

Nestorian Christian Schools in the Abbasid Era (132-334 AH / 749-945 CE)

Akram Abdullah Mukhllef

Sunni Endowment Diwan / Religious Education Department

Prof. Dr. Laith Shaker Mahmoud

University of Baghdad - College of Arts - Department of History

Received:16.3.2025

Accepted: 16.4.2025

Published: 2.6.2025

Abstract: Throughout history, Mesopotamia has been a field of coexistence between various religions and sects that fed on its culture, and Christians in general and Nestorians in particular were among the most prominent actors in terms of supporting and promoting the scientific movement through their educational institutions, especially their schools, which were mostly linked to the Nestorian Church, and these Nestorian environments were distinctive in terms of knowledge activity in the pre-Islamic era and their activity continued to flourish even under Islamic rule, and contributed effectively to the civilisational renaissance that Iraq witnessed in the Abbasid era (132 - 334 AH / 949 - 945 AD) 334 AH / 749-945 AD).

Keywords: Schools, Nestorian, Abbasid Era, Iraq.

Introduction

The topic of *Nestorian Christian Schools in Iraq during the Abbasid Era (132-334 AH / 749-945 CE)* holds particular significance in demonstrating the positive impact of the social and religious diversity that Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) has enjoyed throughout history. This diversity resulted in a variety of sources contributing to the scientific movement, which led to an intellectual flourishing that reached its peak during the Islamic rule of the Abbasid period (132-334 AH / 749-945 CE).

One of the main aspects of investigating the influence of Nestorian Christians on the scientific renaissance of the Abbasid era is to examine the educational institutions that were under the control of the Nestorian Church or those that were supported by Nestorian clergy such as monks, patriarchs, bishops, or prominent Nestorians in the Abbasid court, including scribes and physicians.

In this research, we will adopt a methodology focused on tracing the origins of these schools and the notable figures nurtured by the Nestorian Church, as well as those who contributed to the scientific movement in the Abbasid era and even public life, such as scribes. Through this investigation, we will explore the diversity of subjects taught at these schools and their influence in enriching their students with a variety of knowledge, which allowed some to excel in the field of theology, others in logic and philosophy, as well as providing skilled scribes for the Abbasid administrative institutions who were highly regarded during that time.

Nestorian Christian Schools in Iraq during the Abbasid Era (132-334 AH / 749-945 CE)

The Nestorian Church was committed to supporting its religious institutions with educational establishments, initially intended to prepare ecclesiastical staff to carry out their duties effectively by providing them with a wide range of knowledgeⁱ. These schools initially began as small primary schools (Kuttab) for teaching children. Over time, they evolved into institutions attached to churches, and their scope expanded as they were also built alongside monasteries. Since monasteries were more widespread in various regions than churches, they became centers for learning, in addition to their spiritual preparation role.ⁱ

The Nestorian Church took great care in establishing and managing its schools, so much so that its legal system included laws to regulate the creation and administration of these institutions. Each of their ecclesiastical and monastic schools was referred to as an "Eskul"ⁱ. The person responsible for managing education at these schools was called the "Melfan"ⁱ. The Nestorian Church's laws stipulated that each Eskul, in agreement with the Melfan, should select a person to manage the church administratively and financially, known as the "Khasin." This position was filled annually, and no opposition to Khasin's authority was allowed.

Furthermore, these laws governed the relationship between those involved in the schools. Any student who violated the rules was first warned and gradually punished, and if they did not mend their ways, they were expelled from the Eskul. The laws also prohibited students from engaging in buying, selling, or trading, allowing them only to focus on their education.

During the period from July to October, the Nestorian Church also prohibited the acceptance of new students without subjecting them to a test to assess their willingness and proficiency in the basic principles of learning. Furthermore, students who were admitted to the Eskul were not allowed to neglect their commitment to writing and reading. The school day would begin at sunrise, with each student taking their seat at the desks and remaining there until sunset and the evening of that day. The regulations were so strict that even the school director was held accountable. If the director violated the rules, they were required to pay a fine. If the violation was repeated, the director could be expelled not only from the Eskul but also from the entire city that hosted the school.^v

Although the origin of these schools within the Nestorian Church was primarily aimed at teaching ecclesiastical sciences and preparing church personnel, their scope expanded over time. They began to accept various social classes and became accessible to all, provided they passed the admission exam, which focused on testing the fundamental principles and positions of Nestorian thought, such as the views of the great interpreter Theodore of Mopsuestia and others. As a result, the range of subjects taught in these schools broadened. Since the 5th century AD, they contributed to the development of philosophy, logic, rhetoric, and the Greek and Aramaic languages, in addition to compiling liturgical texts. Later, during the Islamic era, the schools started teaching Arabic language and literature, as Arabic had become the language of administration and society at that time^v. The Nestorian Church was also distinguished by its educational curricula, which combined both ecclesiastical and secular sciences. It was not uncommon to see a deacon excelling

in medicine or a Nestorian bishop innovating in the fields of philosophy and logic. This approach allowed its followers to become excellent intermediaries in transmitting knowledge.^v

To better understand the impact of these educational institutions, such as the church schools and monastery schools, it is essential to review the most prominent ones, particularly during the period under study, as well as highlight those who benefited from studying in these institutions and made significant intellectual contributions:

1- The School of St. Mary:

This school was known as the *School of Mar^v Mary*, named after its founder, Saint Maryⁱ (d. 82 AD)^x. It was located in the Monastery of Qani^x, also known as the Monastery of Mar Mary, situated in Tisfun, which, during the Islamic period, became part of the region of Madain. Consequently, it was sometimes referred to as the *School of Madain* during the Islamic era.^x

