The Relationship of the Syriacs with the Islamic and Christian Communities in the Abbasid State until the End of the Third Century AH/Ninth Century CE

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Abstract

The social relations between the Syriacs and Muslims during the Abbasid era were intertwined and diverse, as the Syriacs lived side by side with Muslims and participated in various aspects of daily life. The Syriacs were part of the social fabric in major cities such as Baghdad, Mosul, Nisibis, and Gundeshapur, where they coexisted with Muslims in mixed neighborhoods. They worked in various professions, from trade and industry to translation and medicine, which kept them in constant contact with Muslims. Despite religious differences, the Syriacs engaged in markets and exchanged goods and services with their Muslim neighbors. The social relations between the Syriacs and Muslims in the Abbasid state were based on coexistence and continuous interaction, with some restrictions, but these did not prevent cultural and scientific exchange. The Syriacs contributed significantly to Islamic society and participated in its development, while also being influenced by Islamic culture, leading to a gradual integration between the two sides.

Keywords: Abbasid State, Syriacs, Social Relations, Arameans, Marriage, Visits.

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Introduction

The Syriacs are a group of Arameans who embraced Christianity and adopted one of the widespread Aramaic dialects, the dialect of the Emirate of Edessa (or "Urhoy" in Syriac), making it their official language. Edessa was the first kingdom to declare Christianity as its official religion. Subsequently, the Syriacs spread this dialect far and wide through Christian missionary activities.[1] As a result, they became the heirs of the Arameans, and the term "Syriac" came to be applied to the Arameans once the adopted dialect replaced their original language.

The Syriac-Aramaic dialect spread across Persia, India, the Arabian Peninsula, and regions known today as Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, as well as the corresponding areas on the Iranian coast, Palestine in the southwest, Mesopotamia in the east, and Turkey in the north.[2] In other words, Syriac was the language spoken by the majority of the people in the Middle East before the Islamic conquest and was the last spoken Semitic language before Arabic. The cradle of the Syriacs and the center of their flourishing was the same region where Aramaic had once served as an international language in ancient times. This historical context facilitated the Syriac dialect's ability to replace Aramaic and assume its former status.

The Syriac dialect—which had effectively become a distinct language—witnessed the rise and fall of numerous civilizations in the Middle East, including the Byzantine, Persian, Arab, Mongol, and finally the Turkish civilizations. Its presence is documented in the records and archives of these states. Among the traits inherited by Syriac from Aramaic was the diversity of dialects.[3] For instance, "Bar Bahlul" mentioned in his lexicon sixteen dialects of the Syriac language.[4] Scholars of Syriac literature have divided it into two branches, Eastern and Western, based on geographical location or the ecclesiastical division that split the Syriac Church into rival Eastern and Western groups.

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[1] Nöldeke, Theodor. The Semitic Languages; translated by Ramadan Abdel Tawab. 1st Edition. Cairo: Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya Library, 1963, p. 60.

[2] Syriac Liturgies: Center for Pastoral Studies and Research, Proceedings of the First Conference, Antelias, 1st Edition, 1994, Introduction, p. 15.

[3] Rubens Duval: La Littératures syriaque, librairie victor lecoffer, troisiéme édition, Paris, 1895, p. 7.

[4] Hassano Bar bahlule: Lexicon Syriacum, voces syriacas graecasque cum glossis syriacis ET arabicis, Complectens e pluribus codicibus edited ET notulis instruxit Rubens Duval, librairie Email bouillon, Paris, 1885, 1886, p. 10.

To provide a clear picture of the Syriacs during the early Abbasid era, it is essential to understand the developments that the Syriac peoples underwent from the emergence of Christianity, through the ecclesiastical schism, and then the Islamic conquests. Following this, we will briefly outline their status within the Umayyad state.

Section One: The Relationship of the Syriacs with Islamic Society

The study of social connections and ties between Muslims and Christians holds significant importance, as it sheds light on the nature of coexistence among the diverse elements and components of society within the Arab Islamic state. It also reveals how Muslim rulers and the general Muslim population interacted with Christians.

The Arabs interacted with the Syriacs in various aspects of life. The Syriacs worked as farmers on the vast lands and estates that the Arabs acquired in Syria and Iraq after the conquest. They mingled with the Arabs as craftsmen, merchants, and practitioners of various professions. They also lived together in neighboring houses and mixed with them during the movement of armies from one place to another. The Arabs imposed obligations on them towards the Arab armies, which they continued to fulfill until the Abbasid era, including the requirement to host Muslim soldiers in their homes. The Arabs' reliance on traveling by mounts often necessitated their stay in areas inhabited by Christians, where their hosts would take care of their animals and provide them with food. Monasteries offered travelers what they needed, and this was particularly well-known of the Monastery of John near Tikrit on the Euphrates River and the Monastery of Ba'arba to its north.[5] Additionally, postal routes passed through cities inhabited by Syriac Christians.

Despite the Arabs' condescending view of them, which made the term "Nabatean" a label associated with shame or disgrace—or as they were sometimes called, "Al-Lujj"—they integrated and eventually blended with the Arabs. There is no clearer evidence of the peaceful coexistence between the two groups than the connection between the establishment of some major Abbasid cities and the mention of Christians, Nabateans, or Aramaeans. Among these

[5] Al-Umari, Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Fadl Allah al-Qurashi al-'Adawi (d. 749 AH/1349 CE). Maslak al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar [The Paths of Sight in the Kingdoms of the Lands]; edited by Ibrahim Salih. First Edition. Abu Dhabi: The Cultural Complex, 2009, 1/278; al-Khazen (William). Al-Hadara al-'Abbasiyya [The Abbasid Civilization]. Second Edition. Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1992, p. 96.

cities was the capital itself, Baghdad, which was inhabited by monks.[6] Al-Mas'udi points to the Aramaic origin of the name Baghdad, derived from "Bayt Kaddad," meaning "house of sheep." Modern excavations have uncovered a name inscribed on a Babylonian clay tablet, referring to it by the Aramaic name "Bakdadu," meaning "house of the flock" or "pasture."[7]

The sources mention that some of the wise Christians alerted Al-Mansur to the excellence of its location. This advice came as a result of the Christians' experience and their knowledge of the advantages of various sites in their land. One of them informed him, saying, "If anyone fights you, the Tigris and Euphrates will serve as moats for your city." He also pointed out that supplies or reinforcements would reach it easily from all directions, and that the enemy could only approach via bridges. If these were cut off or destroyed, the enemy would not be able to reach it. Moreover, the location was centrally situated between Basra, Kufa, Wasit, Mosul, and the Sawad region, and was close to the desert, the sea, and the mountains. This greatly increased Al-Mansur's determination and eagerness to build it.[8]

Samarra was also the residence of a group of Jaramqa, who were Syriacs themselves. It is said that it was the site of eight monasteries or a famous monastery called Al-Tawawis.[9] It has even been suggested that the name Samarra itself has Aramaic or Christian origins. There is a view regarding the etymology of this name, stating, "Samarra is an Aramaic name, originally truncated like other Aramaic names in Iraq, such as Karbala, Akbara, Harura, Ba'aquba, and Tamra".[10] In the chronicle of Michael, it is mentioned that Al-Mu'tasim built the city of Shomra, located between Babylon and Assyria, and made it his capital. He left Baghdad and settled between two branches that split from the Tigris and irrigated

[6] Ibn al-Batriq, Sa'id al-Misri al-Nasrani (328 AH/940 CE). Al-Tarikh al-Majmu' 'ala al-Tahqiq WA al-Tasdiq [The Compiled History Based on Verification and Attestation]; edited by Louis Cheikho. First Edition. Beirut: Jesuit Fathers Press, 1909, p. 39.

