

The Oriental Ancient Referentiality in Bassam Sabry's contemporary Icons

Salam Idwer Yaqoob Al-Loos¹

College of Fine Arts University of Baghdad/ Plastic
Arts/ Drawing/Iraq

Abstract

Bassam Sabry's religious icons represent a state of deviation in the structure of the traditional form of religious art, which has long been characterized as constant in molds that are difficult to change that since any change could clash with the taste of the local receiver which was shaped in formal contexts over a long time. Bassam Sabry reproduces an old local style in this iconic performance. Did this performance enable him to balance his expressive style and his desire to renew the discourse of the iconic figure? The research aims to identify the ancient oriental references in Bassam Sabry's contemporary icons and it is shown in a study of selected models of Bassam Sabry's icons within the research community that extended from 2005-2020 and created with different materials. The research includes two topics, the first: the historical concept of the eastern icon. And the second: Bassam Sabry's contemporary icons. As for the most important results of the research: Bassam Sabry mixed the ancient Syriac style with the influence of (Marco Evan Rubinic) style in his recent works, which are characterized by simplicity, freedom of expression and flexibility in performance. Bassam Sabry also found that the formal and performative references to the ancient Iraqi miniatures could constitute a state of cultural communication and an extension of the local identity of Christian religious art in Iraq.

Keywords

Bassam Sabry - the contemporary icon

To cite this article: Al-Loos S, I, Y. (2021). The Oriental Ancient Referentiality in Bassam Sabry's contemporary Icons. Review of International Geographical Education (RIGEO), 11(2), 389-398. Doi: 10.48047/rigeo.11.12.39


Submitted: 09-08-2020 • **Revised:** 11-09-2021 • **Accepted:** 15-10-2021

Introduction

Bassam Sabry's religious icons today represent a state of deviation in the structure of the traditional form of religious art, which has long been characterized as constant and fixed in molds that are difficult to bring about any change or transformation because it would clash with the taste of the recipient, which was molded in formal contexts over a long time, whose roots extend to the Middle Ages and is preserved by Religious institutions as a continuous existential act of broadcasting the discourse of historical communication. But Bassam Sabry reproduces an old local style in the iconic performance, perhaps representing a linking tie that he was looking for and it allows him to converge and find the common in the merge of three things: the expressive style and the desire to renew the discourse of the iconic form and an attempt to reproduce and revive the local identity of the Mesopotamian icon. Therefore, the research aims to identify the ancient oriental references to Bassam Sabry's contemporary icons, as an important study of one of the Iraqi formation patterns that contribute to the production of the mosaic of the cultural and social scene in contemporary Iraq. The research is represented in a study of selected models of Bassam Sabry's icons from 2005-2020 that are created with different materials.

The Historical Concept of the Eastern Icon

The ancient Eastern Christian icon that we know today represents an important link in a long series of successive transformations in the concept and form of the icon in general. It cannot represent a unique case in its existence, but rather in its objective, intellectual and functional specificity. The icon was shown as an art in order to help the simple and new members of the church, it is an art that did not come for the sake of adornment and manifestations of opulence and luxury. It's an art that carries the spirit of the religious inside it with the purpose of simplifying religion to those who can't read. And even for those who can read, the existence of audio and visual ways of communicating religion during prayer and preaching contributes to opening ways of communication capable of carrying the message from the sender and delivering it to the recipient. (1) This is the functional view of the icon in the Christian temple, as it is the place where the sacred attends, in which the physical form reincarnates the souls of the sanctified who are represented by the icon. As for the reason for the use of the word icon as a sign of sacred Christian religious painting, this is due to its use by (Plato) (2), where he used this word to denote that everything that is material is nothing but an image (icon) of the foundation or the reality that exists in the world of the Supreme ideals (3) Which is only comprehended by reason, so the early church borrowed this term to denote everything that has a relationship to the Supreme Absolute, which resides in the world of heavenly ideals. The first beginning of the Christian icon was symbols such as (the fish, the anchor, and the dove). (4) After that, it developed into the first original models of the icon, where we see the oldest Syriac manuscripts with their miniatures, known as the miniatures of the Syriac monk (Rabbula) from the fifth century (5), which contains images representing the most prominent events in the life of Christ. It contains the first two images of their kind in the world, the first (the scene of the crucifixion) and the second (the guiding Virgin Lady), or the guide as they describe her. (6) But they remain mere miniatures, i.e., illustrations of a manuscript within a volume, as their influence is limited to the recipients in relation to the icon, but their influence on ecclesiastical art was great. Here we must clarify the difference between the religious church art and the icon art (sacred), that is, the difference between religious art and sacred art. Berthelemy discussed Malraux's (7) views in differentiating between what is religious and what is sacred according to fixed criteria. The icon represents the sacred as it shows Christ and the disciples and the events of the divine measure and the biblical events. Which is subject to all the conditions of iconic painting in technique, style, form, subject matter and religious content. As for religious art, it is the one that represents the broadest and clearest reflection of that sacred origin. It is used in decorating the walls, ceilings and floors of the temples. And despite the fact that these executed figures are in fact inspired or semi-transferred from the iconographic figure, they did not bear the attribute of holiness like the first. The icon has gone through different historical stages in which political events and positions varied, as well as its technical characteristics, it can be divided into three stages (8):