The Monastery of Qani, which housed this school, was of great importance within the Nestorian Church, as it was founded by Saint Mary, the founder of the Patriarchal See of the East. Additionally, Saint Mary was buried there, which further contributed to its significance^x. It became a well-established tradition for the ordination of the Catholicos that the first monastery the Catholicos would visit was the Monastery of Qani to receive the blessing of Saint Maris. Additionally, it was customary for the Catholicos to visit this school, where he would be warmly welcomed and congratulated by its students, who would also offer their blessings^x. Furthermore, many Catholicos^v were buried in this monastery, as was the case with Catholicos Hannanisho II (d. 164 AH / 779 CE), which further elevated the status of this monastery within the framework of the Nestorian Church.^x

One of the most famous students of the School of Saint Marius, who also taught there for many years during the period under study, is the philosopher and logician Abu Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus al-Qannā'ī (d. 328 AH / 940 CE)^x. His proficiency in several languages, acquired through his studies at this school, contributed significantly to his mastery of philosophical and logical sciences, eventually leading him to become the head of the logicians in his era.^v

2- The School of the Monastery of Beth Abī:

The credit for the establishment of the Monastery of Beth Abī goes to the monk Ya'qūb al-Lāshūmī^x. By the early seventh century CE, the number of students who had been tutored by its founder in this monastery had reached eighty^x. This monastery soon flourished and became a popular destination for those seeking knowledge. This success prompted the patriarch Ishoyahb III al-Ḥadīyābī (d. 649-659 CE) to consider expanding the monastery's school and transforming it into an important academy, equipping it with everything it needed. However, the patriarch's decision was met with opposition from the monks running the monastery, who argued that this might disrupt the monastery's tranquility and bring noise and commotion. After disputes between the two sides, the patriarch ultimately abandoned his plan, complying with their request.^x

One of the most famous students who studied at the School of Beth Abī and graduated from it was the monk Kyurīkos. Due to his knowledge and expertise, he was appointed as the bishop of all of Ḥadīyāb. Before his death, Patriarch Ishoyahb III al-Ḥadīyābī recommended him to be selected as the next patriarch. As a result, Kyurīkos was consecrated as Patriarch Kyurīkos I (40-60 AH / 659-680 CE).^x

Also, Patriarch Kyurīkos II (213-216 AH / 828-831 CE)^x studied at the School of Beth Abī and even served as its head. The School of Beth Abī continued to thrive, as it also became the institution where Patriarch Ibrāhīm II al-Marjī (223-236 AH / 837-850 CE) studied and later assumed its administration.^x

3- The School of the Monastery of Klayleshua:

This monastery was established during the Sassanian period and was named the Monastery of Klayleshua, which in Syriac means "Crown of Jesus^x ." However, it gained significant importance when Patriarch Timothy I (164-208 AH / 780-823 CE) made it his headquarters after moving the patriarchal residence from al-Madā'in to Baghdad. He chose the Monastery of Klayleshua, located on the western side of Baghdad, as his residence, and it became commonly known as "The Patriarch's Monastery" because of this.^x

Patriarch Timothy I, the Great, undertook the renovation and expansion of the Monastery of Klayleshua to make it suitable for the residence of the Patriarch and the clergy accompanying him, and fit for the administration of the affairs of the Chaldean Church. He was buried there upon his death^x . Similarly, Patriarch Ishoyahbrun (208-213 AH / 823-828 CE) also made the monastery his residence and was buried there upon his passing^x . Additionally, Patriarch Kyriakos II (213-216 AH / 828-831 CE) adopted it as his headquarters and was buried there.^x

The Monastery of Klayleshua housed an ecclesiastical school that flourished, particularly during the time of Patriarch Sabrisho II (216-221 AH / 831-835 CE). In 220 AH / 834 CE, he issued several ecclesiastical edicts urging the followers of the Nestorian Church, especially the monks, to engage in the pursuit of knowledge and the study of the writings of the Church Fathers and ecclesiastical sciences in order to ensure their advancement within the ecclesiastical ranks^x . As such, the school at the Monastery of Klayleshua functioned like an academy, attended by those who had completed their studies in the church and monastic schools to further their education and prepare for ecclesiastical roles. Furthermore, its students had the right to participate in the election activities for

the Nestorian Patriarch and the accompanying celebrations of the patriarch's consecration, as they were considered students of the patriarchal seat.^x

4- The School of the Monastery of Saint Vithon: It dates back to the 5th century CE and was established in honor of Saint Vithon^x. It was built in a location within the patriarchal district west of the Tigris River. It is reported that Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur (136-158 AH / 754–774 CE), when he was deciding on the site for the capital he intended to establish, visited the site of this monastery and met with one of its monks. He was pleased with the location and planned his round city around it^x. This location was^x near the mouth of the^x Sarāt^x River into the Tigris, and therefore, the monastery was also known as the Monastery of Qarn al-Sarāt^x. After the establishment of Baghdad, this area became part of a district known as al-'Atiqah^x, and thus the monastery was sometimes referred to as the Monastery of al-'Atiqah^x.