[7] Al-Khazen. Al-Hadara al-'Abbasiyya, p. 96.

[8] Al-Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir ibn Yazid ibn Kathir ibn Ghalib (d. 310 AH/922 CE). Tarikh al-Rusul WA al-Muluk [The History of the Prophets and Kings]; edited by Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim. Fourth Edition [This edition has been collated with the printed edition of Brill Press in Leiden in 1879]. Beirut: Al-Alami Foundation, 1404 AH/1983 CE, 6/236.

[9] Yaqut al-Hamawi, Shihab al-Din Abu Abdullah Yaqut ibn Abdullah al-Rumi (d. 626 AH/1228 CE). Mu'jam al-Buldan [The Dictionary of Countries]. First Edition. Beirut: Dar Sader, 1375 AH/1955 CE, 2/519.

[10] Al-Khazen. Al-Hadara al-'Abbasiyya, p. 96.

the region of the Aramaeans.[11] To paint a clear picture of the social connections between Muslims and Syriacs, we will highlight several foundations of the social ties and relationships between Muslims and Syriacs in the Arab Islamic state.

First: Marriage

The Abbasid era witnessed significant diversity in the elements and components of society, which enjoyed strong social relationships. Although these relationships were occasionally marred by tensions, the general atmosphere was characterized by tolerance. Islam defined the relationship with the Ahl al-Dhimmah (protected people) through numerous texts in the Quran. Among the most prominent relationships permitted by Islam was marriage to Dhimmī women, as stated in the Quran: "This day [all] good foods have been made lawful, and the food of those who were given the Scripture is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them. And [lawful in marriage are] chaste women from among the believers and chaste women from among those who were given the Scripture before you..."[12] From this, we observe that the Quran permitted Muslim men to marry women of the Book (Jews and Christians).

As a result of the diversity within Islamic society during the Abbasid era, the marriage of Muslim men to Dhimmī women became widespread, in accordance with what Islamic law permitted, as mentioned in the Quran.

Intermarriage and the taking of concubines were among the most prominent manifestations of Islamic-Syriac integration. As Muslims settled in Syriac lands, they began to intermarry with the native inhabitants.[13] This practice continued throughout the Abbasid era. Syriac sources provide some of the most expressive accounts of the nature of the relationship between Muslims and Syriacs. For instance, the manuscript Al-Azmina (The Times) mentions Arab men, stating: "As for the men who married Syrian women, they bore them children with Syrian features, to the point that it became difficult to distinguish them from the children of the Aramaeans".[14] Additionally, Imam Al-Awza'i, in his letter regarding

[11] Mikhāʾīl al-Suryānī (1199 CE). Tarikh Mikhāʾīl al-Kabīr; prepared and introduced by Youhanna Ibrahim, translated by Saliba Shamoun. First Edition. Aleppo: Syriac Heritage, 1996, vol. 3, p. 56.

[12] The Quran, 5:5.

[13] Aqil ibn Abi Talib, the brother of Ali ibn Abi Talib, married a Nabataean woman from the family of Farzanda. She was the mother of Masqala ibn Raqba, who was one of the most eloquent orators during the era of Al-Hajjaj. She was Jarmaqaniyyah, meaning of Syriac origin. See: Ibn Qutaybah, Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Muslim al-Dinwari (d. 276 AH / 889 CE). Al-Ma’arif; edited and introduced by Tharwat Ukasha. Fourth Edition. Cairo: Dar al-Ma’arif, 1999, pp. 203-204.

[14] Dionysius of Tel Mahre, Patriarch Mar Dionysius (224 AH / 845 CE). Tarikh al-Azminah (The Chronicle of Dionysius of Tel Mahre); translated and introduced by Shadia Tawfiq Hafez,

Syriac women from Syria who were married by Arabs, stated: "Their women are our women; those who marry them are entitled to the same rights of division, waiting period, and divorce".[15] There is also evidence that Arabs took Nabataean women as concubines.[16] The result of marriages with Syriac women and others was the proliferation in Islamic lands of what were known as al-Yajīn or al-Muwalladūn (mixed-race individuals).[17] Imam Al-Askari, the father of the Shiite Mahdi, married one of these women. Some suggest that this connection underscores the link in Iraqi Shiite heritage between the Mahdi and the awaited Messiah, Jesus Christ (peace be upon him), through this lineage.[18]

The number of concubines in the palaces of the Abbasid rulers began to increase significantly during the reign of Al-Mahdi (158-169/774-785), and among them were those who wore crosses.[19] The palace of Al-Ma'mun was also filled with Christian concubines. The influence of these concubines grew to such an extent that they gained prominence, status, and favor among the Abbasid rulers, even becoming the mothers of some of them. For instance, Al-Hadi and Harun's mother was Al-Khayzuran, a Roman woman whom Al-Mahdi freed in 169 AH / 785 CE and then married.[20]

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reviewed by Al-Saba'i Muhammad Al-Saba'i. First Edition. Cairo: The National Center for Translation, 2008 CE, pp. 230-231.

[15] Ibn Zanjuwayh, Abu Ahmad Humaid ibn Makhlad ibn Qutaybah ibn Abdullah Al-Khurasani (251 AH / 865 CE). Al-Amwal; edited by Shaker Dhaif Fayyad. First Edition. Saudi Arabia: King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, 1406 AH - 1986 CE, vol. 1, p. 421.

[16] Ibn al-Rumi says:

"Fātarik al-ghāniyāti waʿmir dabāhā Bikhaliṭayni min Nabīṭin wa-Khūz."