	
<p>1. The Annunciation to Mary in the Book of Readings of the Syriac Bible, Northern Iraq, (1216-1220)</p>	<p>2. The earliest crucifixion in an illuminated manuscript, from the Rabbula Gospels (1216-20)</p>

a. The first stage: The history of this stage extends from the second century to the fourth century AD. This stage in terms of artistic production is somewhat poor due to the religious persecution that the first Christians were subjected to at the hands of pagan governments, which led to negative repercussions on religious art, where we find symbolic and realistic expression in abundance. (The grape vine, the Holy Grail, the Good Shepherd, the snake, the dove, the fish, the anchor) and here we find a great impact on life and reality that forced Christians not to focus too much on (the icon) as a religious or holy shroud, in addition to the lack of a private architectural space and The designation for the new worship is that Christians did not have special buildings for prayer until after the Council of Nicaea, where they used to meet in Jewish assemblies and pagan temples. As for the Christians of pagan origin were not in the best condition, as they were characterized by a strong hatred of paintings and sculptures under the influence of the ideas of the Pythagoreans and philosophical idealists (9).

		
<p>3. Nativity & 3 kings in Syriac Gospel Lectionary, N. Iraq, (1216-20) (Add.7170)</p>	<p>4. Christ and Saint Menas, 6th-century Coptic icon from Egypt (Louvre).</p>	<p>5. The Lamentation at The Tomb 1400 37 x 43.2 cm Crete Byzantine Museum-Greece</p>




The second stage: In this stage, Christianity developed its own artistic form and represented its official line later. Here we are witnessing icons of the saints along with the icons of Jesus and the Virgin Mary. Priestly influences prevailed here in the form of figures and poses, highlighting the