The Catholicos Sabrisho II (216-221 AH / 831-835 CE) undertook the construction of the Monastery of Saint Vithon and built a school within it. He invited teachers to it and allocated funds for its operation, ensuring the provision of financial support for both the students and teachers at the Monastery of Saint Vithon^x. This school continued to thrive and remain active until the end of the period under study, when Catholicos Emmanuel I (326-349 AH / 937-960 CE) undertook further reconstruction of the monastery and its school.^x

5- The Upper Monastery School:

This monastery was built on a high mountain to the northeast of Mosul, on the banks of the Tigris River. It was a distinguished monastery, unparalleled due to its unique location and favorable climate^x. Its foundation dates back to the 5th century CE^x. The monastery gained fame due to the remarkable school it hosted,

which was so distinguished that it is known as the "School of the Mother of Virtues."^x " l i

One of the most notable figures credited with the flourishing of this monastery is Catholicos Ishoyahb III Al-Hadiabi (29-40 AH / 649-659 CE), who resided at the Upper Monastery in Mosul. He is credited with organizing the Nestorian liturgical year and dividing it in collaboration with the monks of the Upper Monastery in Mosul.^x l i i

Additionally, the activity of the Upper Monastery and its school was enhanced by Saint Gabriel al-Kashkari (d. 122 AH / 739 CE)^x , and due to his influence, someⁱ mistakenly attributed the founding of the Upper Monastery to him^x . Similarly, the famous Nestorian teacher Emmanuel ibn Shahari (d. 370 AH / 980 CE) also contributed to its development.^x l v

The importance of the Upper Monastery school reached such a level that its organizational structure, under which it was managed, was incorporated into the legal systems of the Nestorian Church as ecclesiastical laws.^x l

6- Jundishapur School:

This school stands out from all the other schools mentioned previously, as it was not a church school but rather the most prominent medical academy in the East, despite being a Nestorian academy. While the founding of the city of Jundishapur dates back to the 3rd century CE^x , its growth as a school was further bolstered after the Byzantine Emperor Zeno (474–491 CE)^x decided to close the School^v of Edessa in 489 CE as part of his efforts to eradicate Nestorian thought and its followers. Consequently, many of its teachers, staff, and some doctors and philosophers migrated to the Sassanian state, which was opposed to the Byzantines at the time, and settled in Jundishapur.^x l i

This blending of Greek, Syriac, and Persian cultures in Jundishapur proved to be fruitful, which encouraged the Sassanian king Khosrow I (531–579 CE)¹ to establish a school in Jundishapur that hosted Greek and Syriac scholars who had come to his court. He honored their arrival and encouraged them to translate books on medicine and logic, leading to the flourishing of the Jundishapur School.¹

This school, established within the boundaries of the Nestorian Metropolitanate of Jundishapur, remained prominent, and it was predominantly influenced by the Nestorians, who became the chief physicians of the court, especially during the Abbasid era.¹

7- The Famous Nisibis School:

Among the other Nestorian schools is the famous Nisibis School, which flourished, especially in the early Islamic period. The establishment of the Nisibis School dates back to the 4th century CE, but due to the aftermath of the Sassanid-Byzantine conflict, the school was temporarily moved to Edessa (Ruhā) for a period before returning and settling in Nisibis in the mid-5th century CE. It became one of the most prominent centers of Nestorian thought, bridging the intellectual legacy of Antioch to the lands of the Upper Euphrates.¹

One of the most prominent individuals who studied and graduated from the Nisibis School was the first Patriarch of the period under study, Patriarch Ishoyahb II (8-25 AH/628-646 CE)¹. Additionally, Patriarch Saint Emha (26-29 AH/646-649 CE)¹ also studied there. Among those who were educated at Nisibis was also Patriarch Ishoyahb III of the Hadiab (29-40 AH/649-659 CE).¹

1- The Beshush School:

Another important school was the Beshush School, located in the Marj district of Mosul, which flourished in the early Abbasid period. One of the most prominent figures to have studied there was Patriarch Timothy I the Great (164-208 AH/780-

823 CE). Accompanying him in his quest for knowledge at this school was the scribe Abu Nuh Ibn al-Salt al-Anbari, who played a significant role in the election of Patriarch Timothy I in 164 AH/780 CE due to his influence at the Abbasid court¹. Additionally, Patriarch Ishoyahb Barnon (208-213 AH/823-828 CE) also studied at the Beshush School.¹

Conclusion

Through our examination of the topic "The Nestorian Christian Schools during the Abbasid Period (132-334 AH / 749-945 CE)," it becomes clear that the movement for education and the nurturing of learning within the Nestorian Christian schools flourished during the Abbasid period. The schools mentioned above indicate the revival of education under the auspices of the Nestorian Church and among its followers, granting them a deep understanding of various sciences. These schools not only contributed to the Nestorian Church by producing its leading patriarchs and clergy but also provided the intellectual movement with notable scholars, such as the philosopher and logician Abu Bishr Mata ibn Yunus al-Qanai (d. 328 AH/940 CE), who became the leader of philosophy in his time. Moreover, they enriched the Abbasid bureaucracy with distinguished writers, such as the scribe Abu Nuh Ibn al-Salt al-Anbari. The Nestorian Christian schools also had a profound impact on the advancement of medical and pharmaceutical sciences, particularly through the Jundishapur Medical School, which was one of the most prominent medical academies in the entire Middle Eastern medieval world. This highlights the significant contribution these Nestorian Christian schools made to the scientific movement and the intellectual renaissance witnessed during the Abbasid era.