See: Al-Nasir, Al-Mawsūʿah al-Shiʿriyyah, First Edition. "Dabāhā" means: to shape it or cover it, derived from "daba." See: Al-Saghani, Razi al-Din al-Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Haydar al-Adawi al-Amri al-Qurashi (650 AH / 1252 CE). Al-ʿAbāb al-Zākhir wa al-Lubāb al-Fākhir; edited by Muhammad Hasan. First Edition. Beirut: Al-Dar al-Arabiyyah lil-Mawsuʿat, 2011 CE, p. 143.

[17] One of the poets expressed this as follows: Al-Mubarrad narrated that Al-Rabashi recited to him:

"Awlād al-sarārī Kaththarū yā Rabba fīnā

Rabbi adkhilnī bilādan Lā arā fīhā hajīnā."

See: Al-Mubarrad, Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Mubarrad, Abu al-Abbas (d. 285 AH). Al-Kamil fi al-Lughah wa al-Adab; edited by Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim. Third Edition. Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1997 CE, vol. 2, p. 117.

[18] Al-Mubarrad, Al-Kamil fi al-Lughah wa al-Adab, p. 73.

[19] Al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk, vol. 4, p. 592.

[20] Al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Rusul WA al-Muluk, vol. 6, p. 356.

It appears that intermarriage between Muslims and Ahl al-Dhimmah (protected people) was quite rare, despite Islam permitting Muslim men to marry Dhimmī women. The reason for the scarcity of such marriages was not so much related to the Muslims as it was to the Ahl al-Dhimmah themselves, who often opposed such unions among their own communities.

Second: Exchange of Visits

In the Arab Islamic state, relationships of affection and harmony prevailed, bringing Muslims and Syriacs together. These social relationships took various forms, including the exchange of visits between the two groups. These visits were diverse, ranging from official ones, such as visits between Muslim rulers and Christian patriarchs or leaders, to private ones, involving scholars, poets, ordinary Muslims, and Christian scholars.

Among the official visits mentioned in the sources was the visit of Catholicos Timothy to Harun al-Rashid (170-193/786-809). The Catholicos referred to this visit in a letter attached to the church laws approved at the council of 174/790. These visits occurred six times and were apparently aimed at obtaining the Caliph's approval for the reconstruction of some churches.[21]

Among the visits made by Catholicos Timothy to Harun al-Abbasi, it is mentioned that he was a guest of the Caliph for three days, during which he was warmly received and honored. The Caliph presented him with precious gifts and money.[22] Another significant official visit was that of Patriarch Dionysius to Baghdad during the reign of Al-Ma'mun. Upon his arrival in Baghdad, the Christians lodged a complaint against Bishop Lazarus, which led the Patriarch to issue an order of excommunication against the bishop. The bishop, in turn, appealed to Al-Ma'mun, but the Caliph, not wishing to upset the Patriarch as the leader of his people, welcomed his visit with obedience and offered him valuable gifts. A few days after his arrival, Al-Ma'mun granted him a private audience without the presence of bishops or attendants.[23]

Additionally, Al-Ma'mun (198-218/813-833) visited Catholicos Sabrisho as a guest.[24] Similarly, the King of Nubia visited Baghdad during the reign of Al-Mu'tasim Billah (218-227/833-842). However, it appears that Al-Mu'tasim initially

[21] Fiey (Jean Maurice). Ahwal al-Nasara fi Khilafat Bani al-Abbas; translated by Husni Reneh. First Edition. Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1990 CE, p. 89.

[22] Fiey, Ahwal al-Nasara fi Khilafat Bani al-Abbas, p. 98.

[23] Ishaq (Yousif Matti). "Al-Tarikh al-Zuqnini al-Mutahawil: Dionysius of Tel Mahre," Journal of the Iraqi Scientific Academy, vol. 8, special issue of the Syriac Language Department, Baghdad, 1984 CE, pp. 43-61.

[24] Fiey, Ahwal al-Nasara fi Khilafat Bani al-Abbas, p. 117.

hesitated to receive him upon learning of his young age, suspecting he might be an impostor, as the king was no older than thirty-three. He was initially accommodated in one of the Abbasid palaces in Baghdad. Once his legitimacy was confirmed, Al-Mu'tasim received him with the honor befitting a king. The Christians of Baghdad, particularly the Jacobites, to whose sect the king belonged, rejoiced. The king celebrated in a manner typical of Christian festivities, wearing a crown adorned with a golden cross and carrying a scepter in one hand and a cross in the other. He was flanked by Nubian youths carrying crosses, and an bishop riding a horse with a cross in his hand led the procession. Such a display was unprecedented for the Christians.[25] During this period, Patriarch Dionysius also visited Baghdad to meet Al-Mu'tasim and, during his visit, he met with the King of Nubia.[26]

As for private visits, among them was the visit of Abu Ja'far al-Mansur to some monks and church leaders, whom he honored and treated with great kindness.[27] The Caliph also stayed as a guest at a monastery during his journey to select a site for building his new capital, where he was warmly received.[28]

Another notable visit was that of Harun al-Abbasi to the city of Al-Hira,[29] where he stayed in the palace of Awn al-Jawhari, one of the wealthy Christians of Al-Hira. It appears that Awn al-Jawhari had a good relationship with the Abbasid rulers, but this relationship did not remain consistent due to a disagreement. It is said that Harun al-Abbasi gifted some of his concubines with jewelry, which Awn later purchased from them. When Harun sought to buy them back, Awn raised the price, which angered the Caliph, leading to Awn's imprisonment. He was only released after the intervention of the physician Gabriel ibn Bakhtishu and Theophilos of Edessa. Upon his release, Awn distributed alms in joy.[30]

Additionally, the Abbasid rulers often stayed at the homes of Syriac scholars in response to invitations extended to them. Among these was the invitation sent

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[25] Fiey, Ahwal al-Nasara fi Khilafat Bani al-Abbas, p. 129.

[26] Ishaq (Yousif Matti). "Al-Tarikh al-Zuqnini al-Mutahawil: Dionysius of Tel Mahre," Journal of the Iraqi Scientific Academy, vol. 8, special issue of the Syriac Language Department, Baghdad, 1984 CE, pp. 43-61.

[27] Ibn al-Muqaffa, Abu Bishr Sawirus (376 AH / 987 CE). Tarikh al-Batariqa; edited by Abdul Aziz Jamal al-Din. First Edition. Cairo: Maktabat Madbuli, 2006 CE, vol. 2, p. 69.

[28] Al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk, vol. 6, p. 235.

[29] Al-Hira: A city in Iraq located three miles from Kufa in a place called Najaf. It was the residence of Arab kings during the pre-Islamic era. See: Yaqut al-Hamawi, Muʿjam al-Buldan, vol. 2, p. 321.

