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The Sign in Syriac Arts the Levantine Arts as a Template

Lamee Najeeb Mousa¹, Dr. Tahreer Ali Hussein²

Abstract

The current research deals with understanding the importance of the sign in the Syriac artistic achievements in the Levant Including drawings that took a new form for expressing religion and a means of teaching in images and form. Its goal is to arouse spiritual emotions and stir latent emotions through the icon in light of the religious text that the painter turns into a sign A colorful visual achievement, He adopts it as a tool for communication between believers, the church, and God. Therefore, in this study, the researcher aims to analyses Syriac drawings in the Levant, which serve as significant symbols that convey deeper meanings. The researcher seeks to uncover the religious connotations of these symbols based on the Christian tradition, as well as explore the aesthetic representation found in their formal, color, and semantic structure. Therefore, the issue of the present investigation emerged by addressing the following inquiry: What are the indications found in the Levantine Syriac arts? How was it visually and cognitively expressed by the artist? The first chapter included the importance of research, the need for it, the goal of the research, and the identification and definition of terms. The second chapter included the theoretical framework Which contained two sections: The first section deals with the Syriac arts in the Levant the second topic dealt with the art of Syriac manuscripts and miniatures. The third chapter was concerned with research procedures, which included defining the research community Choosing a research sample of (3), Then the research tool, research methodology, and sample analysis. The fourth chapter included the research results Conclusions, recommendations and proposals.

Keywords: *the sign - Syriac arts - Levant arts.*

Chapter One

First: The Research Problem

Since ancient times, art and drawing in particular have been a form of social and religious activity for humans who dealt with nature, its phenomena and its components. Then he tried to encode it in abstract forms in a symbol-simulating form. Gradually, the process of transformation of signs over time passed through several stages according to each civilization and culture.

Therefore, the sign, in its graphic and symbolic form, contributed to stimulating communicative action between human groups. Considering that the sign is linked to the human mind and the fact that he is a producer and aware of it.

Thus, the arts—including the Syriac arts—use signals to convey aesthetic and communicative

¹ University of Basra / College of Fine Arts – Iraq
Email: pgs22788@uobasrah.edu.iq

² University of Basra / College of Fine Arts – Iraq
Email: dr.tahreer2020@gmail.com

purposes. Taking into account that a drawing is a structure built on a system of signals whose goal is freed material references It was changed into iconic, symbolic, and symbolic media in order to fulfil high goals. The Syriac drawings demonstrate how the Levant has been a hotbed of shapes and sign systems throughout history that convey exclusively religious purposes. When he distributed Bible verses, the Syriac painter was mindful of the form's structure. Its signals, structural connections, and the resulting semantic information and visual characteristics. These facts offered a tangible experience that influenced and enhanced the arts in general. Particularly Syriac drawings are very rich both aesthetically and in terms of plasticity. Inspired by the Bible, his official writings also activated the power of a religious discourse emphasizing heavenly religious principles via their operational procedures.as well as the moral and spiritual aspects of Christianity. The issue with the existing study is clear from the foregoing in the following ways:

revealing the symbols in the arts of Syria. How did the brand manage to capture the shape, expression, and style of the creative aesthetic?

Second: The Significance of Research and Its Imperative Nature

The importance of the research lies in the following: -

1. The study aims to clarify the process of identifying sign systems in Syriac illustrations. At the level of academic structure, its official products created a rich field where the capacity to regard official texts scholarly was crystallized.
2. The goal of the study is to provide a reading that fits within the recent body of research on visual art. It enables researchers to use a semiotic technique to follow the artistic influence of Syriac paintings in the holy text. This is due to the fact that these drawings combine to create an original visual element.

Third: Research Objective

The current research aims to:

(Discovering the signs in Syriac art in artistic works in the Levant and explaining their intellectual and aesthetic aspects).

Fourth: Limits of Research

Objective Limits: the scholar's study in the Syriac arts - the arts of the Levant as an example.

Spatial Borders: (The Levant).

Temporal boundaries: The current research is limited to studying Syriac arts from 586 AD to 1850 AD.