List of Sources and References

First: Primary Sources:

1. **Eisho Adnah al-Basri** (d. 3rd century AH / 9th century CE)
 - *Al-Diyura fi Mamlakati al-Furs wa al- 'Arab*, translation by Paulos Sheikho, revised by Alber Abouna, (Baghdad, no publisher, 1427 AH / 2006 CE).
2. **Evagrius, Chalcedonian** (d. 594 CE)
 - *Al-Tarikh al-Kanisi*, translated by Paula Sawiris, (Cairo, Coptic Treasures Electronic Publishing Project, 1440 AH / 2019 CE).
3. **Al-Bakri, Abu Ubayd Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Andalusi** (d. 487 AH / 1094 CE)
 - **Mu'jam Ma Ist'jam min Asma' al-Buldan wa al-Mawaqi'*, edited by Mustafa al-Saqqa, (Beirut, Dar 'Alam al-Kutub, 1403 AH / 1982 CE).
4. **Al-Dinawari, Abu Hanifa Ahmad bin Dawud** (d. 282 AH / 895 CE)
 - *Al-Akhbar al-Tawwal*, edited by Abdul Mun'im Amir, (Cairo, Dar Ihya' al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1380 AH / 1960 CE).
5. **Al-Shabishthi, Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Muhammad** (d. 38 AH / 998 CE)
 - *Al-Diyarat*, edited by Korkis Awad, 3rd edition (Beirut, Dar al-Ra'id al-'Arabi, 1406 AH / 1986 CE).
6. **Saliba, Ibn Yohanna** (d. 8th century AH / 14th century CE)
 - *Asfar al-Asrar or Kitab al-Tawarikh*, studied and edited by Louis Saliba, (Jbeil, Dar wa Maktabat Byblos, 1433 AH / 2012 CE).
7. **Al-Sobawi, Abd Yeshua** (d. 718 AH / 1318 CE)
 - *Fahras al-Mu'allifin*, translated and edited by Yusuf Habi, (Baghdad, Iraqi Scientific Academy, 1406 AH / 1986 CE).
8. **Al-Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jareer bin Yazid bin Kathir bin Ghalib al-Amawi** (d. 310 AH / 923 CE)

- *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, edited by Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, 2nd edition (Beirut, Dar al-Turath, 1387 AH / 1967 CE).

9. Ibn al-Tayyib, Abu al-Faraj Abdullah al-Baghdadi (d. 435 AH / 1043 CE)

- *Fiqh al-Nasraniyya*, series: The Christian Eastern Writers (Arabic Book), edited by Hunsburg and Spies, (Leuven, Catholic University of Leuven, 1376 AH / 1956 CE).

10. Ibn al-‘Abri, Abu al-Faraj bin Aharon bin Touma al-Malti (d. 685 AH / 1286 CE)

- *Al-Tarikh al-Kanisi*, translated from Syriac by Saliba Shimun, (Duhok, Dar al-Mashriq al-Thaqafiya, 1433 AH / 2012 CE).

11. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, Ali bin al-Hussein bin Muhammad al-Qurashi (d. 356 AH / 966 CE)

- *Al-Diyarat*, edited by Khalil al-‘Attiya, (London, Riyad al-Rais for Publishing and Books, 1412 AH / 1991 CE).

12. Mari, bin Suleiman (d. 6th century AH / 12th century CE)

- *Akhbar Patriarchs of the See of the East from the Book of al-Majdal*, edited by Henry Gismondi, (Baghdad, al-Muthanna Library, 1384 AH / 1964 CE).

13. Ibn Matta, ‘Amro (d. 6th century AH / 12th century CE)

- *Akhbar Patriarchs of the See of the East from the Book of al-Majdal*, edited by Henry Gismondi, (Baghdad, al-Muthanna Library, 1384 AH / 1964 CE).

14. Anonymous Author (d. 6th century AH / 12th century CE)

- *Al-Tarikh al-Sa’r di*, edited by Addi Shir, 2nd edition (Sulaimaniyah, Kurdish Heritage Institute, 1431 AH / 2010 CE).

15. Anonymous Author (d. 5th century AH / 11th century CE)

- *Mukhtasar al-Akhbar al-Bay‘iya*, edited by Butrus Haddad, (Baghdad, Diwan Printing Company, 1421 AH / 2000 CE).

16. Al-Marji, Touma (d. 3rd century AH / 9th century CE)

- *Kitab al-Ru'asaa*, translation and edited by Alber Abouna, (Mosul, al-Matba'a al-'Asriya, 1386 AH / 1966 CE).

17. Al-Maqdisi al-Bashari, Abu Abdallah Muhammad bin Ahmad (d. around 380 AH / 900 CE)

- *Ahsan al-Taqaṣim fī Ma'rifat al-Aqalim*, 3rd edition, (Cairo, Madbouli Library, 1411 AH / 1991 CE).

18. Ibn al-Nadim, Abu al-Faraj Muhammad bin Abi Ya'qub Ishaq (d. 385 AH / 995 CE)

- *Al-Fahrasat*, edited by Ayman Fouad al-Sayed, 2nd edition (London, Al-Furqan Foundation, 1435 AH / 2014 CE).

19. Ya'qut al-Hamawi, Abu Abdallah Shihab al-Din Ya'qut bin Abdallah (d. 626 AH / 1229 CE)

- *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, 2nd edition (Beirut, Dar Sader, 1416 AH / 1995 CE).

20. Al-Yaqoubi, Ahmad bin Abi Ya'qub bin Ja'far bin Wahb bin Wadi' (d. 292 AH / 904 CE)

- *Al-Buldan*, (Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, 1422 AH / 2001 CE).

Second: Arabic References and Translated Foreign References

Abouna, Alber

1. *Diārāt al-'Irāq* (Baghdad, Dar Najm al-Mashriq, 1427 AH / 2006 CE).