[30] Fiey, Ahwal al-Nasara fi Khilafat Bani al-Abbas, p. 91.

by Jibril ibn Bakhtishu to Al-Mutawakkil. He prepared grand banquets and furnished his house with the finest furniture as a gesture of respect and honor for the Abbasid ruler.[31]

Third: Participation in Festivals and Occasions

Muslims and Christians were connected by good relations based on affection and camaraderie. They shared in each other's joys and sorrows, and there are numerous indications of the genuine love and goodwill that prevailed in Islamic society during the Abbasid era. There were also many festivals and occasions celebrated during this period, a reflection of the great diversity within society. Each religion had its own holidays and celebrations, but most members of society participated in them in an atmosphere of tolerance and freedom to practice rituals. Among the most important Christian festivals celebrated during the Abbasid era, and in which all elements of society participated, were those specifically dedicated to the Christians. The poet Abdullah ibn Abbas ibn Rabi'[32] composed a poem sung for Al-Wathiq, in which he mentioned their most important festivals, saying:

O night that knows no dawn,
And a promise that bears no success.
From a gazelle who passed by,
On the occasions of Christmas, Easter, and the Sacrifice.
And on Palm Sunday, for one who saw him,
While the ultimate appointment was Easter.
So, O God, prepare me against an oppressor,
Whom neither generosity nor stinginess could save.[33]

Al-Shabushti mentioned some of the Christian festivals celebrated in Baghdad, such as the Feast of Fasting (Lent), which was observed in several monasteries. It began on a Sunday and lasted for fifty days, culminating in the Feast of Resurrection, known as the Great Feast. The celebrations were held on the first Sunday at the Al-Asiya Monastery,[34] the second Sunday at the Al-Zarqiya

[31] Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, Muwaffaq al-Din Abu al-Abbas Ahmad ibn al-Qasim ibn Khalifa ibn Yunus (668 AH / 1270 CE). ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ fi Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ; edited by Muhammad Basil ʿUyun al-Sud. First Edition. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1998 CE, pp. 205-206.

[32] Abdullah ibn al-Abbas ibn al-Fadl ibn Rabiʿ: A skilled poet known for his craftsmanship in singing and had a good reputation for narration. He was among those close to Al-Wathiq. See: Al-Isfahani, Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Muhammad (d. 356 AH / 966 CE). Al-Aghani. Fourth Edition. Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafa, 1404 AH / 1983 CE, vol. 19, p. 146.

[33] Al-Isfahani, Al-Aghani, vol. 19, p. 163.

[34] Dayr al-ʿAsiyyah: One of the famous monasteries in Baghdad where festivals and celebrations were held. See: Yaqut al-Hamawi, Muʿjam al-Buldan, vol. 2, p. 509.

Monastery,[35] the third Sunday at the Al-Zandur Monastery,[36] and the fourth Sunday at the Dirmals Monastery.[37] Al-Shabushti described the last monastery during this festival:

> **Its festival is the finest; the Christians of Baghdad gather there, and no one who loves amusement and revelry fails to join them. People stay there for days**.[38]

Among their festivals was Christmas, in which Muslims participated alongside Christians, celebrating it in the palaces of the rulers during the time of Al-Mansur. The celebrations were attended by scholars from the Ahl al-Dhimmah, such as the physician Jirjis ibn Jibril.[39] Muslims also celebrated the Christian feast of breaking the fast (Easter), organizing drinking gatherings where they shared in the joy and festivities of the Christians. An example is the gathering hosted by Al-Abbas ibn Muhammad, attended by the Christian physician Jibril ibn Bakhtishu.[40]

Palm Sunday (Sha'aneen) is one of the most prominent festivals that witnessed significant participation from Muslims, and it was celebrated by rulers in their palaces. Harun al-Abbasi celebrated it and would present gifts to scholars from the Ahl al-Dhimmah. His annual gift to his Christian physician, Jibril ibn Bakhtishu, on Sha'aneen included clothes and gifts worth ten thousand dirhams.[41]

Al-Ma’mun also celebrated this festival, with Christian concubines joining in the celebrations while wearing crosses. Ibn Sadaqa described the scene:

> **I entered Al-Ma’mun’s presence on Sha'aneen, and before him were twenty Roman slave girls, adorned in Byzantine silk, with**

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[35] Dayr al-Zarqiyyah: One of the famous monasteries in Baghdad where festivals were held. See: Yaqut al-Hamawi, Muʿjam al-Buldan, vol. 2, p. 509.

[36] Dayr al-Zandur: A monastery in Baghdad located on the eastern side, known for its land filled with fruits, citrons, and grapes. See: Al-Himyari, Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul Munʿim (900 AH / 1495 CE). Al-Rawd al-Miʿtar fi Khabar al-Aqtar; edited by Ihsan Abbas. Second Edition. Beirut: Muʾassasat Nasser for Culture, 1980 CE, p. 254.

[37] Dayr Dirmalis: One of the monasteries in Baghdad located near Bab al-Shammasiyyah, close to Dar al-Muʿizziyyah. It is a pleasant monastery with many trees and orchards. See: Yaqut al-Hamawi, Muʿjam al-Buldan, vol. 2, p. 509.

[38] Awwad (Korkis). "Diyarat Baghdad al-Qadima (The Old Monasteries of Baghdad)." Journal of the Syriac Language Academy, vol. 2, special issue of the Syriac Language Department, Baghdad, 1976 CE, pp. 48-65.

[39] Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ fi Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ, p. 184.

[40] Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ fi Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ, p. 198.

[41] Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ fi Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ, p. 199.

golden crosses hanging from their necks, holding palm fronds and olive branches in their hands.[42]

Fourth: Visiting the Sick

The high status enjoyed by the Ahl al-Dhimmah (protected people) among the Abbasid rulers, particularly the scholars among them, led to their close association and inclusion in private gatherings. The affection between them was such that if one of them fell ill, the Abbasid ruler would grieve for them, send someone to check on their condition, provide care, and personally visit them. For instance, when the Christian physician Jirjis ibn Bakhtishu fell ill, Al-Mansur would send servants daily to inquire about his health. When his condition worsened, Al-Mansur ordered that he be carried on a bed to the public courtyard so that he could personally check on him.[43]

It appears that the close relationship between the Abbasid rulers and the scholars of the Ahl al-Dhimmah was a common phenomenon, reflecting the honor and respect they were accorded for their contributions to the Islamic state during the Abbasid era. They played a significant role in the cultural and scientific advancement that characterized the palaces of the rulers at that time. This relationship was not limited to the academic sphere but also extended to social aspects, as strong social bonds developed between the scholars of the Ahl al-Dhimmah and the rulers. If one of them fell ill, the Abbasid ruler would inquire about their condition, visit them personally, and even care for them. For example, Al-Mu’tasim was so attached to his Christian physician, Salmawayh ibn Banan, that he would address him as "O my father." When Salmawayh fell ill, Al-Mu’tasim visited him, wept at his bedside, and ordered his son to visit him as well. When Salmawayh passed away, Al-Mu’tasim grieved deeply, refrained from eating, and ordered that his funeral be brought to his residence. He also commanded that prayers be offered for him with candles and incense, in accordance with Christian customs.[44]

When the physician Bakhtishu fell ill, Al-Mutawakkil ordered his son and heir apparent, Al-Mu’tazz, to visit him and check on his health. Accompanying him were Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Tahir[45] and Wasif al-Turki.[46] Al-Mutawakkil

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[42] Al-Isfahani, Al-Aghani, vol. 22, p. 417.