strength and harshness of the external line and the style of confrontation that came from the Church of Antioch and Alexandria, where (the art of depicting icons arose in Syria and Palestine, the cradle of the Christian religion... then spread to Asia to settle in Constantinople. In it, the monks had special concerns for the manufacture of icons, which, with the passage of time, had long traditions, and the church encouraged artists and promised the artist to be the mediator or ambassador between the Christian believer and the Lord in heaven.) (10) This art also inherited from us, and at this stage, the theological controversy over the legitimacy of creating these icons, which was the war of icons. The second phase extends from the fourth century until the end of the sixth century AD. The third stage: the Iconoclasm, which took place in two phases, from 712 - 787 AD, and from 813 - 843 AD, during which the movement of destroying and rejecting icons and even prohibiting their depiction by a number of the Byzantine emperors themselves in addition to their allies. In the year 726 AD Emperor Leo issued The third decree stipulates the prohibition of worshiping images and statues, followed by a terrifying destruction of all icons, and the conflict between the church and the state continued to oscillate between agitation and calmness until the year 843 AD (11). It took the Church a good period of time to triumph over this heresy and held several councils, the last of which was the Seventh Ecumenical Council, after which the iconographic art returned and a violent reaction appeared in the era of the Macedonian family (the golden age of Byzantine art and Eastern Christianity in general) (12). As for the makers of the icon or (Iconography), which is a designation made up of two syllables (Icon) and (Graphy) or (Graphos) as it is pronounced in Greek, which means writer or photographer (13), despite their important work, the names of the majority have been forgotten. Instead, the works are attributed and identified according to their schools, where we witnessed the presence of a number of religious artistic centers in the Orient, such as the School of Antioch, the School of Crete and the School of Macedonia ... Now the Constantinople School has a distinguished position in the Christian religion and in the eastern sects, due to its political weight as the first capital of a Christian state It is the Holy Eastern Roman Empire. In addition, it has become a symbol since it is the first merge of its kind in Christian history between the state and the church (14). In contrast to the Syriac and Coptic painters - despite the fact that their arts represented the first source of religious art - Byzantine artists adopted specific techniques and began to think that their artworks would carry precise theological meanings by setting conditions in the measurements and dimensions and the general body of the executed form and method of creation. Even in the creation of symbols that later became a companion to Christian art, such as the aura, for example. And soon these practices became artistic traditions that were transferred to other schools (15) Church history reminds us that the vast majority of painters were monks ((The Church asks him to prepare for years of prayer, fasting, reading, and spiritual effort, so that when he is ready, a special prayer is recited to him by the priest, that he is like prophets and apostles, he conveys to us the good news of salvation written in drawings and colors))(16) As mentioned above, the vast majority of painters are unknown. This tradition is self-denial in front of the icon, the icon is often a collective work, each of the artists draws certain parts in the icon and this is due to their understanding of the icon as an idea ((as the supervisors sought not to interfere with the human imagination at all during the creation process, as any interpretation in the rules of the icon(17) means a distortion of the archetype(18))) Which in turn represents the heavenly model (the parable), and thus the work becomes (heretical) in the sense that the church abhors, meaning that the current icons are nothing but an exact copy of the icon that was painted centuries ago. Thus, it preserves the artistic heritage and the church tradition, but this does not mean that repetition does not generate differences. Differences that may seem small, themselves accumulate over time to exacerbate into great differences that constitute artistic creativity. The drawing tools themselves, such as brushes and colors, were all consecrated by placing them on the altar (19), to be purified and divided, as for the board on which the icon would be drawn, It is made from good wood shaped as a board to be later stacked without nails, then treated with layers of plaster and glue. Colored oxides are used that mix with egg yolk and vinegar and dilute with holy water. After the drawing process is completed, the icon is covered with a layer of beeswax to preserve it from the factors of time and sometimes mix With the colors in the relics of the saints, after completing the drawing, it's presented to prayer, sprinkled with holy water and anointed with Myron(20) According to the church tradition, the first person to draw or print the icon in the Christian religion is Christ when he printed a picture of his face on the handkerchief of King (Abjar), the king of the state of Edessa, as well as the icon Which the bleeding woman depicted after her recovery on her house(21), as well as the icon called (the honorable handkerchief), on which the face of Christ was imprinted on the path of the crucifixion.(22) The artistic style in general tended towards flatness and neglect

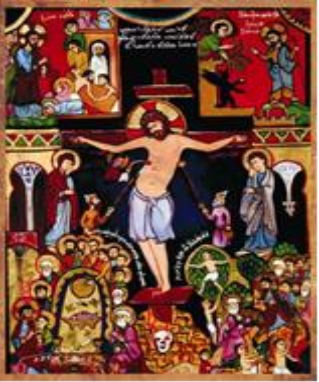

of perspective, and although the artist sometimes showed interest in how to draw nude shapes, he seeks to destroy the depth in them by bringing the points of distance closer, so that their shapes become closer to the isometric perspective (23) and can be in harmony with the rhythm of flatness followed in the work, the icon excludes the normal depiction of the human body, except in what is rare and neglects the anatomical reality of the body, which is often covered by dresses that do not wrap around the bodies, but rather veil them and turn into a complex geometric system in which decorations and inscriptions sometimes overlap. The clothes do not take the shape of the body that they cover, as they are very wide and loose. The posterior position of the head and the body is absent and does not appear as distinct, as the face maintains its presence in its position facing the recipients, as well as the lateral face is absent and does not appear except in a few exceptions, which are either for the intended distinction, or for secondary persons in the depicted event, as for the size and the law of proportion that rules reality is also neglected here at the expense of the law of importance and sovereignty. The important personalities in the work dominate with their distinctive size as main characters - such as Christ - in addition to the dominance of the human body in general over everything that exists around it, based on the idea of importance in existence. The artist also sought to create a balance within the work by distributing the formal vocabulary between the two sides of the work. As for the expression, it left human existence to the area of the eyes only, with almond-shaped shapes, which turn in a state of tension and anger and are half closed in a state of stillness. (The colors in the icon have many meanings...they do not exceed twenty colors in the painting, so dark blue indicates darkness, and light blue indicates the sky. It is the color of the outer garment of Christ and the color of the inner garment of the Virgin, while red symbolizes martyrdom and the blood of Christ, brown and green to earth and austerity and asceticism, orange to purity and white to wisdom, while gold symbolizes shining divinity, and if it is present as a background to the icon, it symbolizes infinite eternity. The white color is also associated with the idea of the invalidity of death and the entry into the new life.(24) As for the most important schools of iconographic painting, we find the Constantinople school, the Macedonian school, the Cretan school, and the Russian school that represents the Moscow, Novgorod and Dionysian school.