Addi Shir

2. *The Lives of the Famous Martyrs of the East, Saints*, reviewed and edited by Alber Abouna, 2nd edition (Arbil, Kurdish Heritage Institute, 1430 AH / 2009 CE).

3. *The Famous Nisibis School* (Beirut, Catholic Printing House, 1322 AH / 1905 CE).

Anwar, Magda Muhammad

4. *Syriac Schools in the Ancient Near East* (Cairo, Itrak Library, 1430 AH / 2009 CE).

Babo Ishaq, Raphael

5. *Schools in Iraq Before Islam* (London, Dar al-Waraq, 1427 AH / 2006 CE).

Barṣum, Ignatius Ephrem I

6. *Syriac Terms in Arabic Lexicons*, reprinted by Yohanna Ibrahim (Aleppo, Syriac Studies Department, 1405 AH / 1984 CE).

Birnia, Hassan

7. *The History of Ancient Iran from the Beginning to the End of the Sassanid Period*, translated by Muhammad Nour al-Dīn Abd al-Mun‘im and al-Sebā‘i Muhammad al-Sebā‘i (Cairo, National Center for Translation, 1434 AH / 2013 CE).

Taysran, Eugene

8. *A Historical Summary of the Chaldean Church*, translated by Sulaymān al-Ṣāyigh (Mosul, Inkil Press, 1358 AH / 1939 CE).

Al-Jamīlī, Rashid

9. *The Translation Movement in the Islamic East* (Baghdad, Dar al-Ḥurīya Printing, 1406 AH / 1986 CE).

Habeeb, Youssef

10. *The Great Monastery and the Pure Church* (Mosul, Al-Matba‘a al-‘Asriyya, 1389 AH / 1969 CE).

Haddad, Botros

11. *Churches of Baghdad and Their Monasteries* (Beirut, Academic Center for Research, 1435 AH / 2015 CE).

12. *Christian Terminology in the Arab Heritage* (Baghdad, Dar Najm al-Mashriq, 1444 AH / 2023 CE).

Dufal, Robinson

13. *History of Syriac Literature*, translated by Louis Qassab (Baghdad, Publications of the Syriac Catholic Archdiocese, 1412 AH / 1992 CE).

Saako, Louis Raphael

14. *The Lives of the Patriarchs of the Church of the East*, 2nd edition (Amman, al-Adīb Printing House, 1444 AH / 2023 CE).

Sheikho, Louis

15. *Ministers and Writers of Christianity in Islam*, edited by Camille Hachimi al-Yassou'ī (Beirut, al-Maktaba al-Būlīsīya, 1408 AH / 1987 CE).

Isa, Hanan Abd al-Mun'im Abd al-Ḥakam

16. *The Syriacs: Their Religious and Civilizational History* (Damascus, Dar Nur Ḥawran, 1445 AH / 2024 CE).

Fieyeh, Jean Maurice

17. *The Syriac Saints* (Beirut, German Institute of Oriental Studies, 1426 AH / 2005 CE).

Kraf, Kyyork

18. *The History of Christian Arabic Literature*, translated by Rony al-Jamīl, Habib Ibrāhīm, and Maher Nāthān (Beirut, al-Maktaba al-Būlīsīya, 1443 AH / 2022 CE).

Lokoz, Raymond

19. *The History of the Church of the East*, translated by Alber Abouna (Arbil, Publications of the Arbil Chaldean Diocese, 1442 AH / 2020 CE).

Makhoul, Moussa

20. *Syriac Civilization: A Universal Civilization* (Beirut, Bisan for Publishing and Distribution, 1430 AH / 2009 CE).

Malaki, Joseph Asmar

21. *The Syriac Pearls* (Homs, Al-Yamāma Press, 1423 AH / 2002 CE).

Nasrī, Butros

22. *Treasury of Minds in the Histories of Eastern and Western Syriacs* (Mosul, Dominican Fathers Press, 1323 AH / 1905 CE).

Nichol, Donald

23. *A Lexicon of Byzantine Biographies*, translated and annotated by Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, Egyptian General Book Organization, 1424 AH / 2003 CE).

Al-Yassou‘ī, Subḥī Ḥamwī

24. *A Lexicon of Christian Faith*, edited by Jean Corbon, 2nd edition (Beirut, Dar al-Mashriq in cooperation with the Middle East Council of Churches, 1418 AH / 1998 CE).

ⁱ **Esho 'Adnah al-Basri** (d. around the 3rd century AH / 9th century CE), *The Monasteries in the Kingdoms of the Persians and Arabs*, translated by **Boulos Shikho**, edited by **Al-Bair Abuna**, (Baghdad, no publisher, 1427 AH / 2006 CE), p. 182; **Rafael Babou Ishaq**, *Schools of Iraq Before Islam*, (London, Dar al-Waraq, 1427 AH / 2006 CE), p. 67.

ⁱ **Dufal, Robinson**, *History of Syriac Literature*, translated by **Louis Qassab**, (Baghdad, Publications of the Syriac Catholic Archdiocese, 1412 AH / 1992 CE), p. 21.

ⁱ The term is derived from the Greek word (Scholoc) and was adopted into the Aramaic and Syriac writings. It was used to refer to those who practiced teaching in a school or "escholani." (See: **Ibn al-Tayyib, Abu al-Faraj Abdullah al-Baghdadi** (d. 435 AH / 1043 CE), *The Jurisprudence of Christianity*, Eastern Christian Writers Series (Arabic Book), edited by **Honrbach & Speiss**, (Louvain, Catholic University of Louvain, 1376 AH / 1956 CE), vol. 161, v. 2, p. 159; **Haddad, Botros**, *Christian Terms in Arab Heritage*, (Baghdad, Dar Najm al-Mashriq, 1444 AH / 2023 CE), p. 9).

