*). The sura "*Âl-i İmrân*" is in the third place in Koran, and it has 200 verses as revealed in Madinah (Altuntaş / Şahin, 2013: 49). In this sura, Virgin Mary, her father İmran, her grandmother and Jesus' birth without a father as Allah's miracle are mentioned.

The other sura in which the information about Virgin Mary is given in Koran is the sura "*Meryem*" (Mary) which is her own name. The sura was revealed in Mecca along with the 98 verses of it, and it is the nineteenth sura in Koran. According to some commentators, the 58<sup>th</sup> verse that mentions her and her birth of Jesus was revealed in Madinah; according to some other it is the verse 71 (Altuntaş / Şahin, 2013: 304).

Apart from these two surahs, some other verses of other surahs in Koran also mention Virgin Mary. According to the findings both in the surahs "*Meryem*" and "*Âl-i İmrân*" and in other surahs, Virgin Mary's name is mentioned in 32 verses and 35 times in the following different forms: 10 times as an individual "*Mary*", 10 times together with her son Jesus "*Mary's son Jesus*", 6 times together with her son Jesus and his nickname Messiah "*Mary's son Messiah Jesus*", 5 times only with Jesus's nickname Messiah "*Mary's son Messiah*", one time pointing her son Jesus "*Son of Mary*".

In Koran, Virgin Mary is once mentioned as "*İmran's daughter*" referring to her dad, and once she is mentioned as "*Harun's sister*". Apart from these, in a few places in Koran, Virgin Mary is addressed as "*she*", "*her*".

The events that Virgin Mary's mother's becoming pregnant with her, Virgin Mary's being sent to a sanctuary to serve there, her being heralded by Allah for having a son despite being a virgin, her pregnancy, her giving birth and her tribe's accusing her of unchastity when she went back to her home with her baby are explained in detail in Koran. Moreover, Virgin Mary's sincerity, her obedience to the commands of Allah, her chastity and patience and Allah's miracle's coming true (giving a birth despite being virgin), her being selected among other women are her superior features, and that's why she is shown to Muslim women as an example.

### **1) Verses from the Koran About Virgin Mary**

There are many verses in Koran mentioning Virgin Mary and her superior features. However, in this study, some of the verses' meanings that especially shed light to Virgin Mary's life by showing her place in Islam, and how she is mentioned in Koran will be given. The meanings of the aforementioned verses have been

taken from Koran which are available in Turkey Religious Affairs Presidency Web page. (Received date: 22.2.2017-[http://www.kuranikerim.com/m\\_diyamet\\_index.htm](http://www.kuranikerim.com/m_diyamet_index.htm)).

#### **a) Virgin Mary's Progeny, Birth and Abortion According to the Koran**

According to Koran, Virgin Mary is İmran's daughter and Jesus's mother. Although Virgin Mary's father İmran wasn't a prophet, Allah mentions his name together with Prophet Adam, Prophet Noah and Prophet Abraham, and accepts his family as important as those prophets' families. It is stated in Koran as follows:

*"God chose Adam, and Noah, and the family of Abraham, and the family of Imran, over all mankind."*(Meaning of Koran), Family of İmrân (3): 33).

Virgin Mary's mother is a pious woman who is praised in Koran. Despite being an infertile woman at an old age, her prayer to have a child was accepted by Allah. After giving birth, she gave her child to the service of Allah to lead a life that is in accordance with the religion of him. The meaning of the verses in Koran about this issue is as following:

*"The wife of Imran said, "My Lord, I have vowed to you what is in my womb, dedicated, so accept from me; you are the Hearer and Knower."* (Meaning of Koran), Family of İmrân (3): 35).

*"And when she delivered her, she said, "My Lord, I have delivered a female," and God was well aware of what she has delivered, "and the male is not like the female, and I have named her Mary, and have commended her and her descendants to your protection, from Satan the outcast."* (Meaning of Koran), Family of İmrân (3): 36).

*"Her Lord accepted her with a gracious reception, and brought her a beautiful upbringing, and entrusted her to the care of Zechariah. Whenever Zechariah entered upon her in the sanctuary, he found her with provision. He said, "O Mary, where did you get this from?" She said, "It is from God; God provides to whom He wills without reckoning."* (Meaning of Koran), Family of İmrân (3): 37).

As it is understood from these verses, although Virgin Mary's father was not a prophet, his name is mentioned, and he is praised together with Prophet Adam, Prophet Noah and Prophet Abraham in Koran. Her mother's name isn't given explicitly, but it is mentioned that she gave birth when she was pregnant, and she gave her daughter to sanctuary for their service. Prophet Zechariah a.s. who was Virgin Mary's aunt's husband, and took her responsibility when she was given to sanctuary, was the sanctuary's chief responsible; he was one of Allah's prophets (Avcı, 2012:28). To summarize, like Virgin Mary, her descendants are the elite servants of Allah.

#### **b) The News of Virgin Mary's Pregnancy**

As it is seen in the 33<sup>rd</sup> verse of sura Family of Imran given as an example above, Allah chose Imran family, and made it superior to others. Virgin Mary is a member of Imran family, but she was selected among all the women in the world for the miracle by Allah. This issue is mentioned in Koran as follows:

*"The angels said, "O Mary, God has chosen you, and has purified you. He has chosen you over all the women of the world".* (Meaning of Koran), Family of İmrân (3): 42).

Allah chose Virgin Mary to reveal his miracle, and she gave a birth to a son without a father. Her son is highly regarded both in the world and in the afterlife, and he is one of Allah's benevolent subjects. Virgin Mary was prepared in advance to give birth to such a child. After the birth, she was given to the sanctuary for its service. According to Zeyneddin Ahmed Zebidî, this sanctuary is Beytü'l-Makdis; its imam was Virgin

Mary's close relative Prophet Zechariah (Zeynüddin Ahmed Zebidî, 1945: 9 /195). Virgin Mary was cleansed and matured there spiritually. After such intense preparation, while Virgin Mary was praying in sanctuary behind a curtain, angel Gabriel sent by Allah, heralded her that she would have a son. In Koran, the moment of giving this news and Virgin Mary's reaction is as the following:

*"She screened herself away from them, and we sent to her Our spirit, and He appeared to her as an immaculate human."* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 17).

*"The Angels said, "O Mary, God gives you good news of a Word from Him. His name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, well-esteemed in this world and the next, and one of the nearest."* (Meaning of Koran), Family of İmrân (3): 45).