Fifth: Identify and Define Search Terms

1- Sign language: "And he taught him: he taught him: he marked him. He taught him a sign: he made it a sign for him that he knows... and the sign and the trace, the beacon... the sign... the sign and the sign, what is placed in the accusative one is guided by it, and it is called the sign (AS): It is the sign (+) to indicate positive numbers and the sign (-) to indicate negative numbers." ¹

The Word "Mark": "A consciousness of the present that supports, with relative confidence, a statement about anything else" is its definition. Not only that, but he can also recall things like an alarm clock or a mention of a fire, as shown by the memory game or association of

ideas. Alternatively, it is: an audible, outward action intended to convey a will. For example, (halt sign or signal, closing the signals column). Alternatively, it is a tangible object—a form or sound—that substitutes for something lacking or imperceptible and serves to either jog memory or facilitate integration with other connections.²

Practical Definition of the Mark

Effectiveness of art realized on the surface of the picture to convey a profound spiritual level and validate the relationship between beauty and its symbolic significance.

2- Syriacs: Syriac: (Noun)

Syriacs: "The language of Syria is the offspring of Christians" ³

Syriac: is a Semitic language that is still spoken in certain parts of Iraq and Syria. It is an Aramaic language.

Syriac: the term Syriac is the designation given by the Greeks to the Aramaic components who converted to Christianity once they came into touch with them in Syria.⁴

Syriacs: They are of Aramaic origin, and as years passed and conditions changed, the Syriac name coexisted with Aramaic. To provide this language to someone. The Syriac name superseded the Aramaic name upon the advent of Christianity. This is because the apostles who preached the Christian religion spoke the Syriac language. Anyone who accepted their teachings from the Arameans to become a Christian changed his old name (Aramaic) to (Syriac). ⁵.

Syriac art reaches back to the era of heathen Aramaic. After the Syriac Arameans converted from pagan to Christian beliefs, its forms and symbols became a Christian notion. The paintings and icons seen in old churches and monasteries across the East, particularly the Levant, testify to this as well. ⁶

The arrival of Christianity brought with it an awareness of the significance of these accomplishments.

I made an effort to confine and encircle it by using the teachings and ideas found in the Bible, as well as the Christian thinkers, clergy, and artists that collaborated with them. They made an effort to get rid of pagan ideals and incorporate these principles into their society. In addition, it should be disseminated among the people so that it might serve as a beacon that guides the people in the direction of Christianity. The narrative of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him), his suffering, and his quest for freedom, peace, and justice were depicted in enormous murals that were painted on churches and other places of worship⁷

Exquisite cathedrals were constructed by Christian rulers to honor the key moments in Jesus Christ's life (peace be upon him). A picture depicting the visit of the Magi from the East was painted on the front of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, Palestine. Appropriate paintings adorned the churches dedicated to the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the D

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A Palestinian icon from the ninth century AD depicts the ascension event in (Figure 2). The four angels bring Christ, who looks to be seated in the circle of cosmic splendour, symbolising the triumphant King. The Virgin appears before the apostles, her hands raised to heaven in the

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middle of the burning bush's flames. ¹⁰



Figure 1: Crucifixion Palestine.



Figure (2): Ascension, Palestine.

Whoever accomplished the mosaic on the church nave floor in Deir Mismar Rajab, Ajloun, Jordan, is the master of this particular work of art. It has a topic enclosed in an octagonal geometric form. A square geometric design with equal-sized circles connected with each other sits in the centre of a huge circle. Syriac script is used to write a foundation inscription in the centre of this exquisite ornamentation. Nine lines are written within a rhombus on a white backdrop using black cube, ¹¹ (Figure 3).

During the Umayyad era and the early Abbasid period, Jordanian churches maintained the custom of utilising mosaics.

The greatest examples of this may be seen in the churches of Umm al-Rasas, which are located east of Amman, the capital. These churches have unique designs, geometric frameworks, and

religious themes.¹²



Figure (3): Syriac Writings, Rajib Church.

The majority of the Syriac artwork was located in burial crypts, church basement crypts, and monasteries. The monks of the Syrian monasteries were the first to create the picture of the crucified man on the cross in the sixth century. The monasteries often contain little churches that function as an addition to the main edifice. Christians first opposed to his depiction for a long time because they associated the penalty of crucifixion with humiliation and dishonors, so they turned to symbols and signs in place of the picture.¹³

Found at the Monastery of Mar Musa Al-Habashi*, this drawing is among the most well-known examples of Syriac art. It was built during the first part of the sixth century AD. Even now, the old church in the monastery is intact. Four wooden columns support the ornate wooden dome that sits above the altar. The four Evangelists are shown in the church's painting on the dome's borders, with a Syriac passage from each Evangelist's Gospel placed next to them.¹⁴

One of the most important paintings of the monastery is the Judgment painting on the western wall, which represents Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) and the apostles above the apse. The Virgin Mary with the Church Fathers* in the apse, the four Evangelists above the columns (Figure 4)¹⁵. An incense burner dating back to the tenth century AD was also found in the monastery. Inscribed on it are stages of the plan of salvation, located in the British Museum¹⁶ (Figure 5).