ⁱ The Syriac word originally means "teacher," but in the ecclesiastical context, it refers to the senior teacher or school director. (See: **Barsoom, Ignatius Ephrem I**, *Syriac Terms in Arabic Dictionaries*, reprinted by **Yuhanna Ibrahim**, (Aleppo, Department of Syriac Studies, 1405 AH / 1984 CE), p. 276; **Maleki, Joseph Asmar**, *Syriac Pearls*, (Homs, al-Yamama Printing, 1423 AH / 2002 CE), p. 57).

^v **Ibn al-Tayyib**, *The Jurisprudence of Christianity*, v. 2, pp. 19-165.

^v **Tayseran, Eugen**, *Historical Summary of the Chaldean Church*, translated by **Suleiman al-Saigh**, (Mosul, Inkel Press, 1358 AH / 1939 CE), pp. 155-159.

^v **Krav, Kyriak**, *History of Arabic Christian Literature*, translated by **Rony al-Jamil, Habib Ibrahim, and Maher Nathan**, (Beirut, Paulist Press, 1443 AH / 2022 CE), p. 137.

^v **Mar** is a Syriac term meaning "Lord." It is an honorific used in Syriac-speaking churches before the names of saints and bishops. The masculine form is "Mar," while the feminine form is "Mart," meaning "saint." (See: **Jesuit, Sobhi Hamwi**, *Dictionary of Christian Faith*, edited by **Jean Corbon**, 2nd edition (Beirut, Dar al-Mashreq in cooperation with the Middle East Council of Churches, 1418 AH / 1998 CE), p. 423; **Haddad, Botros**, *Christian Terms*, p. 81).

ⁱ **Saint Mari**, the Apostle of the East, is considered the founder of the Patriarchate of the East. He was a disciple of Saint Addai, sent to preach Christ in Mesopotamia. He preached in many regions, established churches and monasteries, and suffered in the effort to spread the Gospel in the Parthian-controlled cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, where he established the seat of the Patriarchate of the East. He was the first Catholicos of the Patriarchate of the East. (See: **Anonymous Author** (d. 5th century AH / 11th century CE), *Summary of Ecclesiastical News*, edited by **Botros Haddad**, (Baghdad, Al-Diwan Printing Company, 1421 AH / 2000 CE), p. 97; **Mari, Ibn Sulayman** (d. 6th century AH / 12th century CE), *Chronicles of the Patriarchs of the East from the Book of the Magdil*, edited by **Henry Jessmond**, (Baghdad, Al-Muthanna Library, 1384 AH / 1964 CE), p. 3).

^x **Mari**, *The Magdil*, p. 5; **Sleiba, Ibn Yohanna** (d. 8th century AH / 14th century CE), *The Books of the Mysteries or The Book of Histories*, Study and Edition by **Louis Sleiba**, (Jbeil, Dar and Library of Bibleon, 1433 AH / 2012 CE), p. 235.

^x It is a monastery founded by Saint Mari, and is sometimes known as the Monastery of Saint Mari the Silih. It was named the Monastery of Qani after the woman who donated the land for its construction. The Monastery of Qani

is located sixteen parasangs from Baghdad, on the eastern side, and is considered part of the regions of Nahrawan. (See: Al-Shabashiti, Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad (d. 38 AH / 998 CE), *The Monasteries*, edited by Korkis Awad, 3rd edition (Beirut, Dar al-Ra'id al-Arabi, 1406 AH / 1986 CE), p. 265; Abouna, Eliezer, *The Monasteries of Iraq*, (Baghdad, Dar Najm al-Mashriq, 1427 AH / 2006 CE), p. 340.)

^x Al-Shabashiti, *The Monasteries*, p. 300; Abouna, *The Monasteries of Iraq*, p. 340.

^x Ibn Matta, Amro, (d. 6th century AH / 12th century CE), *The News of the Patriarchs of the See of the East* from the *Book of Majdal*, edited by Henri Jismondi, (Baghdad, Al-Muthanna Library, 1384 AH / 1964 CE), p. 2; Sliba, *The Books of the Secrets*, p. 235.

^x Mari, *Majdal*, p. 130.

^x Ibn Matta, *Majdal*, p. 64; Sliba, *The Books of the Secrets*, p. 329.

^x He is the philosopher and logician Abu Bishr Matta ibn Yuhus al-Qannai, hailing from the Monastery of Qani in the area of Ctesiphon, and hence he was known as al-Qannai. He was born in 257 AH / 870 CE, and studied at the Nestorian School of Saint Mari in the Monastery of Qani in Ctesiphon, where he mastered the Syriac and Arabic languages. He continued to excel, residing in Baghdad, where he became the leader in logic of his time. Among his students was the Muslim philosopher Al-Farabi. (See: Ibn al-Nadim, Abu al-Faraj Muhammad ibn Abi Ya'qub Ishaq (d. 385 AH / 995 CE), *Al-Fihrist*, edited by Ayman Fawad al-Sayed, 2nd edition (London, Al-Furqan Foundation, 1435 AH / 2014 CE), vol. 2, p. 278; Al-Jumayli, Rashid, *The Translation Movement in the Islamic East*, (Baghdad, Dar al-Hurriyah for Printing, 1406 AH / 1986 CE), p. 315.)