Bassam Sabry's contemporary icons

Bassam Sabry is a painter loyal to the expressive style (fig. 6), whether it is on the level of style or in the nature of his selection of subjects, and who searches for that expressive tendency that rejects and undermines any form of school and craft restrictions inherited and circulated, this artistic behavior is even shown in his choice of subjects, so his drawings are sometimes shocking to the traditional recipient, that critical sense of resentment on all the pain produced by contemporary civilization (Fig. 7). As for his recent series of religious works, which began about a decade ago, it documents a great turning point in the life of Bassam Sabry, as he moves from being influenced by the Byzantine iconographic form, to a painter of an Iraqi oriental icon, as Bassam's works after the last stability constitute a state of civilized communication or a case of the historical extension of the icons of the Syriac (Rabula) monk (Fig. 2) in terms of the style, the structural composition and the general perception of the scene, and the formal metaphor that we find today in some vocabulary is only to confirm that communication, or perhaps to confirm its spatial affiliation and temporal continuity, It is an intense search and excavation for a way to communicate with the past and with the heritage at the same time to preserve the ancient identity and to produce a local identity characterized by stability firmly rooted in the memory and has its uniqueness that helps to distinguish and characterize Iraqi ecclesiastical art (Mesopotamia) (for comparison see Figure 1-10) that is independent and distinct from other arts of neighboring civilizations, such as the Armenian, Coptic and Byzantine style in miniatures, and the latter is the dominant or dominant style of the idea of Eastern religious art.




		
<p>6. New World - Graduation Project - Oil on Canvas - 80x100cm – 1998- private collection</p>	<p>7. The Deal Before The Last Supper - Oil on Canvas -2002 - 80x100cm-private collection</p>	<p>8. Mar Adi and Mar Mari - Oil on Canvas - 2x3m - 2011- Chaldean Patriarchate Center - Ankawa</p>

Here, Bassam reproduces the spirituality of the past (Fig. 9)(24) and repeats that simple, direct method, suggesting the spontaneity of the innate performance, as if he wanted to break the barrier of competence, experience and eliteness presented in Byzantine icon art, as Bassam seeks to bring the spirit of his drawings (characterized by simplicity of style) closer to the simplicity of the recipients of the common believers, it is an invitation to (you) also - i.e. the recipient or the viewer - to be able to create your own icon, in which you put your opinion and vision in what is heavenly or what is contained under your religious belief and doctrine, in your own unique style and according to the standards of your abilities and art experience, no matter how simple it is, its goal is for us to smoothly understand the religious texts through the image of the icon, and how do we read the ritual icon? And how do we interact and explain the vision of its writer? - that is, who drew it - and thus Bassam throws in the arena of the local recipient (the difference), thus provoking a history of the collective memory (fig.12-13-14) which contain certain shapes that came from the west (both good and bad) and others contain naive modifications that have perhaps distorted over the decades the taste of ecclesiastical art at the popular level and even at the level of decision-makers in Iraq.




		
<p>9. Lent - Oil on Canvas on Wood - 70 x 100 cm – 2005. St. Jacob Church - Baghdad - destroyed in the civil war 2007</p>	<p>10. The Annunciation - Oil on Canvas, Mounted on Wood - 100x70cm -2005. St. Jacob Church - Baghdad - destroyed in the civil war 2007</p>	<p>11. The Dormition of Saint Joseph - Oil on Canvas - 80x200cm- .2016 St. Joseph church - Ankawa</p>

The forest of identity and privacy is in the chaos of selection of what is imported from religious arts of a popular level and eastern ones that are not studied - On the architectural, decorative and

iconographic level - it contradicts the pattern and establishes an iconic art, not a religious art, as the art scene is blessed with many important works and names, but in my estimation, most of what was presented represented ecclesiastical or religious art, with some attempts to copy and produce contemporary icons that meet the taste and demands of the donor group or whoever undertakes the assignment. As for Bassam Sabry's works, they announced the beginning of a new turn in art, which is not the end but rather Just the beginning, and there may be more other artists who believe in the idea of the Mesopotamian icon, which was re-established by Bassam Sabry and revived after a long hibernation.