*"He will speak to the people from the crib, and in adulthood, and will be one of the righteous."* (Meaning of Koran), Family of İmrân (3): 46).

*"She said, "I take refuge from you in the Most Merciful, should you be righteous."* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 18).

*"He said, "I am only the messenger of your Lord, to give you the gift of a pure son."* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 19).

*"She said, "How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, and I was never unchaste?"* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 20).

*"He said, "Thus said your Lord, 'It is easy for Me, and We will make him a sign for humanity, and a mercy from Us. It is a matter already decided.'"* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 21).

After Virgin Mary was given this good news, her astoundment, her asking of how this was possible as well as the answer she received to remove her doubt is repeated in the 47<sup>th</sup> verse of sura Family of Imran as follows:

*"She said, "My Lord, how can I have a child, when no man has touched me?" He said, "It will be so. God creates whatever He wills. To have anything done, He only says to it, 'Be,' and it is."* (Meaning of Koran), Family of İmrân (3): 47).

Repetition of the question and the answer given in Koran is to show that the matter is important, and it is for a better understanding of the issue. As it is known, Koran was revealed in Arabic, and such repetitions are a characteristic of Arabic language and literature. Arabs resort to such repetitions in order to reinforce the meaning or give a better understanding of a topic.

### **c) Virgin Mary's Pregnancy and Jesus' Birth**

Throughout her difficult life, Virgin Mary always received support from Allah. Although she had lost her dad before she was born, and she was given to the service of the sanctuary, her aunt's husband Zechariah looked after her. Whenever Prophet Zechariah went to see Virgin Mary, he witnessed that Virgin Mary was awarded by Allah. As Virgin Mary was heralded with a son, her anxiety was removed by Allah both during and after the birth. When she went back to see her people, Allah revealed her what to do in response to the reactions. Some of the verses' meanings in Koran giving information about this issue are as follows:

*"So she carried him, and secluded herself with him in a remote place."* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 22).

*"The labor-pains came upon her, by the trunk of a palm-tree. She said, "I wish I had died before this, and been completely forgotten."* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 23).

*"Whereupon he called her from beneath her: "Do not worry; your Lord has placed a stream beneath you."* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 24).

*"And shake the trunk of the palm-tree towards you, and it will drop ripe dates by you."* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 25).

*"So eat, and drink, and be consoled. And if you see any human, say, 'I have vowed a fast to the Most Gracious, so I will not speak to any human today.'"* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 26).

As it can be understood from these verses given as examples, all of the anxieties Virgin Mary had when she was heralded with a child was removed by Allah through Gabriel. But she was still afraid of the reaction of her people; her saying *"I wish I had died before this, and been completely forgotten"* when she had the pain of childbirth shows severity of psychological pressure on her.

#### **d) People's Reaction to Jesus' Birth**

The people, who Virgin Mary faced with her baby in her arms, had previously killed even their own Prophet. Only such chosen faithful and wise servants, who believe in Allah and submit their bodies along with their souls to him, take the chance of fighting with such a tribe as Virgin Mary did. When she gave birth to her son and returned home, she was subjected to all kinds of psychological pressures by the tribe. Her stance against this psychological pressure and events is involved in Koran as following:

*"Then she came to her people, carrying him. They said, "O Mary, you have done something terrible."* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 27).

*"O sister of Aaron, your father was not an evil man, and your mother was not a whore."* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 28).

*"So she pointed to him. They said, "How can we speak to an infant in the crib?"* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 29).

*"He said, "I am the servant of God. He has given me the Scripture, and made me a prophet."* (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 30).

People's reaction to Virgin Mary, their slander for her and lies and false words about Jesus are later cursed by Allah. In Koran such people who behaved like this, and invented lies are called as misbelievers:

*"And for their faithlessness, and their saying against Mary a monstrous slander. And for their saying, "We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the Messenger of God." In fact, they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them as if they did. Indeed, those who differ about him are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it, except the following of assumptions. Certainly, they did not kill him."* (Meaning of Koran), Women (4): 156-157).

*"O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion, and do not say about God except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, is the Messenger of God, and His Word that He conveyed to Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers, and do not say, "Three." Refrain—it is better for you. God is only one God. Glory be to Him—that He should have a son. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and the earth, and God is a sufficient Protector."* (Meaning of Koran), Women (4): 171).

*"They disbelieve those who say, "God is the Messiah the son of Mary." But the Messiah himself said, "O Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord. Whoever associates others with God, God has forbidden him Paradise, and his dwelling is the Fire. The wrongdoers have no saviors."* (Meaning of Koran), the Table (5): 72).

As it is understood from these verses, Virgin Mary gave birth to her son and came back home where she was subjected to all kinds of psychological pressure by her people. However, she went back home together with her baby with great courage despite all the pressure and slander of her people. Allah didn't leave her alone again, and in order to show her innocence, the baby was made talk as a miracle. The baby (Jesus) told that his mom is innocent, and he was created without a father as a miracle. Additionally, in the verses above, people who slandered Virgin Mary and Jesus are cursed.

### **The Situation of the Child Delivered by Virgin Mary**

Her becoming pregnant although she was a virgin and giving birth to a son caused her to be slandered by her people. These slanders are rejected in the Koran. In many verses Virgin Mary's innocence and chastity are underlined, and it is stated that Jesus was created without a father as a miracle:

*"The likeness of Jesus in God's sight is that of Adam: He created him from dust, then said to him, "Be," and he was." (Meaning of Koran), Family of İmrân (3): 59).*

Jesus spoke even when he was in cradle, and he defended his mom Virgin Mary against the slanders as a proof of Allah's miracles. The meaning of the verses explaining this situation in Koran is as following:

*"And has made me blessed wherever I may be; and has enjoined on me prayer and charity, so long as I live." (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 31).*

*"And kind to my mother, and He did not make me a disobedient rebel." (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 32).*

*"So Peace is upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the Day I get resurrected alive." (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 33).*

*"That is Jesus son of Mary—the Word of truth about which they doubt." (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 34).*

As it is seen in the verses given, Allah created Jesus without a father and gave him many blessings as his prophecy the biggest one. Jesus was given a lot of miracles like as prophecy, and the book of Bible are among them. According to the information given by Mustafa Asım Köksal, one of the most important names in the Islam history, as it is stated in Bible, Jesus was sent as a confirmer of the Torah and as a messenger of the Prophet named "Ahmed" after him. Köksal states that the clues for this miracle are seen in today's Bible as following:

*"According to Yuhanna, Jesus said: "I will beg Allah and he will give you another comforter, the spirit of truth." The Prophet who was heralded by Jesus was addressed as Paraclete (Paraklit) word. This word should be Hebrew or Syriac and it means Ahmed and Muhammad" (Köksal, 1963: 21).*

The meaning of the verse referring this in Koran is as following:

*"And when Jesus son of Mary said, "O Children of Israel, I am God's Messenger to you, confirming what preceded me of the Torah, and announcing good news of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is Ahmad." But when he showed them the miracles, they said, "This is obvious sorcery." (Meaning of Koran), Column (61): 6).*

The meanings of the three verses in Koran that show that Jesus was given miracles, and was supported by the Holy Spirit (Rûhu'l-Kudüs) are as following:

*"We gave Moses the Scripture, and sent a succession of messengers after him. And we gave Jesus son of Mary the clear proofs, and we supported him with the Holy Spirit. Is it that whenever a messenger comes*

to you with anything your souls do not desire, you grew arrogant, calling some impostors, and killing others?” (Meaning of Koran), the Heifer (2): 87).

“The Messiah son of Mary was only a messenger, before whom other Messengers had passed away, and his mother was a woman of truth. They both used to eat food. Note how we make clear the revelations to them; then note how deluded they are.” (Meaning of Koran), The Table (5): 75).

“They have taken their rabbis and their priests as lords instead of God, as well as the Messiah son of Mary. Although they were commanded to worship none but The One God. There is no god except He. Glory be to Him; High above what they associate with Him.” (Meaning of Koran), Repentance (9): 31).

In Islamic belief, Allah is the one; neither was born nor gave birth to anybody. No one is like him and no one is equal to him. As it has been stated in the verses above, Jesus was born without a father as a miracle. He was given the book (Bible), but he is neither Allah, nor his Son! He is Allah’s subject and Prophet.

#### **e) Virgin Mary’s Death**

As it was stated in the previous pages about Virgin Mary’s ancestry and her birth, in this study “*Virgin Mary’s Place in Islam*” won’t be covered in detail; only the information in Koran and hadiths about Virgin Mary will be presented. When viewed from this point of view, we don’t have any other information except for the one given in Koran that Virgin Mary faced a big reaction from her people after she went back to his city with her newly born son. Thus, there is no information in Koran or in hadiths where and how she lived until she died nor where and when she passed away. In other Islamic sources apart from Koran and hadiths, unfortunately, there is no healthy information in this matter.

#### **f) Virgin Mary as an Example for People**

If looked at both the verses given as examples above and the other verses that cannot be presented here in order not to give much detail about Virgin Mary, it can be seen in all these verses that both Virgin Mary and Jesus are Allah’s distinguished and beloved servants, as they are presented as examples for people by Allah. The meaning of the verse that is thought to be revealed by Allah for humans to be an example from Virgin Mary’s and Jesus’ lives is as follows:

“And mention in the Scripture Mary, when she withdrew from her people to an eastern location.” (Meaning of Koran), Mary (19): 16).

“And We made Mary’s son and his mother a sign, and We sheltered them on high ground with security and flowing springs.” (Meaning of Koran), the Believers (23): 50).

“And Mary, the daughter of Imran, who guarded her womb, and so We breathed into her of Our Spirit; and she believed in the truth of her Lord’s Words and His Books, and was one of the devout.” (Meaning of Koran), Prohibition (66): 12).

However, when Islamic Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) told Mekka disbelievers about Virgin Mary’s and Jesus’ miracle, he faced a similar reaction years ago that disbelievers showed to Virgin Mary and her son Jesus. Koran tells this situation as follows:

“And when the son of Mary was cited as an example, your people opposed. They said, “Are our gods better, or he?” They cited him only for argument. In fact, they are a quarrelsome people.” (Meaning of Koran), Decorations (43): 57).

As it is seen in these verses, Virgin Mary is one of Allah’s distinguished subjects. She is a chaste woman.

## 2) Hadiths about Virgin Mary

After Koran, the second most important source for Islam is the hadiths that are Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.a.w.) words. As in the Koran, hadiths also state that Virgin Mary had a distinguished ancestry, and she was such a chaste woman who affirmed the words of Allah in order to obey him sequaciously.

In Prophet Muhammad's hadiths, he states that he is so close in both in the world and in the afterlife to people who were close to Virgin Mary's son Jesus, and there isn't any other prophet between them. The meanings of the hadiths we were able to find in reliable sources about Virgin Mary and her son Jesus are as follows:

*"There is no child born, so the devil must have poked him. That is because the devil poked, the child wails and cries at the mother's birth. Except for the the Mary and her son!"* (Sofuoğlu, 1988: 7 / 245).

*"I am the most auspicious for people. Prophets are children whose mothers are different, but whose fathers are the same. There is no other Prophet between me and Jesus."* (Sofuoğlu, 1988: 7 / 244).

*"The most auspicious woman in our time is İmran's daughter Mary. The most auspicious woman among this ummah women is Hüveylid's daughter Hadice."* (Sofuoğlu, 1988: / 336).

*"Many of the men have reached perfection. However no woman has reached perfection except for İmran's daughter Mary and The Pharoah's wife Asiye. Aişe's superiority on my ummah's women is like tirid's superiority on other food."* (Sofuoğlu, 1988: / 336-337).

*"As Nasara spoke in praise of Mary inappropriately, don't spoke in praise of me; don't exaggerate! I am a subject; call me Allah's subject and Prophet. (Zeynüddin Ahmed Zebidi, 1945: 9 / 213).*

As it is seen it these hadiths, Virgin Mary was a matured and chaste woman who is thought to be one of the most virtuous women in heaven.

## B- Virgin Mary's Reflection on Turkish Language and Classical Turkish literature

Virgin Mary has a special and distinguished place in the eyes of both Christians and Muslims. That's why she is an important name for Christian (West) and Islamic (Oriental) literature as she is mentioned for different purposes, and for whom novels, stories and poems have been written.

With its 700 years of history, Classical Turkish literature is one of the important literatures of the Islamic world. In this literature, along with many scientific works written about Virgin Mary, there are examples of novels, stories and poems. Additionally, Turkish language gained many words through works about Virgin Mary.