^x Ibn al-Nadim, *Al-Fihrist*, vol. 2, p. 201; Ibn al-'Abri, Abu al-Faraj ibn Ahrun ibn Tuma al-Malti (d. 685 AH / 1286 CE), *The Ecclesiastical History*, translated by Sliba Shimun, (Dohuk, Dar al-Mashriq Cultural, 1433 AH / 2012 CE), p. 164.

^x He is Saint Jacob of the Lishomi, who hails from the episcopate of Lishom near Daquq in the district of Baqrmi. He was born in the first half of the 6th century CE, studied at the Great Monastery of Mount Izla in Nisibis, and later moved to the episcopate of Marj near Aqra. He established the Monastery of Beth Abbi (meaning "House of the Forests") and continued to lead it until his death, being buried in the Monastery of Beth Abbi. (See: Ishu 'Adnah, *The Monasteries in the Kingdoms of the Persians and Arabs*, pp. 137-138; Abouna, Eliezer, *The Monasteries of Iraq*, p. 201.)

^x Al-Marji, Thomas (d. 3rd century AH / 9th century CE), *The Book of the Patriarchs*, translated and edited by Eliezer Abouna, (Mosul, Al-Matba'a Al-Asriya, 1386 AH / 1966 CE), p. 55.

^x Same source, pp. 70-74.

^x Al-Marji, *The Book of the Patriarchs*, pp. 76-79; Ibn Matta, *Al-Majdal*, p. 57.

^x Sliba, *The Books of the Mysteries*, p. 334.

^x Mari, *Al-Majdal*, p. 77.

^x Haddad, *The Churches of Baghdad and Their Monasteries*, (Beirut, Academic Center for Research, 1435 AH / 2015 CE), p. 269.

^x Abu al-Faraj al-Asfahani, Al'ibn al-Husayn ibn Muhammad al-Qurashi (d. 356 AH / 966 CE), *Al-Diyarāt*, edited by Khalil al-'Attiyah, (London, Riyad al-Rayyes Publishing and Books, 1412 AH / 1991 CE), p. 59; Al-Shabashiti, *Al-Diyarāt*, p. 28.

-
- x Sliba, *The Books of the Mysteries*, p. 334. v i
- x Mari, *Al-Majdal*, pp. 75-76.^x v i i
- x Ibn Matta, *Al-Majdal*, p. 69. v i i i
- x Nasri, Boutros, *The Treasure of the Minds in the Histories of the Eastern and Western Syrians*, (Mosul, Printing Press of the Dominican Fathers, 1323 AH / 1905 CE), Vol. 1, p. 391.
- x Abuna, *Schools of Iraq before Islam*, p. 109. x
- x Saint Vithon was born a Zoroastrian during the Sassanid rule, then converted to Christianity and became a monk. He began preaching Christianity in the province of Hadiab and started destroying Zoroastrian fire temples, which angered the Sassanian king, Yazdegerd II (438-457 CE). He was arrested, tortured, and eventually executed in 449 CE, and was considered a martyr according to the tradition of the Nestorian Church. (See: Addi Shire, *Biography of the Most Famous Martyrs of the East, the Saints*, edited and revised by Eliezer Abouna, 2nd edition (Erbil, Kurdish Heritage Institute, 1430 AH / 2009 CE), Vol. 2, p. 350; Vieh, Jean Maurice, *The Syriac Saints*, (Beirut, German Institute for Oriental Research, 1426 AH / 2005 CE), p. 210.)
- x Al-Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir ibn Yazid ibn Kathir ibn Ghalib al-Amili (d. 310 AH / 923 CE), *History of the Apostles and Kings*, edited by Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, 2nd edition (Beirut, Dar al-Turath, 1387 AH / 1967 CE), Vol. 7, pp. 617-618.
- x It is a river branching from the Euphrates, flowing towards Baghdad, named as such because it 'cut off' from the Euphrates. (See: Al-Bakri, Abu Ubayd Abdullah ibn Abdulaziz al-Andalusi (d. 487 AH / 1094 CE), *Lexicon of Unfamiliar Names of Towns and Places*, edited by Mustafa al-Saqa, (Beirut, Dar Alam al-Kutub, 1403 AH / 1982 CE), Vol. 3, p. 829; Yaqut al-Hamawi, Shihab al-Din Abu Abdullah Yaqut ibn Abdullah al-Rumi (d. 626 AH / 1229 CE), *Dictionary of Countries*, 2nd edition (Beirut, Dar Sader, 1416 AH / 1995 CE), Vol. 3, p. 399.)
- x Al-Yaqoubi, Ahmad ibn Abi Ya'qub ibn Ja'far ibn Wahb ibn Wadhih (d. 292 AH / 904 CE), *The Countries*, (Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiya, 1422 AH / 2001 CE), p. 16.
- x A neighborhood in Baghdad on the western side between the *Taq al-Harani* and *Bab al-Sha'ir*, and the connected bank of the Tigris, named "Al-Atiqah" because it existed before the founding of Baghdad. (See: Yaqut al-Hamawi, *Dictionary of Countries*, Vol. 4, p. 83.)
- x Abouna, *Monasteries of Iraq*, p. 387. x v i
- x Ibn Matta, *Al-Majdal*, p. 70; Sliba, *The Books of the Mysteries*, p. 336. v i
- x Mari, *Al-Majdal*, p. 96. x v i
- x Al-Shabashiti, *Al-Diyarāt*, p. 176. x i x
- x Abouna, *Monasteries of Iraq*, p. 174.
- x Habi, Yusuf, *The High Monastery and the Church of the Pure One*, (Mosul, Al-Matba'a Al-Asriya, 1389 AH / 1969 CE), p. 12.
- x Sako, Louis Raphael, *Lives of the Patriarchs of the Church of the East*, 2nd edition (Amman, Al-Adib Printing Press, 1444 AH / 2023 CE), p. 75.
- x Saint Gabriel al-Kashkiri, originally from Kashkar, was diligent in establishing monasteries, founding ones in Bajirma, Kashkar, and Mosul. He died in 122 AH / 739 CE. (See: Nasri, *The Treasure of the Minds in the Histories of the Eastern and Western Syrians*, Vol. 1, p. 271; Vieh, *The Syriac Saints*, p. 113.)