		
<p>12. Birth 50×60cm - Acrylic – 2009. Shimon Al-Safa Institute - Ankawa</p>	<p>13. The Annunciation 50×60cm - Acrylic – 2009. Shimon Al-Safa Institute - Ankawa</p>	<p>14. Congratulations to the Virgin 50×60cm- Acrylic- 2009. Shimon Al-Safa Institute - Ankawa</p>

As for the paradoxes in Bassam's icons, it is how to combine the contradictions between the artist's revolutionary expressive style and the personality of the icon writer who is committed to old texts and formal templates. Here, Bassam surprises us in destroying chains and refusing the constant molds by trying to renew and merge the new with everything that is traditional. and it is worth mentioning here that his experience working in a mosaic workshop in Rome under the supervision of (Marco Ivan Rupnik) (25) had a significant and noticeable impact on the completion of his own artwork later (Fig. 11), we find it in his use of the four basic colors and their intellectual connotations, and the direction of the lines and shapes that are organized for him in a specific format with high symbolism (in a vertical way that represents God's relationship with man). This contradiction extends even to Bassam Sabry's calm personality, which contrasts with the revolution of colors and lines in his work full of movement and boldness in presenting topics and methods of his shocking presentation, indifferent to the stereotypical context of reception.

		
<p>15. The Visit- 30x40 cm - Acrylic– 2014-private collection</p>	<p>16. Bladence Rope- 30x40cm Acrylic-2014-private collection</p>	<p>17. The Prostration of the Magi 30 x 40 cm – Acrylic- 2014- private collection</p>

As for the idea of difference from the traditional constant, we can observe it in several aspects: In an attempt to treat the empty space of backgrounds, with geometric shapes, which are divided into rocky areas of varying shapes and colors containing chromatic, written, and other formal syllables from the Syriac heritage or innovative, as well as in the artist's attempt to simulate the spontaneity of the innate drawing - despite Bassam Sabry's high potential in the craftsmanship of realistic drawing - is in harmony with the inherited one on the one hand and the simple mentality of the recipient on the other hand and differentiated in terms of age and cultural level, as well as his attempt to break the ecclesiastical restrictions that necessitate (shape, size, appearance or concealment) The sacred figures within the drawing space as well as in placing them within fixed formal templates, while in Bassam we find them not only liberated, but integrated and intertwined in a network of lines, symbols and color spaces, in an unpretentious performance that releases freedom for the imagination, it is easy and abstaining, in which we feel two pleasures. The first: is generated While painting, it is the bliss that accompanies the process of iconic achievement, according to a spiritual and expressive style that does not recognize restrictions. As for the second: it is the possibility of entering and being carried away simply in moments of intellectual contemplation that results from liberating feelings and thoughts from the self - the product - and spilling them directly on the surface of the painting without restrictions or conditions or critical or even logical review. It is the celebration of the first performance (Fig. 15-16 -17), thus, Bassam drew the expressive energy - as a style and as a school - from the era of modernity to the area of iconoclasm and pulled the religious iconoclastic molding to modernity in formation. He broke and freed the chains of the icon to accept the freedom and spontaneity of expressive style, remembering the miniatures of the Syriac monk (Rabula) and the religious paintings of (Marc Chagall).(26)

Results

1. Bassam Sabry's expressive style of painting intersects with the constants of religious iconography, so he first resorted to religious themes in an expressive style (Fig. 6-7).
2. Through Bassam Sabry's copying of some old icons, he found the possibility of reviving some of the old methods and methods in contemporary production, which provide him with freedom in expressive style. (Fig. 1-2-3-9-10).
3. Bassam Sabry found that the formal and performative references to the ancient Iraqi miniatures could constitute a state of cultural communication and an extension of the local identity of Christian religious art in Iraq. (Fig. 8-9-10).
4. Bassam Sabry was inspired by the Syriac style (the monk Rabula and the miniatures of Deir al-Sheikh Matta) bypassing the Byzantine influence (fig. 8) and reviving this style because of its simplicity in its innate performance at times and unpretentiousness in most of it. (Fig. 9-10-12-13-14) But it came as a shock to the recipients.
5. Bassam Sabry was influenced by the slob (Marco Ivan Rubenick), who is characterized by freedom and austerity (Fig. 11).
6. Bassam Sabry combined the ancient Syriac style with the influence of (Marco Ivan Rubenick) style in a series of recent works characterized by simplicity, freedom of expression and flexibility in performance. (Fig. 11-15-16-17).