### 1) Virgin Mary in Classical Turkish literature

According to Islamic scholars, the Koran is the true and essence of all knowledge, especially religious knowledge. For this reason, from the early periods of Islam until recently, the Koran was located in the centre of education, which began with learning the Koran; the information learned and the books written in other fields were generally a means of a better understanding of it. The books written about Virgin Mary and her son Jesus in Christianity are among these books. In Islamic world, there are both scholars who wrote self-contained works on this issue and others who included this issue as a chapter in a book. Some of the prose works written on this issue are as follows:

### a) Virgin Mary in Prose Works

As in other Islamic countries, countless Koran translations and interpretations were written in the Ottoman state, in which Classical Turkish literature works were revealed. In these works written, especially in tefsir (interpretation) books, there is much information about Virgin Mary and her son Jesus.

Some of these “*Mary*” and “*Imran’s Family*” surahs’ tefsirs mention Virgin Mary and her ancestry. The following two works written in the Ottoman period and now included in the Bulletin Catalogue of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (<https://www.yazmalar.gov.tr>) are examples of such works:

Celâleddîn Muhammad bin Ahmed el-Mahallî (791-864/1389-1459), **Tefsîru ale'l-Ayâti min Sûreti Âl-i İmrân** (Istanbul Suleymaniye Manuscript Library: 07 Tekeli 874/4).

el-Beyzâvî, Ebu Said Nasîrüddin Abdullah bin Ömer bin Muhammad Ebu Said (685/1286), **Nakl min Tefsiri'l-Beyzâvî min Sûreti Âl-i İmrân** (Köprülü Manuscript Library -İstanbul: 34 Fa 1581/14).

Similarly in Ottoman period, many independent literary works were written about Virgin Mary and Jesus. Examples for such works, which are considered as the products of Classical Turkish literature, are available in Ministry of Culture and Tourism Collective Manuscript Catalogue (<https://www.yazmalar.gov.tr>):

Ahmed Hamdi Konuk, **Hazreti Meryem ve İsa'ya Dair Risâle** (Konya District Manuscript Library: 42 Kon 1769).

Ahmed Avnî Konuk (1868-1938), **Risâle-i İsa ve Meryem** (Mevlana Museum-Konya: 3851).

Birgir Mehmet Pir Ali, **İmrân el-Anzar** (Edirne Selimiye Manuscript Library 22 Sel 2223/1).

These are some anonymous works of Classical Turkish literature which are also available in Ministry of Culture and Tourism Collective Manuscript Catalogue (<https://www.yazmalar.gov.tr>):

**Risâle fî Hakki Hazreti Meryem** (Konya District Manuscript Library 15 Hk 1767/9).

**Hikâyet-i Beyân-ı Vefât-ı Meryem binti 'İmrân** (National Library -Ankara: 06 Mil Yz A 3755/18).

**Meryem Kitâbı** (Kazan-Tatarstan: Kol. 39 Liste: 21-64).

Classical Turkish literature tradition came to an end at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, some of the Turkish literary works written in Arabic letters during the Ottoman period were translated into Latin letters that are in use today. One of the examples that can be given for such works is “*Hz. Meryem Kitabı*” (*the book of Virgin Mary*) that was attributed to Hakim Süleyman Ata, who was the khalifa of great sufi Ahmet Yesevi. The comparative text of this work written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and it was printed by Münevver Tekcan in 2008.

As in this work and other works written in the Ottoman period about Virgin Mary, also in today’s works there are many books, novels and stories written about Virgin Mary as Mustafa Necati Bursalı’s “*Hz. Meryem ve Hz. İsa*” (*Virgin Mary and Jesus*) book, Sibel Eraslan’s “*Sîret-i Meryem*” are good examples

In addition to these literary works, some universities in Turkey hosted master and PhD studies about Virgin Mary that are very important to introduce her better. As Virgin Mary is known by people, there will be an increase in the number of literary works related to her.

We can show a few examples of the master and doctoral theses prepared in universities related to Virgin Mary and be available in the Higher Education Council Presidency Thesis Screening Catalogue (<https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi>) as follows:

Yaşar Üner, **Dinî kıssalar Açısından Luka İncili ve Meryem Sûresi Üzerinde Karşılaştırmalı Bir İnceleme** (*A comparative study of the Gospel Luke and the surah Maryam within the context of religious narratives*), Çanakkale On Sekiz Mart University, SBE, Master Thesis, Çanakkale, 2014.

Betül Turpcu, **Din Eğitimi Açısından Kur'ân-ı Kerim'de Hz. Meryem'in Terbiyesi** (*Mary's decency in the Koran in terms of religious education*), Marmara University, SBE, Master Thesis, İstanbul, 2012.

Hatice Avcı, **Kur'an'dan İffet Örnekleri: Hz. Meryem ve Hz. Yusuf** (*Examples of chastity from the Qur'an: Hz. Meryem and Hz. Yusuf*), Fırat University, SBE, Master Thesis, Elazığ, 2012.

Emine Koç, **Kur'an Bağlamında Meryem Kıssasına Sosyo-psikolojik Bakış** (*Socio-psychological view for Meryem parable in the context of Koran*), Cumhuriyet University, SBE, Master Thesis, Sivas, 2009.

Nurdane Güler, **Kur'an'da Örnek Bir Şahsiyet Olarak Hz. Meryem** (*Mary as a specimen personality in the Koran*), Yüzüncü Yıl University, SBE, Master Thesis, Van, 2001.

These types of scientific works that are related to Virgin Mary, especially in universities, make it easy for large public figures as well as science circles to know her closely. This situation has led to an increase of fictional works related to Virgin Mary recently.

## **b) Virgin Mary in Poetic Works**

When poetic works are explored in our classical literature, classical poetry books, mesnevis and poetry magazines called as “*divan*” come to our minds naturally. As it is stated above under the title of “*Virgin Mary in Prose Works*”, even though it is limited, there are prose works written about Virgin Mary in Ottoman period. However, we have never come across a poetic work written only about Virgin Mary. This situation doesn't show that there isn't any poetic work written only about Virgin Mary; indeed, in a lot of poetic works, even the ones that are not only about Virgin Mary, there are sections describing Mary's life. One of such works is “*Hikmetnâme*” written in the 15<sup>th</sup> century by İbrahim ibni Bali. One of the stories told in the work written in Mesnevi style is Virgin Mary and Jesus anecdote (Kiraz, 2013: 39).