There is also the Gospel of the Rusafa Church* The history is written in the Syriac language and is now preserved in the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate in the capital, Damascus¹⁷.



Figure (4): Mural Drawings of The Monastery of Mar Musa Al-Habashi.



Figure (5): Incense Burner, Tenth Century AD.

Ecclesiastical art embodied in the murals of monasteries in the Damascus countryside, such as the Monastery of Mar Musa al-Habashi, these religious themes of the saints were greatly embodied and reflected in the wooden icon¹⁸. Also, Dr. Afif Bahnasi observes: "Syrian church art is renowned for its use of dominating icons, or iconostasis. That is, the church's hierarchy, with Jesus Christ, Mary, and the disciples as its central figures."¹⁹

There were writings in Syriac on both the outside and inside walls of the churches. Instead, it became a component of Syriac urbanism's cultural and social manifestations along with the movement as a whole. Because of its connection to the weather, it has a religious identity. Moreover, having a unique cultural identity. As a result, "language is a system of signals that facilitates responding to the meanings of written text by acting as a means of communication with others."²⁰

After seeing the majority of the artwork made in Levantine churches and monasteries, the researcher

The round face's characteristics give the illustrations a cohesive aspect, and the artist approached the biblical text in a narrative fashion. and that the most of the characters were drew in a way that complemented one another. Within an assembly of regular rectangles, in a hierarchical fashion, and based on the concepts of symmetry and opposition. It is distinguished by a position facing the observer, devoid of any bending motion and conveying pleading. This is intended to provide a great lot of peace so that one may turn inward and spiritual.

The Second Topic: The Art of Syriac Manuscripts and Miniatures

The earliest early books, or "Codeex," are the archaeological manuscripts that progressively took the place of the first scrolls between the first and the fourth century AD.²¹ A detailed drawing that graces a page or many pages of a handwritten book is called a miniature. A miniature is: "a precise drawing that adorns a page or some pages of a manuscript book. A miniature is: "a precise drawing that adorns a page or some pages of a manuscript book it includes two similar presentations: the first: accuracy, and the second: embellishing the book with colors."²²

Simple decorations may be found in these volumes, and their significance is explained by the phrases that are written next to them. They are images that do not lack shorthand ornamentation, which in turn provide a framework for these drawings, giving the impression that they are a visual explanation for those who are illiterate.²³ The old texts were written in the Astrangeli script, a Syriac script. It's a lovely sentence that moves away from traditional writing²⁴

The British Treasury (Abb) is home to the earliest Syriac manuscript whose copy date has been preserved. It is dated to 411 AD and is designated 1215. There are now about forty manuscripts in worldwide public libraries that date back to AD 622. Syriac manuscripts are distinguished from other manuscripts by their exceptional feature. For instance, the earliest Greek text that has been copied dates to 835 AD. The earliest Hebrew manuscript that has survived dates to 895 AD. Paying attention to the intricacies of the manuscripts' identification and stressing them, "It demonstrates that Syriac copyists were more diligent than other copyists in recording manuscripts."²⁵

A Syrian manuscript titled "The Second Law" is seen in (Figure 6). The saints' names (Matthe, Murkes, and Lukaa) were inscribed within the painter's division of his manuscript, which resembled a table with three arcs. Its foundation consists of four columns that terminate in geometric pyramid bases with longitudinal bands strewn throughout. There are a certain amount of verses for every evangelist in each area. A fisherman is catching a fish, and there are other birds in various poses and a group of birds facing each other on each side of the table. * From a plant that yields lotus flowers and a rectangular basin of water, The meanings of each of the verses are represented by these symbols. With this composition, the artist alludes to the church's symbolism, which uses its columns and arches to symbolize various levels of the subject's spirituality. (Figure 7) depicts a manuscript inscribed in the East Syriac alphabet.

Specifically for the liturgical readings pertaining to the topic of the Feast of the Cross, and as a concluding prayer, the artwork prominently features the iconography of the Cross, occupying a significant portion of its area. The artist depicted the cross in a precise geometric form, adorned with overlapping coloured stripes, positioned on a pyramidal foundation, and enclosed inside a frame. Regarding (Figure 8), it depicts a document composed in the Astrangeli script. The top half of the workspace is occupied by a section that includes a biblical passage related to Christmas. The shepherds pay a visit to Christ, and the bottom portion is adorned with two horizontal strips of coloured ornamentation in the form of a little rectangle. The object is a large rectangular shape with symbolic representations of stars inside its boundaries. What was the indication that directed the three wise men to the location of Christ's birth.