^x Eisho Adnah, *The Monasteries in the Kingdoms of the Persians and Arabs*, p. 173.

^x Emmanuel was born and raised in Mosul and worked as a teacher at the *School of Umm al-Fadhail* in the High Monastery in Mosul. He excelled in interpreting the Holy Scriptures and attained a distinguished position within the Nestorian Church. (See: Mari, *Al-Majdal*, p. 101; Al-Subawi, Abd Yeshua (d. 718 AH / 1318 CE), *Index of Authors*, translated and edited by Yusuf Habi, (Baghdad, Iraqi Scientific Academy, 1406 AH / 1986 CE), p. 117.)

^x Ibn al-Tayyib, *The Jurisprudence of Christianity*, Vol. 2, p. 168.

^x Al-Maqdisi al-Bashari, Abu¹ Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad (d. around 380 AH / around 900 CE), *The Best Divisions in Knowing the Regions*, 3rd edition (Cairo, Madbouly Library, 1411 AH / 1991 CE), p. 405; Yaqt al-Hamawi, *Dictionary of Countries*, Vol. 2, p. 170.

^x The Byzantine Emperor Zehō, who succeeded his son Emperor Leo II after his death, claimed the throne and began his reign in 474 CE. He worked to reconcile church disputes, and his rule ended in 491 CE. (See: Evagrius Scholasticus (d. 594 CE), *Ecclesiastical History*, translated by Paula Sawiris, (Cairo, Coptic Treasures Publishing Project, 1440 AH / 2019 CE), p. 194; Nicol, Donald, *Dictionary of Byzantine Biography*, translated and commented by Hassan Habashi, (Cairo, Egyptian General Book Organization, 1424 AH / 2003 CE), p. 125.)

^x Makhoul, Musa, *Syriac Civilization: A Universal Civilization*, (Beirut, Bisan Publishing and Distribution, 1430 AH / 2009 CE), p. 591; Locus, Raymond, *History of the Church of the East*, translated by Eliezer Abouna, (Erbil, Publications of the Erbil Chaldean Diocese, 1442 AH / 2020 CE), Vol. 1, p. 76.

¹ Khosrow I Anushirwan, son of Kavad I and descendant of Firuz, was one of the greatest kings of the Sassanian Empire. He ascended the throne after his father in 531 CE and, during his long reign, succeeded in overcoming the empire's enemies, especially the Byzantines. He was a patron of knowledge and passed away in 579 CE. (See: Al-Dinawari, Abu Hanifa Ahmad ibn Dawud (d. 282 AH / 895 CE), *The Long History*, edited by Abdul Monem Amer, (Cairo, Dar Ihya' al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1380 AH / 1960 CE), p. 67; Al-Tabari, *History of the Apostles and Kings*, Vol. 2, p. 98; Birnia, Hassan, *The History of Ancient Iran from the Beginning to the End of the Sassanian Period*, translated by Muhammad Nour al-Din Abdel Monem and Al-Sebai Muhammad al-Sebai, (Cairo, National Center for Translation, 1434 AH / 2013 CE), p. 368.)

¹ Makhoul, Musa, *Syriac Civilization: A Universal Civilization*, p. 591; Issa, Hanan Abdul Monem Abdul Hakim, *The Syriacs: Their Religious and Civilizational History*, (Damascus, Dar Nour Horan, 1445 AH / 2024 CE), p. 150.

¹ Dufal, *History of Syriac Literature*, pp. 287-289.

¹ Addi Shir, *The Famous Nisibis School*¹, (Beirut, Catholic Press, 1322 AH / 1905 CE), pp. 6-11; Anwar, Magda Muhammad, *Syriac Schools in the Ancient Near East*, (Cairo, Itrak Library, 1430 AH / 2009 CE), pp. 115-148.

¹ Unknown Author, (d. 6th century AH / 12th century CE), *The History of Sayrdi*, edited by Addi Shir, 2nd edition (Sulaimaniyah, Kurdish Heritage Institute, 1431 AH / 2010 CE), Vol. 2, p. 152; Mari, *Al-Majdal*, p. 61.

¹ Ibn Matta, *Al-Majdal*, p. 55.

¹ Saliba, Ibn Yohanna, *The Books of Secrets*¹, p. 314.

¹ Al-Marji, *Book of the Leaders*, pp. 163-164; Mari, *Al-Majdal*, p. 71; Sheikho, Louis, *Ministers of Christianity and Their Writers in Islam*, edited by Camille Hachima Al-Yassou'i (Beirut, The Pauline Library, 1408 AH / 1987 CE), p. 164.

¹ Ibn Matta, *Al-Majdal*, p. 66; Saliba, *The Books of Secrets*, p. 331.