Both in these works and the poems in the Divan literature, Virgin Mary takes place as an important motive because of her many characteristics and different connotations.

In Classical Turkish literature, Virgin Mary is mentioned by using surahs in the Koran related to “Family of Imran”, which refer to her ancestry and “Mary” as her name. How Virgin Mary's mother gave her to the sanctuary, Virgin Mary's conversation with the Angel Gabriel,, her piety, chastity, , her being heralded with a son although she was a virgin, her giving birth, her people's reaction to her, her stance against the reaction, her baby's (Jesus) talking as a miracle, his response to disbelievers are the most mentioned subjects. Without further elaboration, all these points can be examined under the following headings:

## **ı) Virgin Mary's Devotion and Chastity**

In a lot of verses of Koran, Virgin Mary is shown as an example to Muslim women as she is praised by Allah for her devotion and chastity. It is believed that the most important source that Classical Turkish literature is based on is Koran. The praises for Virgin Mary in Koran became an inspiration for Divan poems, and they also praised her. One of the poets that included Virgin Mary in this aspect is Ahmedi. In the couplet below, Ahmedi resembles the person who he praises in the poem to Virgin Mary for his purity and sinlessness, and he states his surprise against the slanders made to him like Virgin Mary.

Pâk durur ismeti Meryem bigi ol İfî-demün

Pes nedendür iy aceb bu töhmet ü bühtan ana

Ahmedî (Günyüz, 2001: 241)

*“Although he is as clean and without sin as Virgin Mary and Jesus, why did you slander and discredit him?”*

When we look at Ali Rıza Erhan’s couplet below, the cruelty towards Virgin Mary wasn’t limited to just slanders and discretisation; she was ostracized and left alone by her people as well.

Hazret-i Meryem ama pâkize-i her dü cihân

Mâder-i Rûhullâh iken çekdi hayli gurbeti

Ali Rıza Erhan (Tosun, 2006: 315)

*“Although Virgin Mary was the pure and clean woman in both worlds, she suffered from loneliness so much when she was Jesus.’s mother.”*

In the couplet below, Nizami from Karaman establishes an interesting resemblance between Virgin Mary and himself by reminding that Virgin Mary always prayed and fasted. As it is known, Jesus had the miracle of raising somebody from the dead. Nizami says that he has been fasting Mary for so long to reach the bairam by resembling his beloved to Jesus and his moment of meeting her to a bairam:

Vuslatun îdine irem diyü sen İfî-i demün

Yıllar olmışdur ki gönlüm rûze-i Meryem tutar

Karamanlı Nizami (Seydi, 2014:271)

*“I have been fasting Mary to reach your moment of reunion because you are like Jesus.”*

Another reason why Virgin Mary was involved in Classical Turkish poetry is her chastity. As it is stated above, in Koran it is mentioned that she is unspoiled, and she had a son as Allah’s miracle even though she was a virgin. Poets refer to Virgin Mary’s virginity to show their ideas’ originality as it is seen in Mr. Necatî’s couplet below:

Meryem-âsâ bîkr-i fikründen

Tevellüd eyledi

Hazret-i İfî gibi âlemleri ihyâ iden

Necatî Beg (Seydi, 2014:272)

*“What illuminates the worlds like Jesus arose from my idea that is virgin (original) like Virgin Mary.”*

## ii) Conversations with Gabriel, and Divinity

Virgin Mary's conversations with Holy Spirit (Gabriel) and her being revealed divinely that she was pregnant with Jesus was a great influence for divan poetry.

In divan poetry, this incident was processed with different associations. One of the poets that referred Virgin Mary conversations with Gabriel is Şemseddin Canbek. In the couplets below, Canbek portrays the moment of Virgin Mary's moment of being heralded with a boy, and that his son would become a prophet as follows:

Bir gulam ki bahş olundu hem zekiyya diyerek

Nefh edip Rûhu'l-Kudûs hâzâ nebiyya diyerek

Çün göründü sûret-i insanda Cibrîl Meryem'e

Korktu Meryem âdemîden inkıbazı geldi deme

Şemseddin Canbek (Kiraz,2014: 271)

*"When Gabriel showed itself to Virgin Mary in human form, she was afraid; by saying not to be afraid of, Gabriel heralded her with a son from Allah, and said he would become a prophet by blowing a breathe."*

Virgin Mary had a grasp of the secret that Allah gave her through Gabriel. Therefore, she was delivered a divine message; Gabriel told Virgin Mary by Allah's order that she was selected among women for a miracle to have a son even though she was a virgin, and her son would become a prophet. When the miracle is worked, her people didn't know it so they condemned Virgin Mary. Edib Harabi refers to this event as follows:

Bî-peder derler Mesîha'yı ki rûhullahdır

Kimseler bilmez bu sırr-ı mübhemi Meryem bilür

Edîb Harabî (Üçüncü, 2012:271)

*"Mesiha is referred as a child without father and he is Jesus. Nobody except Mary knew this secret."*

## iii) Giving Birth as a Virgin

For a woman to give birth without getting married and having any sexual intercourse is challenging for the mind. This kind of incident can only occur as a miracle; Virgin Mary is someone chosen specially by Allah for such event. As seen from the verses given at the beginning of the article, this incident is told in detail in the Koran.

As seen in the translation of the 59th verse of sura Âl-i İmrân above, the case of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. Allah created Jesus from dust; then he said to him, "Be," and he became. On the one hand, this shows that Allah is omnipotent; on the other hand, according to German orientalist Annamarie Schimmel, (Yılmaz, 2006: 352) it is a certain expression for Virgin Mary's chastity, which even some Christians do not believe.