[43] Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ fi Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ, p. 185; Ibn al-ʿIbri, Mar Gregorius Yuhanna Abu al-Faraj (685 AH / 1286 CE). Tarikh al-Zaman; introduced by Jean Maurice Fiey. Translated from French to Arabic by Ishaq Armala. No edition specified. Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1991 CE, p. 124.

[44] Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ fi Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ, p. 234.

[45] Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Tahir: His grandfather, Mahan, converted to Islam at the hands of Ubaydullah ibn Talha al-Talhat al-Khuzaʿi, the governor of Sijistan, and thus the family was

also instructed his minister to document Bakhtishu's estates, declaring, "These are my estates and my property, for his place is like the place of our souls in our bodies".[47]

Al-Mutawakkil also took great care to visit his physician, Israel ibn Zakariya al-Tayfuri, when he heard of his deteriorating health. When Israel fainted, the Caliph placed his hand under his head to serve as a pillow.[48]

Fifth: Councils of Literature

One of the most prominent manifestations of integration during the early Abbasid era was the seminars and gatherings held in churches, monasteries, the palaces of caliphs and princes, and the homes of notables. The Syriacs were keen to attend these gatherings, and we find in Islamic heritage many names of Syriacs who participated in these councils, such as **Bakhtishu**, **Masawayh**, **Hunayn ibn Ishaq**, **Salmawayh**, and others. They even emulated the notables by hosting scientific councils in their own homes. For example, the council of Masawayh brought together all classes of literary figures, as well as physicians, philosophers, and theologians.[49]

These gatherings were a meeting point for different cultures, where mixed feelings—both positive and negative—emerged. At times, the Syriacs faced suspicion regarding their intentions. For instance, the views of the physicians Masawayh and Salmawayh—that the foulest carcass is that of a camel—led Al-Jahiz to speculate that their belief was influenced by their religious doctrine, as

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attributed to him and named al-Khuzaʿi. They were an ancient family linked to the early Persian princes and held significant influence wherever they aligned, as the caliphate would lean in their direction. He supported Al-Mustaʿin, tipping the scales in his favor. He died in the year 253 AH. See: Al-ʿUmari, Najm al-Din Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Alawi (d. 709 AH / 1309 CE). Al-Majdi fi Ansab al-Talibiyyin; translated by Ahmad al-Mahdawi al-Damaghani. First Edition. Qom: Sayyid al-Shuhada Printing Press, 1988 CE, p. 383.

[46] Wasif al-Turki: A prominent commander and leader during the reign of Al-Mutawakkil. He seized control of Al-Muʿtazz and appropriated wealth for himself. The Faraghina and Sharawaniya revolted against him, demanding their dues. He responded, "You have nothing with us but dust," prompting them to attack and kill him. See: Al-Safadi, Salah al-Din Khalil ibn Aybak (d. 764 AH / 1362 CE). Al-Wafi bi al-Wafayat; edited by Ahmad al-Arnaʾut and Turki Mustafa. First Edition. Beirut: The German Oriental Research Institute, 2008 CE, vol. 27, p. 259.

[47] Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ fi Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ, p. 207.

[48] Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ fi Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ, p. 225.

[49] Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ fi Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ, p. 247.

the Prophet (peace be upon him) is mentioned in their scriptures as the rider of the camel.[50]

In addition to the councils of science and literature, the Syriacs and Arabs shared professional camaraderie at both scientific and artistic levels. The adoption of Syriac scholars, such as **Hunayn ibn Ishaq** and **Thabit ibn Qurra**, by the sons of **Musa ibn Shakir** had a significant impact on the scientific community. Despite Al-Jahiz's well-known stance toward Christians, we find him interacting with Syriacs in various settings, such as when he dined with **Yuhanna ibn Masawayh** at the table of the minister Ismail ibn Bulbul.[51] As for the artistic sphere, the relationship between Barsuma the Musician and his fellow artists was cordial and amicable.[52]

Some Syriacs formed close friendships with Arabs. For instance, **Ishaq ibn Hunayn ibn Ishaq** was a close friend of **Ubayd Allah ibn al-Qasim**, and **Muhammad ibn Abi Ahmad al-Yazidi** was a friend of **Ali ibn al-Haytham Junqa**, the Nabatean scribe of Al-Ma'mun. Al-Yazidi recounted a story about this friendship: he was infatuated with a slave girl named Aliya, and when Al-Ma'mun heard of this, he summoned Muhammad and asked, "What is your story with Aliya?" Muhammad replied, "I have composed some verses about her. If the Commander of the Faithful permits, I will recite them." Al-Ma'mun said, "Go ahead," and Muhammad recited verses beginning with:

I complain to God of my love for the Aliyina,
And that through them I encounter bitterness.
Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, is enough for me,
For truly, I see my love for him as a religion.
And the love of a friend and my loyal companion, Abu Hasan,
I mean Ali, the peerless one of the Taghlib tribe.[53]

The renowned Abbasid poet Abu Nuwas wrote verses mentioning the physician Gabriel and his advice to him to abstain from excessive drinking. The caliph's palace often brought them together, and it appears from the verses that Abu Nuwas held affection for Gabriel, saying:

I asked my brother Abu Isa,
And Gabriel, to whom belongs the virtue,
I said, "Wine is killing me",
He replied, "Too much of it is deadly".
I said to him, "Then measure it",
He answered, and his word was decisive:

[50] Al-Jahiz, Abu Uthman Amr ibn Bahr (d. 255 AH / 869 CE). Rasaʾil al-Jahiz al-Kalamiyyah; introduced, organized, and annotated by Ali Abu Milhim. First Edition. Beirut: Dar al-Hilal, 1987 CE, vol. 1, p. 246.

[51] Al-Jahiz, Rasaʾil al-Jahiz al-Kalamiyyah, p. 35.

[52] Al-Isfahani, Al-Aghani, vol. 6, pp. 297–303; Al-Jahiz, Rasaʾil al-Jahiz al-Kalamiyyah, p. 39.

[53] Al-Isfahani, Al-Aghani, vol. 2, p. 235.