Figure (6): The Second Law.

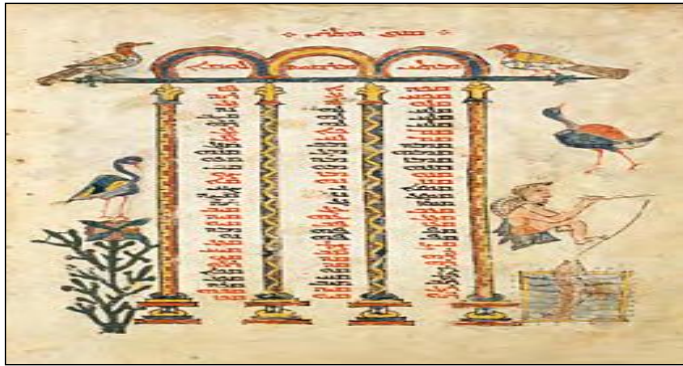


Figure (7) Liturgy Manuscript



Figure (8) Birth Manuscript.

The most famous Syriac manuscripts are the Rabula Illustrations * It is related to the Gospel of Masses, and it is preserved in the Medici Library in Florence, Italy. It is considered the oldest dated and preserved manuscript. It contains miniatures measuring 25 x 33. It is written on two columns, and includes 292 letters. It contains the four complete Gospels, and on its pages are pictures of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is considered one of the first models in the history of Christian photography²⁶. As per the concluding remarks of the text, he finished its completion in the year 586 AD in Syria. The text opens with 26 miniatures depicting a range of subjects, such as the life of Christ, Christ's crucifixion, a glorified Virgin, and selected events from the Acts of the Apostles,²⁷ (Figures 9, 10, 11).

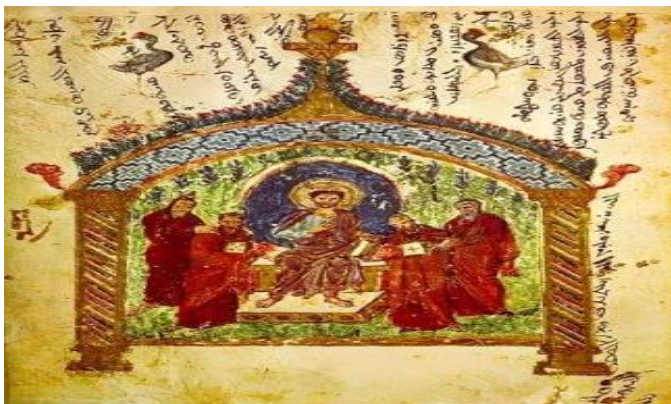


Figure (9): Crucifixion and Resurrection.



Figure (10): Saints Figure.



Figure (11): The Messengers.

Rabula's Illustrated Bible showcases a collection of vibrant miniatures that originate from two fundamental ideas of decoration: The first step is to somewhat compress the image. Depict the action using specified scenarios that include essential aspects. The embellishment fills a whole page and is strongly associated with plastic art. The busts and biblical scenes are placed side by side with ornamental shapes. The text has marginal annotations that provide a narrative of the history of salvation, spanning from the earliest times until the establishment of the church. The focus is on depicting scenes from the New Testament, namely picking events from the Gospel starting with the Annunciation of Zechariah and continuing until the Final Judgement.²⁸ The most significant instrument used by the Syriac painter in the Syriac texts, according to the scholar, is the sign. He uses art as a means of communication and interprets it in light of Christian doctrine. Similar to this, the illustrations on manuscripts and the signs and symbols that go with them aim to have a spiritual rather than a practical impact. Despite the majority of the writings being liturgical and religious, Conversely, the Syriac photographer aimed to portray spiritual principles. However, he also had an inclination to focus on the image's constituent parts and enhance their significance, resulting in the realisation of aesthetic ideals and plastic values.

Indicators Derived from the Conceptual Model

1. After the Syriac Aramaeans converted from paganism to Christianity, the pagan Aramaic symbols and forms were adapted to a Christian perspective.

2. The majority of Syriac artwork was kept in monasteries. Annexes to churches, burial crypts, church house crypts, and monasteries sometimes include miniature churches.
3. Alongside the churches and the overall Syriac architecture, writings in the language were included into the social and cultural manifestations of the region. Because of its connection to both a unique cultural identity and the weather, it has a religious identity.