So many poets have worked on this issue in Classical Turkish literature, and tried to present it with many different associations. Fuzuli is one of the poets who used the fact that Virgin Mary had a child as a virgin with a very interesting metaphor in his poem. Having knowledge and philosophical perspective of his time, Fuzuli uses word symmetry technique, and likens the fact that rose branch becomes pregnant with

rosebuds (blossoms) with the wind of spring to the fact that Virgin Mary became pregnant with Jesus with Angel Gabriel's breath:

Bâddan goncelere hâmile oldu gül-bün

Öyle kim İsrâ'ye Cibrîl deminden Meryem

Fuzûlî (Akyüz ve ark., 1997: 87)

*"Like Virgin Mary becoming pregnant with Jesus with Angel Gabriel's breath, rose branch becomes pregnant with rosebuds with the wind."*

Also Ahmedî refers to Virgin Mary's pregnancy; like Fuzûlî, Ahmedî compares sporogenesis, which is reproduction without insemination, to Virgin Mary's becoming pregnant:

Ne nefh buldı yilden ağaç ki bîkr-iken uş

Tıfl-ı şükûfeye oldı Meryem-misâl hâmil

Ahmedî (Günyüz, 2001: 241)

*"How did the tree find a breath from the wind, similarly it became pregnant with buds like Virgin Mary?"*

Nev'i, a poet from 16<sup>th</sup> century, also makes a resemblance in his verse below between Virgin Mary's pregnancy with Jesus and roses blossoming in spring. He likens Virgin Mary to the earth, Jesus to the rose blossoming in the earth and Ruhul Quddus breathed into Virgin MaryJesus; he sees this trio as a means for the nature to revive in spring:

Cân buldı gül nesîm-i bahâr ile hâkde

Benzetsem anları n'ola İsrâ vü Meryem'e

Nev'î (Akgül, 2013: 120)

*"The rose revived in the earth with the breath of the spring wind; what about resembling that to Jesus and Virgin Mary".*

Şeyh Galip, one of the representatives of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Classical Turkish poetry, reminds that Jesus, to whom Virgin Mary gave birth, is a human being as emphasized in Koran very often. He says the men are "the best of creations" too, and like the son of Virgin Mary, Jesus, was created with the breath of the Angel Gabriel, they are a secret and a miracle of Allah:

Rûhsun nefha-i Cibril ile tev'emsin sen

Sırr-ı Hak'sın mesel-i İsrâ-i Meryem'sin sen

Şeyh Galip (Okur, 1993: 318)

*"You are soul; you are the twin of the soul the Angel Gabriel breathed. You are Allah's secret as the son of Virgin Mary Jesus."*

In Islam Allah is omnipotent; he creates what he wants out of nothing in any way he wants. Creation of Jesus without a father is not deficiency or a flaw. Avnî from Yenişehir, one of the representatives 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman poetry, refers to this in the verse below. He sees the creation of Jesus without a father as a proof of Allah's power of creating miracles out of nothing:

Bir nefesle Meryem'i dem-sâz-ı Cibril eyleyip

Rûh verdin kâlib-ı mevhûmı İsâ eyledin

Yenişehirli Avnî (Güfta, 2004: 168)

*"(Oh My Allah) You made Virgin Mary a friend to the Angel Gabriel, and by giving soul to an imaginary body with one breath, you made Jesus"*

#### iv) Virgin Mary as Jesus' Mother

According to Islamic belief, Jesus is one of the greatest prophets who were given a holy book like Prophet David, Prophet Moses and Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.). In Koran, like other prophets, Jesus is praised; he is referred with his name and title in fifteen surahs and in 93 verses (Harman, 2000: 469). That's why Jesus is loved and respected by all Muslims.

According to Koran, Allah is the one; everything needs him! He wasn't born nor he didn't give birth, and nothing is equal to him (Koran, İhlâs sûra (112): 1-4). As it is pointed out by this verse, according to Muslim belief, Jesus is neither Allah nor Allah's son. He was created without a father as Allah's miracle. Because he was created without a biological father, in Koran he is referred as *Mary's son Jesus*. Although the children in the Arab tradition are referred to by their fathers, Jesus is insistently referred as *Mary's son Jesus* in Koran and hadiths. Its reason is clear.

As Koran's order, which is the main reference source of Classical Turkish poetry, the poets had a deep respect for Jesus in their poems as in this period there is not a single couplet that can be understood as an insult to him or that underestimates him. Therefore, as we stated in our work titled "Jesus in Divan poetry" published in Sakarya University Theology Faculty Magazine in 2009, and presented as a paper in "International Divan Literature Symposium" organized by Istanbul University on 13-14 April 2007 (Koçin, 2009: 69-104), Jesus is one of the most prominent prophets in Classical Turkish poetry. Sometimes he is referred alone, and sometimes he is referred together with his mother Mary.

The most important reason why Mary is referred together with her son Jesus in Classical Literature is that Jesus was a prophet, and he had prominent characteristics; he was not an ordinary person. Nefî, one of 17<sup>th</sup> century poets, praises that time's Padishah 4<sup>th</sup> Murad by referring to Cem, Rüstem and Mary's son Jesus:

Şâhâne-meşreb Cem gibi sâhib-kıran Rüstem gibi

Hem İsî-i Meryem gibi ehl-i dil ü Ferhunde-dem

Nefî (Karahân, 1985: 88).

*"(Sultan) Like epicure Cem, like fortunate Rüstem gibi, and Mary's son Jesus; he is pleased and happy."*

*Nabî, a classical Turkish poet from the nineteenth century, also referred to Jesus while he was praying for the Padishah at that time as he wished the Padishah's life span would be as long as Jesus'.*

*Azmimüz Ka'be'yedür devlet-i Şahen-şeh'de*

*Şimdiden nûş idelüm suları Zemzemcesine*

*Nabiya Hazret-i Hak Padişeh-i devranun*

*Ede 'ömrünü füzün 'İsi-i Meryem'cesine*

*Nabi (Nabi, (h) 1257: 227)*

*"Because our purpose is to go to Kabe in Padishah's country, let's drink water as zemzem now. Ey Nâbî, may Allah extend the Padishah's lifespan as Jesus'."*

The poet's wish while praying for the Padishah's life span to be as long as Jesus was based on his belief that Jesus was ascended. Although it is a controversial issue by theologians, when the Classical Turkish Poetry is examined, it is seen that poets believed and expected that Jesus was ascended, and he will descent the world again. Zaifi, one of 16<sup>th</sup> century's poets states his belief as follows:

Âlemi dutdı sitem zulmeti rûşen itmege

Gelse âdil Mehdi vü İsi' bni Meryem kâşki

Zaifi (Akarsu, 1993: 256)

*"Everything is reproachful; I wish that the Mahdi and Mary' son of Jesus would come in to justify this darkness."*

In Classical Turkish poetry, Virgin Mary is not referred just for the reasons given above. On the contrary, she is referred broadly by her every characteristic stated in Koran, and every incident she experienced. She is even referred with colourful dreams and rich images that poets set up apart from the Koran. However, this article does not include them in order not to extend the subject.