"I have found the nature of man
To be four, as the foundation.
So, four for four,
For every nature, there is an origin."[54]

On the opposing side, some disagreements between Christians and Muslims escalated to the point of resorting to the judiciary. For instance, **Bakhtishu ibn Jibril** and the Abbasid prince **Ibrahim ibn al-Mahdi** disputed over an estate. The judge, Ahmad ibn Abi Dawood, ruled in favor of Bakhtishu over Ibrahim, affirming the integrity of Islamic judiciary,[55] even when one of the disputants was a prince and the other a Dhimmi. This contradicts the claims of some skeptics[56] who argued that it was difficult, if not impossible, to enforce justice in cases involving a Muslim and a Dhimmi.

Moreover, Arab society, in general, was not entirely detached from Syriac affairs. Thousands of Muslims stood in solidarity with the Syriacs who demanded the appointment of **Dionysius al-Telmahri** and the removal of **Abiram** during the arbitration conducted by Abdullah ibn Tahir between the two parties.[57]

Section Two: The Relationship of the Syriacs with the Christian Community

3.2.2.1. The Syriacs and the Copts

The relationship between Syria and the Nile Valley was continuous and daily since the spread of Christianity during the era of the Apostles. It is no surprise, therefore, to find groups of Syriacs who settled in Egypt during the early centuries of Christianity. Similarly, Egyptians traveled to Syria and Palestine for religious and civil purposes. **Arianism** and **Nestorianism** were widespread in Egypt until **Jacobitism** prevailed over them. Likewise, **Melkite Christianity** in Alexandria was

[54] Ibn Butlan, Al-Mukhtar ibn al-Hasan ibn Butlan al-Tayyib (d. 460 AH / 1068 CE). Daʿwat al-Atibbaʾ ʿala Madhhab Kalila wa Dimna; edited and annotated by Bishara Zalzal. First Edition. Cairo: Al-Matbaʿah al-Khidiwiyyah, 1901 CE, p. 392; Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ fi Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ, pp. 200–201.

[55] Ibn Butlan, Daʿwat al-Atibbaʾ ʿala Madhhab Kalila wa Dimna, p. 203.

[56] Bat ye'or, The Dhimmi, Jews and Christians under Islam, with Prifacy by Jaques Ellul, Seventh Printing, 2005, p. 56.

[57] Mikhāʾīl al-Kabīr, Tārīkh Mikhāʾīl al-Kabīr, vol. 3, pp. 18, 19.

weakened after the Islamic conquest. After the Jacobites triumphed over their counterparts, the Nestorians and Melkites, Western Syriacs began flocking to Alexandria to draw from the rich resources of its libraries. Monasticism also attracted thousands of Syriac immigrants.[58]

Historians believe that a story woven from the imagination of Syriac monks served as a pretext for obtaining legal residency in Egypt. This is the story of "Mar Afram the Syrian," who came from Syria to Wadi al-Natrun to visit the Coptic monk Bishoy. The Syriacs followed in his footsteps and considered his location there a sacred site for themselves. The Syriac monasteries and churches that spread throughout Wadi al-Natrun and other regions of Egypt are the best evidence of the Syriac presence in Egypt. Additionally, the Jacobite Tikriti community spread widely in Egypt, engaging in trade and taking on the responsibility of managing monasteries, churches, and scholarly works in collaboration with their Syriac monk brethren.[59]

During the Abbasid era, we see that the two sees—the Jacobite Antiochian (al-Kursi al-Antaki al-Yaʿqubi) and the Alexandrian (al-Kursi al-Iskandari)—became united in both spirit and form, while separating from the Roman see. Their patriarchs corresponded with one another, especially upon their ascension to the patriarchal position, in affirmation of their agreement on the Jacobite doctrine. Consequently, since their separation from the Roman see, the Antiochian Syriac patriarchs began writing their declarations of faith and sending them to the Alexandrian patriarch for endorsement. These strong relations were initiated by Elijah, the Syriac patriarch, who sent a letter of unity to Pope Alexander II in the year 108/726.[60]

Nothing disrupted the harmony of these relations except for an incident that occurred early in the Abbasid era. At that time, Anba Michael, the Patriarch of Antioch, refused to elevate the name of Isaac, the Bishop of Harran, whom Caliph Al-Mansur had appointed as patriarch. After consulting with the church authorities, Anba Michael firmly decided that he would not legitimize what he had previously condemned—namely, allowing a bishop to become a patriarch or violating Orthodox integrity by accepting clerical ordination from the hands of secular authority. Anba Michael's stance was ultimately vindicated by the death of Isaac himself.[61]

During the reign of Caliph Al-Mahdi, after Yuhanna (John) ascended the Alexandrian See (al-Kursi al-Murqusi); he wrote a letter to George, the Patriarch

[58] Saka (Ishaq), Al-Suryan fi al-Qatr al-Misri; a historical study. First Edition. Beirut: Jesuit Press, 1925 CE, pp. 5–11.

[59] Shukri (Munir). Adyrat Wadi al-Natrun: Tarikhuha – ʿImaratuha – Anzimatuhu – Abaʾuha. Second Edition. Second Edition: Deir al-Suryan Press, 2008 CE, pp. 17, 58.

[60] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, Tarikh al-Batariqa, vol. 5, p. 212.

[61] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, op. cit., p. 193.

of Antioch, affirming his adherence to Orthodox doctrine in the year 160/776. Similarly, Anba Marcus wrote to Quriaqos (Cyriacus), the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch (176–202/793–817), for the same purpose. In his letter, Anba Marcus renounced the Council of Chalcedon and described the Nestorians as "the new Jews." When Quriaqos read the text of the letter to the Jacobite congregation, feelings of joy overwhelmed everyone. Meanwhile, the Jubayites—a group that had split from the Antiochian Church during the time of Qurbaqus—attempted to sow discord between the Western (Roman) and Coptic Churches. However, their attempts ended in utter failure.[62]

It is highly likely that the relationship between the two churches was deeply strengthened after Dionysius of Tel Mahre traveled to Egypt to obtain an order from Abdullah ibn Tahir to halt the persecution they were facing at the hands of his brother, Muhammad ibn Tahir, who had been targeting the destruction of churches in Mesopotamia (205–206/820–821). The extent of the welcome he received from the Egyptians was indescribable, to the point that the city guards had to disperse the crowds with sticks.[63] He later returned with Caliph Al-Ma'mun to assist in resolving the famous Bashmurian revolt, with the participation of Yusab, the Patriarch of Alexandria (217/832).[64]

The manifestations of unity and solidarity between the two churches were numerous. The Coptic language was commonly used in the monasteries of Mesopotamia, where it was recited in prayers and religious hymns alongside Aramaic, Greek, and Latin.[65] Additionally, both churches exchanged the consecration of their patriarchs as a token of their mutual affection. In the list of patriarchs of the Alexandrian See, four names were of Syriac origin, with their consecration periods ranging from the 6th to the 12th century CE. One of the Syriacs even ascended to the patriarchal throne during the reign of Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, the Fatimid caliph (365/975), who would invite him to his council, honor him, and hold him in such high esteem that it aroused the envy of the

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[62] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, Tarikh al-Batariqa, pp. 204, 209, 216; Mikhāʾīl al-Kabīr, Tārīkh Mikhāʾīl al-Kabīr, vol. 2, p. 445.