Chapter Three

Search Procedures

First: The Research Community

because of the length of time and the dearth of creative works pertaining to Syriac arts in the Levant. The investigator examined illustrations of the accessible works from relevant sources (books, journals, periodicals, The researcher acquired thirty creative works in addition to the Internet, which benefited from it in a way that aligned with the goal of the present investigation.

Second: Research Sample

For the purpose of selecting models for the research sample, the researcher excluded works that were not documented and works that were similar in terms of idea and content. In addition to the long period of time within the limits of the current research, the researcher chose his research sample of (3) artistic paintings intentionally according to the following justifications:

It addresses the field of study on the sign in Syriac art. because the aesthetic qualities of this selection reflect the Syriac art's stylistic, cultural, and cognitive maturity.

Third: Search Tool

As instrumental sensors for analysing the research sample, the researcher relied on the indicators of the theoretical framework to accomplish the purpose of the study.

Fourth: Research Methodology

Using the content analysis method, the researcher used the descriptive approach to analyse the research sample.

Fifth: Analysis of the Research Sample



Model (1)

Work title: The Virgin and Child

Artist name: Rabula

Size: 28 x 44 cm

Material and material: inks on paper

Production date: 586 AD

Al-Aidiya: The British Museum

The artwork consists of two main figures: the Virgin Mary (peace be upon her) embracing the Christ Child (peace be upon her),

Standing on a cubic-shaped base, wearing long, thick clothes and a shawl on her shoulders, and the child in brown and blue clothes, and on their heads is a golden halo surrounded by red and blue lines.

Above the Virgin (peace be upon her) there is a dome with three layers supported by four columns with geometric bases and capitals. The first layer is in gold and decorated with drawings and a group of sacred icons. The second layer has a group of saints painted on it, the third layer is painted in blue, and above the dome is a lotus flower. From its base emerges a decorative formation in the form of two wings of two leaves from an almond tree, and on both sides is a peacock decorated with colours. The formal structure of the work has a realistic, symbolic system, as represented by the pose of the Virgin Mary (peace be upon her) carrying the child. The painter tried to simulate reality and show a great deal of fine detail. The flow of clothing on the body and expression of perspective. The drawing technique relied on colored inks on paper. Symbols and signs make up the creative work's semantic framework. The most notable of them is the three-colored halo around the Virgin Mary (peace be upon her): blue represents the heavenly throne, red represents the earthly monarchy, and gold represents eternity.

God has appointed an earthly figure, the Virgin, to be the mother of the heavenly Christ. Her presence and authority over the scene indicate her centrality and importance. She therefore embodied both celestial and earthly qualities, and the painter conveyed emotive dimensions that emphasised the significance of the Virgin Mary's (peace be upon her) lofty virtues. Motherhood, austerity, piety, joy, hope, patience, and exalting God Almighty are a few of them. Because it is celestial, Christ's aura (peace be upon him) is composed of blue and gold. The dome's symbolism is broken down into three levels. The first layer, represented by the gold colour, stands for eternity and the holy. The latter is coloured blue, which represents the sky and the holy throne, while the middle one is shaped like an arc and depicts religious figures to represent the martyrs, saints, and early church fathers. The lotus blossom is a representation of knowledge and insight into endless existence. The almond tree expresses the first awakening of spring and is a sign of the rebirth of nature. In Christianity, it is a symbol of essence and spirituality. In the Middle Ages, the amygdala symbolized the virginity of the Virgin Mary. The peacock in the Christian tradition symbolizes the solar wheel and the immortality of the soul. And to the resurrection in view of his feathers that are renewed in the spring and to the divine grace that descends upon the baptized person and creates him anew. Its colors symbolize the beauty of Paradise. The dome, the columns, and the markings, decorative elements, and geometric shapes on them. This is in order to represent the decoration on the principle of repetition through vertical movement towards the arches and to make the meditator feel a sense of completion and attraction towards the absolute.

By analyzing the structure of the work, the aesthetics of the icon emerge through the nature of the painter's style, who worked on the concept of "sovereignty." Which is represented by the sovereignty of the Virgin Mary (peace be upon her) on the demonstrative levels of the pictorial

surface. Therefore, the state of sublimation produced by the contemplative nature of the icon's scene has achieved an aesthetic blend between the ideal vision of the characters. And between the structural compositions of the domes, arches, and signs that hover in its space (the lotus flower, the two leaves of the almond tree, the peacock and the element of contrast it achieved) Which are organized in the structure of the icon as independent visual units that are reflected in the entirety of this discourse to reach the invisible.