## **2) Words and Concepts in Turkish Language About Virgin Mary**

As in the other Islamic countries, "Meryem (Mary)" is one of the most given names to girls in Turkey. Indeed the author of this article named his granddaughter "Meryem (Mary)". The reason is the Koran and hadiths speak highly of her, and show her as an example to Muslim women. Muslims hope that by giving this name to their daughters, they will be unspoiled, religious and devoted to Allah like Virgin Mary when they grow up. However, Virgin Mary is not only a name in Turkish language. There are a lot of sayings, idioms, words and concepts because of the love and respect Turkish Muslims show to her. We can list the ones we could detect as:

Bikr-i Meryem (*The virginity of Mary*), buhûr-ı Meryem (*the incense of Virgin Mary*), dâmen-i Meryem (*the skirt of Virgin Mary*), deyr-i Meryem (*the church of Virgin Mary*), diraht-ı Meryem (*the tree of Virgin Mary*), el-azra (*untouched, a feature of Virgin Mary*), el-azraü'l-betül (*chaste virgin girl, a feature of Virgin Mary*), el-betül (*celibate, a feature of Virgin Mary bakire*), gonce-i Meryem (*the bud of Virgin Mary, Jesus*), the pray of Virgin Mary, İbn-i Meryem (*the son of Virgin Mary, Jesus*), İbnü'l- Betül (*the son of the Celibate, Jesus*), iffet-i Meryem (*the chastity of Mary*), İsa ibni Meryem (*Jesus son of Virgin Mary*), İsa-i Meryem (*Jesus of Virgin Mary*), İsi-i Meryem (*Jesus of Virgin Mary*), kalıb-ı Meryem (*the body of Virgin Mary*), leben-i Meryem (*the milk of Virgin Mary*), Mother Mary, Mother Mary Generation (*The Rainbow*), Meryem binti İmrân (*Mary the daughter of İmran*), Mary flower, like Virgin Mary, wearing black like Virgin Mary, be like Virgin Mary, the son of Virgin Mary, Jesus the son of Virgin Mary, Virgin Mary fasting, the innocence of Virgin Mary, Meryem-âsâ (*similar to Virgin Mary*), Meryem-i azra (*the Untouched Mary*), Meryem-i Betül (*Mary who is virgin*), Meryem-i ma'na (*Virgin Mary meaning*), Meryem-i nâhid (*adolescent*

girl, Mary), Mesiha ibni Meryem (*the Messiah the son of Virgin Mary*), Mesih-i Meryem (*the Mesisiah of Virgin Mary*), meşime-i Meryem (*the womb of Virgin Mary*), nahl-i Meryem (*the tree of Virgin Mary, date palm*), nefh-i Meryem (*the breath of Virgin Mary*), reşk-i Meryem (*he one making Virgin Mary jealous*), rişte-i Meryem (*the thread of Virgin Mary*), rûze-i Meryem (*Virgin Mary fasting*), savm-ı Meryem (*Virgin Mary fasting*), sîret-i Meryem (*morals of Virgin Mary*), Sûre-i Meryem (*Surah Maryam*), suret-i Meryem (*the face of Virgin Mary*), silence fasting, sükût-ı Meryem (*the silence of Virgin Mary*), şîr-i Meryem (*the milk of Virgin Mary*), vech-i Meryem (*the face of Virgin Mary*), Yetîm-i duhter-i İmrân (*the orphan of the daughter of İmran, Jesus*).

All the expressions about Virgin Mary above are used in Classical Turkish poetry by poets in very different ways of simile. We can give some examples of verses of Turkish poetry in which the expressions in question are used:

Âteş-i işkunla yandurdun **bahûr-i Meryem**'i

Dûdidur zâhir olan gülzârdan sünbül degül

Vahyi (Taş, 2004: 121)

*"You burned incense of Virgin Mary with the fire of your love; what you see in the rose garden is its smoke, not hyacinth."*

**Gonce-i Meryem-i İmrân** mısın

Şu'le-i hâne-i ruhbân mısın

Enderunlu Fazıl (Sürelli, 2007: 77)

*"Are you the bud of Virgin Mary, the daughter of İmran or the light of clergy house?"*

Ne gam cellâd oldı-y-ısa gamzen

Çün oldı dudagun **İsâ-i Meryem**

Ahmedî (Günyüz, 2001: 240)

*"Even if your dimple is an executioner, it is not a trouble because your lips are (reviving) Jesus, the son of Virgin Mary."*

**Kalib-i Meryem** olur hem-dem-i Rûh-ı Cibril

Gelse lafz-ı kaleme ma'nî-i bî-gâne-i ney

Şeyh Galib (Kalkışım, 1994: 415)

*"If the unearthly meaning of the reed flute comes to the pen's word, the body of Virgin Mary will be united with the soul of the Angel Gabriel."*

Temâşâ etse ol rûh-ı musavver şûh-ı tersâyı

Atar âgûşdan **Meryem Ana** tasvîr-i İsâ'yı

Sümbülzâde Vehbi (G.26/1)

*"If that painted soul sees the Christian beautiful, even Virgin Mary (statue) will throw Jesus description out of her lap."*

Kimden olurdu **Meryem-i ma'nâya** nefh-i rûh

Bezm-i suhanda Nehcî-i kudsî-dem olmasa

Nehcî (Aslan, 2005: 384)

*"If it weren't for Nehci who has a holy breath in the word house, who would blow soul into Virgin Mary of meaning?"*

Kâfir bileydi ma'nî-i levh-i zamîrini

Tagyîr iderdi vasf-ı **Mesîh ibn-i Meryem'**

Yenişehirli Avnî (Turan, 1998: 125).