[63] The Anonymous Edessan. The Chronicle of the Anonymous Edessan; translated from Syriac into Arabic and annotated by Father Albert Abouna. First Edition. Baghdad: Shafiq Press, 1986 CE, p. 36.

[64] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, Tarikh al-Batariqa, p. 241; Mikhāʾīl al-Kabīr, Tārīkh Mikhāʾīl al-Kabīr, vol. 3, p. 25; Ibn al-Rahib, Tarikh Ibn al-Rahib, p. 129.

[65] Abu Ishaq (Raphael). Tarikh Nasara al-ʿIraq min Intishar al-Nasraniyyah fi al-Aqtar al-ʿArabiyyah ILA Ayyamina. First Edition. Baghdad: Al-Mansour Press, 1948 CE, p. 16.

Jewish leader.[66] In the list of patriarchs of Antioch, two were of Coptic origin: Paul II (550–578) and Theodore (649–667).

Additionally, the names of the two patriarchs are mentioned during the celebration of the Eucharist in both churches. The Coptic Church clergy recite the names of "Mar Barsoum" and "Mar Maruta," followed by "Mar Sawera of Antioch"[67] during four feasts throughout the year. The Copts of Alexandria also adopted from the Syriacs the Anaphora[68] of their liturgy, specifically the Mimr Mar Yaqub (Liturgy of St. James). Similarly, Syriac clergy translated into their own language the Coptic liturgies of Mark, Athanasius, Dionysius, and Timothy, the patriarchs of Alexandria. A clear indication of the unity between the two churches is that when Syriac patriarchs and bishops ordain a deacon or priest, they require him to pledge obedience and submission to both the Antiochian and Alexandrian patriarchs. Moreover, the Eucharistic offering (Qurban) among the Copts closely resembles that of the Syriacs.

In his letter to Anba Yuhanna (John), the 48th Patriarch of Alexandria, Mar Quriaqos (Cyriacus) (176–202/793–817), the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, reminded him of the unity of their predecessors, stating: "In the days of our forefathers, they were united in faith, truth, and love, and they commemorated the names of our fathers in the sanctuaries of the regions of Egypt".[69]

It is well known that the Syriac language significantly influenced Coptic rituals, as Syriac terms such as **Tubawī**, **Nīḥ**, **Mīmr**, and **Rashm** are clearly present in their prayers and rites. The spread of the Syriacs in Egypt, the establishment of numerous monasteries, and the migration of several families to the region were among the most prominent manifestations of unity and solidarity. Over time, they even adopted the language and customs of the Copts.[70] The shared disdain for the Nestorians by both the Coptic and Syriac Jacobites became evident when Caliph Al-Mu'tasim sent a Nestorian to Egypt to acquire columns and marble.[71]

Members of the Eastern Nestorian community frequently traveled to the Nile Valley and visited the wilderness of Upper Egypt, particularly because it housed the tomb of Nestorius, to whom the Nestorians trace their name. They also had a church dedicated to St. George there, along with two episcopal sees,

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[66] Ibn al-Rahib, Tarikh Ibn al-Rahib, p. 133.

[67] He was born in Suzopolis, in the region of Pisidia in Asia Minor, around 459 CE and exchanged letters with the popes of Alexandria to affirm their unity in faith. Tarrazi (Philippe de), ʿAṣr al-Suryan al-Dhahabi; introduced by Joseph Chabo. Third Edition. Aleppo: Al-ʿAʾila Library, 1991 CE, p. 12.

[68] It is a Greek term used for the Liturgy of the Faithful, which begins with the Creed and the Prayer of Reconciliation. De Razy, op. cit., p. 12.

[69] Saka, Al-Suryan fi al-Qatr al-Misri, pp. 22, 26, 27, 29.

[70] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, Tarikh al-Batariqa, vol. 1, p. 513.

[71] Saka, Al-Suryan fi al-Qatr al-Misri, p. 30.

until a separate diocese was established in the 11th century CE. However, the number of Nestorians in Egypt gradually declined, as some of them converted to Islam. Abu Salih the Armenian mentions in his history that a Nestorian individual monopolized lands endowed to Nestorian churches, leasing them to Muslims for negligible sums over extended periods.[72]

As for the Syriac Maronites and their relationship with Egypt, its features only became clear in the modern era, when they rose to prominence in Egypt as a distinguished community and as leaders in science, commerce, and literature.[73]

3.2.2.2 The Syriacs and the Armenians

The Syriacs played a significant role in the early centuries of Christianity in relation to the Armenians. The Armenians embraced Christianity through the efforts of the Syriacs from the cities of Edessa and Nisibis. The Armenian Church remained under the jurisdiction of the Syriac Metropolitanate of Caesarea in Cappadocia until the last quarter of the 5th century CE, when it gained independence and its bishop was elevated to the rank of Catholicos.[74] Additionally, the Armenian element played a role in spreading Jacobitism from its inception, as two Armenian individuals assisted Jacob Baradeus in his mission. The liturgical tradition used in Armenian churches during the first six centuries was the same as that of the Western Syriac tradition.[75]

The Armenians and Syriac Jacobites shared the same doctrinal stance, adhering to the Miaphysite (one nature) belief. However, several differences emerged over time, which the Syriacs later criticized, while the Armenians held firmly to them. The Armenians leaned closer to the teachings of Eutyches (460)[76] and later adopted the doctrine of the Phantasiasts, which claimed that Christ's body was inherently incapable of suffering (545). They maintained this belief for a considerable time. The Armenians also practiced certain customs that the Syriacs

[72] Abu Salih al-Armani, Tarikh al-Shaykh Abu Salih al-Armani: Tadhkar fihi Akhbar min Nawahi Misr wa-Iqtaʿiha; edited by B.T.A. Evetts. Second Edition. Germany: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, 1992 CE, p. 55.

[73] Saka, Al-Suryan fi al-Qatr al-Misri, p. 62.

[74] Saka, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 57.

[75] Al-Kaldani (Butrus Nasri). Dhakhirat al-Adhhan fi Tawarikh al-Mashariqah WA al-Maghariqah al-Suryan. First Edition. Mosul: Dominican Fathers Press, 1905 CE, vol. 1, p. 217.