Model (2)

Work name: Symbols of the Four Gospels

Artist name: unknown

Size: 35 x 40 cm

Material and material: colored inks on paper

Production date: 1200 AD, Syria

Al-Aidiya: The British Museum The artwork consists of a manuscript representing four main characters with their animal symbols, where each symbol represents the person being symbolized. The Apostle (John) occupies The upper right corner of the work has a halo surrounding his head, behind which two words are written in Syriac: (This is John) He was depicted without a beard, holding a piece of paper in his left hand and writing on it with his right a text from his Bible In front of him is the symbol of an eagle holding a writing feather in its beak, and facing him is the Apostle (Luke), and behind him is an inscription in Syriac(This is Luke) writing effectively while the bull, a representation of himself, emerges behind him. The Apostle (Mark) is shown in the bottom right corner of the piece, with the words, "This is Mark practising his writing activity," written behind him. The lion, which stands in for Mark, is next to him. The Apostle (Matthew) is facing him to the left of the piece, with the words "This is Matthew" inscribed behind him. An angel, a representation of Matthew, is standing next to him. A geometric form in the centre represents the relationship between Syriac literature and each of the four apostles. Seated on dark brown wooden chairs, each of the four Evangelists takes up a corner of the artwork area. Its interconnecting geometric designs in green and red give it a unique ornamental character. By combining a symbolic system that represents four human figures with complimentary parts with a mythical system that represents four entities with various looks, the formal structure of the creative work of the icon has two dual systems. Coloured inks on paper are the methods used to finish the piece. The Book of Revelation by Saint John, which describes a hopeless world and offers consolation to Christians amid hardships and persecutions, provides the formal language that makes up the creative work's semantic framework. Animal symbols are used in the Book of Revelation to symbolise the

four Gospel writers. A phrase or picture is thus considered symbolic when it conveys significance beyond its literal sense. The eagle represents the apostle John, the rebirth of youth, compassion for children, speed in flight, and the strength of vision that gazes at the sun. It also symbolises the ascension of Christ (peace be upon him) to heaven. These are the symbols of three of the four apostles. Because the beginning of Luke's Gospel takes place in a temple where bull sacrifices are performed, the bull represents Christ's suffering (peace be upon him). Since Mark's Gospel opens in the desert and the lion is an Old Testament emblem for David's lineage, Mark's story is symbolised by the lion. Lions were also used as decorations on a few Christian burials. The resurrection of Christ (peace be upon him) is represented by the lion. Because Matthew comes from the line of Christ (peace be upon him), he is shown as either a human or an angel. The angel serves God and is in his presence at all times. There is a dualism among angels: adoration and service. The angel is a famous Christian symbol that represents the incarnation of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him). The painter depicted this sign in his work. The central image is further shown as a signpost designating the four apostles. furthermore as a symbol of their relationship. These four animals stand for the idea that God is the ultimate authority over all living things and that all of creation is entrusted to him. And with the endurance of the bull, the bravery of the lion, the swiftness of the eagle, and the wisdom of man, all these animals are ever prepared to carry out His plan. The formal correlation between the characters' symbols and their aesthetics—all of whom are in a state of movement and writing activity—emerges via an analysis of the work's structure. Here, the psychological influence on the believer serves as a motivation to provide thoughtful, beautiful data. The form of the pointer in the centre represents the apostles when they are in a state of movement and rotation. The realistic setting and, sometimes, the importance of the scenic picture (the four apostles) contribute to the enhancement of the artistic dimension linked with this reference. Since imagination was a tool used to create this discourse, this vision differs from the common and the familiar when the imagined provided (the four symbols) is present at other times.



Model (3)