*"If the sinner knew the meaning in the landscape, he would change the attributes of the Messiah son of Virgin Mary."*

Safâ bağışlamış bâga sabâ İsîleyin demden

Yeşermiş kurı ağaçlar netekim **nahl-i Meryem'**den

Nesimî (Ayan, 1990:290)

*"The wind Saba granted happiness to the vineyards with granting life breath like Jesus; dry trees blossomed like Virgin Mary tree."*

Yine Mesîh-dem oldu nesîm-i rûhânî

Ke **nefh-i Meryem'**e benzetti bâg u bûstânı

Şeyhi (İsen / Kurnaz, 1990: 66)

*"The reviving wind is again the Messiah breath; such that it likened vineyards and orchards to Virgin Mary's breath."*

Gel ey tab'-ı Fehîm ey **reşk-i Meryem**

O İsî-zay ise sen rûh-zay ol

Fehîm-i Kadîm (Üzgör, 1991: 558)

*"Oh Fehim's (poet) creation which makes Virgin Mary jealous, come; since she gave birth to Jesus, you give birth to soul (give soul)."*

Olursa süzen-i İsâ vü **rişte-i Meryem**

Muhâl sîne-i sad-çâkümüzi rûfû etmek

Seyyid Vehbi (Onay, 2009: 392)

*"Even with the needle of Jesus and Virgin Mary's thread, it is hard to sew our hearts broken into a hundred of pieces."*

Bikr-i ma'nîdür ser-â-ser **sûret-i Meryemleri**

Öyle bir büt-hânenün şimdi gönül nâkûsıdur

*“Virgin Mary descriptions are overall original meanings; the heart is now the bell of such an idol house.”*

## Conclusion

Although there are so many works about Virgin Mary both in the East (Islamic) and the West (Christian) cultures, these works were written hundreds of years after her death, and based on unreliable narratives. Information given in the Bible about her does not show her position in the Islam. Moreover, Muslims believe that the Bible is falsified; that is the divine messages in the Bible were changed by clergymen afterwards. Therefore the information given in the Bible about Virgin Mary to determine her position in Islam was not used in this paper in the sense that it is different from those given in the Koran.

Information given in hadiths about Virgin Mary is not different from those given in the Koran. That is why the Koran is the only source we could use to determine the position of Virgin Mary in Islam. As mentioned in the Koran, holy scripture of the Islam:

- Virgin Mary was the daughter of İmrân coming from a distinguished family. Her mother despite her old age miraculously gave birth to her. After being born, her mother gave her to Bayt al-Maqdis in order for her to live a religious life, and serve to Allah’s religion.
- Virgin Mary had extraordinary features in terms of moral values. She was one of those who confirmed the words and the books of Allah, and obeyed him from their hearts. Because of these distinguished features, she was addressed by Allah and talked to the Angel Gabriel (a.s.). Virgin Mary was also chosen by Allah for a miracle over all women on earth.
- For the miracle in question to happen, the Angel Gabriel appeared before her in the form of a man when she was alone. Virgin Mary, seeking refuge in Allah, told him that she was a chaste woman, and asked him not to touch her. Then the Angel Gabriel told her that he was only the messenger from Allah to herald her with a righteous son. Virgin Mary asked how it was possible when no man touched her, and she was not unchaste, the Angel Gabriel reassured her by saying that it is easy for Allah. In this way, Virgin Mary became pregnant with Jesus and gave birth to him although no man had ever touched her.
- This incident is told in the Koran very clearly so Muslims believe that Jesus had no human divine father, but created in the womb of Virgin Mary with a divine order as a miracle. The incident of Virgin Mary’s pregnancy with Jesus by the Angel Gabriel’s breathing seems hard to believe today, but it is one of the fundamentals of Islam just as Adam’s creation without a mother and a father.
- One of the heaviest accusations for a woman is unchastity. Although Virgin Mary was chosen by Allah, she was accused of being unchaste by her furious tribe, which even killed prophets. However, Allah helped Virgin Mary both during the labour and afterwards. She was protected against her tribe’s slanders. Her baby started to talk miraculously in her lap, and said he was created without a father to prove Virgin Mary’s innocence.
- The period of the Koran’s revelation was a time when the Arab society did not value women; instead, they were insulted and despised. **In such a period, distinguished features of Virgin Mary such as sincerity, obedience to the orders of Allah, courage against her furious tribe in the Koran are exemplified for people, especially for women. It is also an indication of the value that the Islam gives to women as the Koran mentions Virgin Mary’s distinguished features as such.**
- As Virgin Mary, The Koran also speaks highly of Jesus in 15 surah and 93 verses. In the verses mentioned, it is announced that Jesus is a prophet, who was made honourable both in this world and

afterlife, given a holy book (the Bible), confirming the Torah sent before him, and heralding the future prophet named Ahmed. Therefore like Virgin Mary, Jesus is also loved by all Muslims and is believed to be a prophet sent by Allah.

- All of these beautiful attributions mentioned for Virgin Mary and Jesus are used very often in Classical Turkish literature. That is why Virgin Mary is an important theme for poets in the Classical Period. There are so many examples in the Turkish poetry referring especially to Virgin Mary's miraculous pregnancy with Jesus, and giving birth to him.
- As in the Koran and the hadiths, there is no word or a sentence that discredits, accuses or disrespects Virgin Mary in the Classical Turkish literature either. Moreover, there are so many words and concepts about or referring to her because of the deep respect and love for her.

After these determinations and evaluations about Virgin Mary, I assume it is my duty to say this; the life of Virgin Mary is valuable enough to show all chaste women and young girls as a role model in our age. Unfortunately today, there is bloodshed where Virgin Mary was born and grown, gave birth to Jesus, and the shrine she prayed in is located as well as in so many other places. It tortures the souls of Virgin Mary, Jesus, Moses, Mohammad (s.a.a.w) and doubtlessly all other prophets along with all people with a conscience. Like those furious people who defamed Virgin Mary when she gave birth to Jesus, and returned to her home, those who insulted and tried to crucify Jesus when he became a prophet and started to tell the facts, or the furious people today who use massacre to oppress people without regarding their age or gender throughout the world are following the evil acts of the bloody history books. Moreover, for those who are oppressed, I wish that they can be freed soon enough no matter what their language, gender, nationality or country is.

I want the last sentence to be these examples from Nabi and Edip Harabî, the Classical Turkish literature poets, say about Virgin Mary:

Her tabî'atdan ümîd eyleme ma'nâ-yı latîf

Rûh kâbil mi tevellûd ide her Meryemden

Nâbî (Nabi, h.1292: 107)

*"Do not wait for gentle meanings from everyone; is it possible for Jesus to be born from every Mary?"*

*Rûhul-Kudûs'den İsâ*

*Bir kerre togdu geldi*

*Her hâmile cihânda*

*İffetli Meryem olmaz*

Edip Harabî(Kemal, 2012: 380)

*"Jesus was born from Ruhul Qudus once; not every pregnant woman can be the chaste Mary."*

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