[76] He was the abbot of a monastery in Constantinople and a defender of the Monophysite doctrine. Saka, op. cit., p. 34.

disapproved of, leading to frequent debates, disputes, and even occasional hostilities between the two communities, as recorded in Syriac historical accounts. The author of The Book of Times (Kitab al-Azmina) states, "The Armenians have always been cunning, living perpetually by deceit".[77]

The two churches were able to overcome those barriers and achieved unity in the year 108/726. During this union, the Syriacs offered the Eucharist, and the Armenians partook of it. Then, the Armenians offered the Eucharist, and the Syriacs partook of it. They documented this unity in a formal agreement, with the Syriac copy entrusted to the Armenians and the Armenian copy entrusted to the Syriacs.[78] The Armenians coexisted with the Syriacs in many regions within Syriac cities, such as Edessa and areas surrounding some famous monasteries.[79] The people of Armenia would flee to Syria during times of famine. In The Book of Times (Kitab al-Azmina), following a famine that struck Armenia, the author mentions:

> **They all left and filled the entire land—cities, monasteries, villages, and fields—and sold everything they owned to buy food to survive... We often saw them at gates, buildings, churches, and towers**.[80]

The Syriacs also built numerous churches and flourishing monasteries in Armenia, where they established several dioceses, such as those in "Sis," "Tartus," "Ayn Zarba," "Khlat," and "Adana." Bishops were consecrated in these dioceses, generation after generation, until the 13th century CE. The populations of the two regions developed profound social and cultural ties, with Armenia continuing to embrace the Syriacs to the extent that they predominantly populated the city of "Atana" or "Adana".

One of the notable influences of the Syriacs on the Armenians was the adoption of the Syriac script by the Armenians until "Mesrop Mashtots" invented the Armenian alphabet with the assistance of "Daniel the Syrian." The aforementioned "Mesrop" and "Isaac, the Catholicos of the Armenians," undertook the translation of the Holy Scriptures, as well as the commentaries of "Mar Afram" on the "Diatessaron" and other Syriac texts, into Armenian.[81] Armenia was under the care of the Syriacs, as evidenced by "Quriaqos," the Syriac Patriarch (176–202/793–817), sending "Nona," the Archdeacon of Nisibis, to

[77] Dionysius of Tel Mahre, Tarikh al-Azminah, pp. 243–244; Nasri al-Kaldani, Dhakhirat al-Adhhan fi Tawarikh al-Mashariqah wa al-Maghariqah al-Suryan, vol. 1, p. 222.

[78] Mikhāʾīl al-Kabīr, Tārīkh Mikhāʾīl al-Kabīr, vol. 2, p. 390.

[79] The Anonymous Edessan, The Chronicle of the Anonymous Edessan, p. 10; Saka, Al-Suryan fi al-Qatr al-Misri, vol. 1, p. 159.

[80] Dionysius of Tel Mahre, Tarikh al-Azminah, pp. 167, 168.

[81] Tarrazi, ʿAṣr al-Suryan al-Dhahabi, p. 15.

Armenia to expose the heresy of a Chalcedonian man known as "al-Fajal".[82] Additionally, the caliphs appointed Syriacs as governors over the region of Armenia, such as "Sinbat ibn Ashot," appointed by Caliph Harun al-Rashid, and "Zariq," appointed by Caliph Al-Ma'mun.

3.2.2,3. The Syrians and the Abyssinians:

The Syrians played a significant role in the Christianization of the Abyssinians, thanks to the efforts of Queen Theodora, a Syriac Monophysite from Manbij. She sent Syrian missionaries, led by the priest Julian, who spent two years converting the entire Abyssinian population, including the king of Abyssinia and his court officials.[83] However, Abyssinian accounts suggest that the Christianization of the Abyssinians dates back to the fourth century AD, attributed to the Syrian philosopher "Frumentius," who was appointed as a minister by the Abyssinian king and later ordained as the first bishop of Abyssinia by Athanasius, the Patriarch of Alexandria. This story is also mentioned as having taken place in India. It is worth noting that the ancients referred to both Yemen and Abyssinia as India, and the peoples of the black race were sometimes called Abyssinians and other times Indians. Michael the Syrian was aware of this, and after recounting the story, he commented that the India mentioned here refers to Inner India, while the Apostle Thomas preached in Outer India.[84]

The liturgical heritage used in the Abyssinian churches during the first six centuries was the same as the Western Syriac tradition. The Abyssinians still use the Anaphora of Mar Jacob of Serugh, in addition to numerous prayers they translated from Syriac and incorporated into their liturgies and rituals. Everything said about the influence of the Syriac rite on the Coptic rite applies equally to the Abyssinian rite, due to the Abyssinian Church's subordination to the Coptic Church. The Syriac and Abyssinian peoples were bound by the ties of a shared faith, and linguistic, geographical, and racial differences did not weaken the strength of these amicable relations. Mar Jacob Baradeus visited the Abyssinian Church in the fifth century AD, and in the ninth century AD, Moses bar Kepha

[82] Mikhā'īl al-Kabīr, Tārīkh Mikhā'īl al-Kabīr, vol. 2, p. 453.

[83] Tarrazi, ʿAṣr al-Suryan al-Dhahabi, p. 11.

[84] Mikhā'īl al-Kabīr, Tārīkh Mikhā'īl al-Kabīr, vol. 1, pp. 183, 184.

imposed on the Syriac Church the practice of mentioning the king of Ethiopia in its prayers.[85]

The Abyssinians also left traces of their presence among their Syriac brethren in Mount Lebanon, where they established monasteries such as the Monastery of Mar Musa the Abyssinian near Al-Bank in the Syrian Desert and Palmyra. Later, several monastic establishments were founded in their name. However, in the present era, these monasteries retain only the name, as all their members are Syriac in ethnicity and language, though they adhere to the monastery's regulations.[86]

One of the most notable instances of rapprochement during the Abbasid era, specifically during the reign of Caliph Al-Mu'tasim, was the visit of the Abyssinian prince Georgi to Baghdad. The Patriarch of the Jacobites, Dionysius of Tel Mahre, received him and they celebrated the Eucharist together. During this meeting, Dionysius administered the Eucharist to Georgi and his entourage, an event widely recounted in various Syriac and Arabic sources.[87]

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[85] Tarrazi, ʿAṣr al-Suryan al-Dhahabi, p. 14.

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[87] Michael the Great (Mikhāʾīl al-Kabīr), The Chronicle of Michael the Great (Tārīkh Mikhāʾīl al-Kabīr), vol. 3, p. 54; Ibn al-ʿIbri, Tarikh al-Zaman, pp. 30–31; The Anonymous Edessan, The Chronicle of the Anonymous Edessan, p. 48.

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