Work title: The Birth of Christ

Artist name: unknown

Size: 32 x 34 cm

Material and material: tempera on wood

Production date: 1227 AD

Al-A'idiya: Deir Yaqoub, Salah village, Syria

This icon embodies the theme (the birth of Christ), and consists of fifteen figures. The figure of the Virgin (peace be upon her) occupies the center of the work. On her right is the Christ Child (peace be upon him), wrapped in swaddling clothes, in a wooden manger with a donkey and an ox nearby. In the upper part is a semicircle that embraces a large star. And seven smaller stars, from which a ray of light shines on the child's head, and an inscription in the Syriac language: (Praises to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will among men) *, To the right of the Virgin (peace be upon her) stand three kings, and above them hover six angels, and to the left are five of them, and above both sides there is an introductory word in the Syriac language: (Angels), and one of the angels points with his index finger at one of the shepherds while he is playing the flute. And a phrase in the Syriac language: (Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy), and on the right hand of the shepherd is a word in Syriac: (the shepherds). Below is another scene representing the cleaning of the child in the washing font, carried out by a woman on each side, and on the right sits Saint Joseph (peace be upon him). On the left are two shepherds, and a sheep and two goats appear near them. The artist surrounded the icon with a frame of floral ornament without colors. The formal structure of the work in terms of the general form and the shapes present in it is a formal structure established within an expressive symbolic system. And the technique of executing work in tempera colors on a wooden surface. The semantic structure of the work in this work is represented by the semicircular shape on the roof of the icon as a large sign made up of layers symbolizing the divine essence, in the middle of which is a star glowing in red symbolizing the birth star. Surrounded by seven blue stars, the symbolism of the number seven in the Bible is the sign of the covenant between God and Man refers to the seventh day (Saturday) after creation, which lasted six days, and the number seven symbolizes the seven secrets of the Church. Three beams of rays emanate straight from the circular disk on the child's head, symbolizing in Christianity the mystery of the Trinity (The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) and to the divine virtues (faith, hope, love), and in three days of the death of Christ (peace be upon him) on the cross and the resurrection. The star represents the sky's receptivity to earthly issues. The lights emanate from it and change into a vertical line that is straight in the direction of the infant, signifying the sky's affirmation of the divinity of this newborn. It illuminates the infant, signifying that it was conceived in a heavenly body (celestial). The statues have haloes around them, signifying their holiness, and the kid has a halo around him with a red cross painted within, signifying his crucifixion and salvation. The black colour of the cave, which represents sin and nothingness, represents the darkness of the tomb where Christ (peace be upon him) was laid to rest and where he shed light on it by his salvation: (Christ comes to enlighten those who live in darkness and the shadow of death) **. The baby's swaddling garments represent the shrouds, and their white hue denotes Christ's (peace be upon him) triumph over death. It was his destiny to perish and rise. The altar-like manger represents Christ (peace be upon him), the living food offered as a sacrifice to sustain life on Earth. The bull is a representation of power, procreation, and selflessness. The donkey in the image represents patience and perseverance, yet it also has a different connotation. The donkey represents the nations bearing the weight of idolatry, while the bull represents the Jews. Regarding the three kings, they are all various ages and each one stands for one of the then-known globe regions: Europe, Asia, or Africa. They represent the three stages of life: young, mature, and elderly, and they bestow presents onto the kid. The white-bearded elderly man offered gold as a symbol (of Christ's kingdom). The adult with black skin presented frankincense as a symbol (of his suffering and death), while the young guy with a black beard offered incense as a sign (of his divinity). Angels announce the birth of a child, sing praises to God, and represent that they are always in His presence and serving Him. The infant is seen to be alive and present to take part in human matters when they are seen being cleansed by women and bathed in the baptismal font. One interpretation of the symbolism of the sheep is that it represents the souls that are waiting for the genuine shepherd. The sheep represents chastity,

innocence, humility, and the willingness to make sacrifices. Goats are used as a symbol of sinners on the Day of Resurrection in Christian art, and the colour black is used to denote the sinner (Bible, Matthew 25:32-46). The painter's attempt to activate the representational side of events brings out the subject's aesthetic qualities, which are accentuated by the painted subject. What enhanced the nature of its visual attraction was its reliance on narrative elements according to intense narrative scenes organised within the framework of the entire image. This was accomplished by adopting the feature of overlaying individuals and highlighting the emerging dialogue character between the groups that were distributed throughout the icon. Its structure is designed in such a way that it is in accord with the continuity of the motor rhythm of the sequence and the connections of fragmentary scenes within a general scene. The Syriac writings that are a hallmark of this project are a relationship that leads us to the substance of this speech and the majestic presence of high-ranking and important persons in the Holy Bible. This connection is shown by the fact that they are a signature of this project.

Chapter Four

First: Search Results

1. Based on the Findings of the Study Sample Analysis, the Investigator Arrived at Many Conclusions:
2. The Syriac artist purposefully designed his colour scheme so that the forms and figures would have a symbolic relationship to the tale. According to Christian tradition, colour has an impact on the story's events, as shown in models (1), (2), and (3).
3. The use of symbols by the Syriac artist that have a particular meaning in Christian theology, which successfully enhanced religious discourse with doctrinal overtones like symbolism: As in models (1), (2), and (3), the star, the halo, and the halo with a cross. Another important symbolic subject was birds and animals, such as the peacock, eagle, bull, lion, donkey, sheep, and goat seen in models (1), (2), and (3).
4. In painting his sacred icons, the Syriac artist relied on open construction to give an aesthetic feature By expressing creation and the relationships between what is heavenly and what is earthly, as in model (1), (2), (3).

Second: Conclusions

1. After Christians opposed to sketching the picture of Christ on the cross for a long time because they associated humiliation and dishonour with the penalty of crucifixion, Syriac artists avoided depicting the image of Christ on the cross.
2. The Syriac language was a system of signs used for interpersonal communication, making it easier to understand the meanings contained in written texts.
3. The images that were preserved in the manuscripts provide light on the art of Syriac culture and make its beauty abundantly obvious. After then, the Syrians placed a high level of respect on the profession of writing and copying, which was connected to the purpose of Syriac photography.

Third: Recommendations

The researcher suggests the following in light of the findings and recommendations made by the study:

1. Providing access to research on Syriac arts in the Levant as a component of the region's rich cultural legacy.

2. Interpreting foreign materials on Syriac art in particular and Eastern art in general.

Fourth: Proposals

The researcher suggests carrying out the following research in order to fulfil the criteria for the study:

1. The artistic qualities of Syriac paintings found in Levantine churches and monasteries.
2. The biblical tales' symbolic meanings in early Christian artwork.
3. A comparative analysis of East Syriac and Byzantine conceptions of beauty.

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¹⁰ Same source, p. 248.

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* Monastery of Mar Musa Al-Habashi in Syriac: It is an ancient Syriac monastery in Syria that belongs to the monastic community of the Monastery of Saint Musa al-Habashi according to the rite of the Syriac Catholic Church. The name of the monastery goes back to Saint Moses, who left Abyssinia and immigrated to Syria. It is located 80 km north of Damascus and 15 km from the city of Nabek. On the Syrian Qalamoun mountain range, 1320 meters above sea level, the writings on its walls indicate that the construction of the current church dates back to the year 1058 AD. From the website of the Ministry of Tourism in Syria. www.syriatourism.com

¹⁴ Tarazi, Philip D.: The Syriac Golden Age, Hindawi Foundation for Education and Culture, Cairo, Egypt, 2013, p. 56.

* Fathers: Since the first centuries, Christians have given their bishop the title (Father) to express that he is the one who gives birth to them for the life of faith. Based on the hadiths of the Bible (1 Corinthians 4: 14-16). In the fifth century, this title expanded to include priests.

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¹⁶ he Liturgical Journal, a quarterly pastoral magazine, issued by the Monastic Society of the Brothers of Jesus the Redeemer, Syriac Catholic Diocese of Mosul, First Year - Issue (3), Iraq, 2009.

* * Al-Rusaqa Church is located in the city of Al-Rusafa in Syria and was named after Saint Sir George. It contains a founding inscription on the mosaic stating that the building was built in 556 AD. From: Athanasiou, Mitri Haji: The Historical and Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Patriarchate of Antioch: Christian Syria in the First Millennium AD, Nubl Library, Part 1-5, Damascus, 1997, p. 244.

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²³ Tarazi, Philippe D.: The Syriac Golden Age, previous source, p. 99.

* Urfa or Edessa, officially known as Sanliurfa, is a historical city in southeastern Türkiye. After the spread of Christianity there, it became an important religious and cultural center for Syriac Christianity.

²⁴ Shatonnais , Françoise Breckel: Syriac Manuscripts (Within Our Roots), Oriental Studies and Research Center, Lebanon, 2005, p. 54.

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* The fish symbolizes Christ, and also symbolizes baptism, new converts, and the Christian believer. For more review: Ferguson, George: Christian Symbols and Their Meaning, Translated by: Dr. Yacoub Girgis Naguib, presented by: Dr. Zaher Riyad, Institute of Coptic Studies, Egypt, 1964, pp. 59-60.

* A Syriac painter from Syria. He is considered one of the oldest Syriac painters. He lived in the second half of the sixth century AD. The Illustrated Gospel is considered one of his most prominent Syriac artistic works.

²⁶ Saka, Bishop Ishaq: Syriac Faith and Civilization, Part Three, 2nd Edition, Media Press, Iraq, 2007, p. 128.

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* The Holy Bible, New Testament (Luke 2:14-15).

** The Holy Bible, New Testament (Luke 1:79).