Endnotes

- 1) For more see: Khoury, Emma Gharib. Icon explanation and meditation. p: 12.
- (2) Plato: an ideal Greek philosopher (427 BC - 347 BC)
- (3) Fayyad, Michelle. Byzantine art. p: 2
- (4) Spring, Philip. icons. pp. (208, 189).
- (5) The oldest copy dates back to 586 AD from Dermar Yohanna, located between Antioch, Aleppo and northern Syria.
For more, see: Laibi, Shakir. Islamic Art. p. 147. Also: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbula_Gospels
Temple, Richard. Icons. P:29.
- (6) For more see: Terlemy, Jean. Aesthetics. pp. (595-600) where Berthelemy rejects Malraux's ideas of segregation and emphasizes integration and interdependence.
- (7) For more see: Runesman, Stephen. Byzantine civilization. Pg: (50-51).
- (8) For more, see: Al-Mukhlisi, Mansour. Fire and Spirit. p.: 14.

- (9) Ahmed, Mohamed. History of the Byzantine Civilization. p.: (218-219)
- (10) Runciman, Stephen. Byzantine civilization. p: 50
- (11) For more see: Hussey, J.M. The Byzantine World. p: 118
- (12) Athanasiou, Mitri Hagy and Samir Antoine Khayat. Damascus icons. p: 18
- (13) For more see: Hussey, C. NS . Byzantine world. p: 73
- (14) For more see: Al-Mukhlisi, Mansour. Narooruh. p: 46
- (15) Fayyad, Esperbadoun: The Lady Church, p. 8.
- (16) For more see: Khoury, Emma Gharib. The icon. p:13
- (17) Temple, Richard, Icon. p: 36 6.
- (18) The Holy Place in the Contemporary Church on which the sacraments are presented. For more see: Encyclopedia of the Bible. p: 323
- (19) Holy water and chrism: They are sacred liquids that are used during the performance of Christian worship rituals.
- (20) For more see: Syriac, Yusab. Coptic art. p. 31
- (21) For more see: The Bible, New Testament Luke (27:23)
- (22) For more see: Al-Shanhali, Ismail Ibrahim. perspective. p. 73
- (23) Athanasiou, Mitri Magi. Damascus icons. p: 17
- (24) The icon is in fact a composite reproduction of a number of Syriac icons from Deir al-Sheikh Matta in northern Iraq. For more see: Kassab, Lewis and Youssef El-Tuni. The art of photography when Syriac in medieval history. pp. 303-335. See also: Ettinghausen, Richard. The art of depiction among the Arabs. p: 94
- (25) Marko Ivan Rupnik (November 28, 1954) is a Slovenian artist, theologian and priest belonging to the Jesuits. For more see: https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marko_Ivan_Rupnik
- (26) Marc Chagall (1887-1985), Russian-French artist. For more see: Teshuva, Jacob Baal. Marc Chagall, taschen, koln, 2002. p: 149-266-267-268

Sources

The Bible.

- Ettinghausen, Richard. The art of depiction among the Arabs, Asian treasures, see: Issa Salman and Salim Taha Al-Tikriti, Ministry of Information, Directorate of General Culture, Al-Adeeb Al-Baghdadi Press, Baghdad, 1974 AD.
- Athanasiou, Mitri Hagy and Samir Antoine Khayat. Icons of Damascus - Encyclopedia of Syrian Icons, Volume 1, Tariq Center, Damascus, 2002.
- Ahmed, Mohammed. History of the Byzantine Civilization, 1st Edition, Dar Al-Takween for authoring, translation and publishing, Damascus, 2010.
- Berthelemy, Jean. Research in Aesthetics, see: Anwar Abdel Aziz, Dar Nahdet Misr for printing and publishing, Cairo, 1970.
- Runciman, Stephen. Byzantine Civilization.
- Fayyad, Asperion Michel. Byzantine Art - Icon, Alef Publications, Mansouriya, 2007.
- Fayyad, Asperion Michel. Byzantine Art - The Church of Our Lady, Alef Publications, Mansouriya, 2007.
- Fayyad, Esperion Michel. Byzantine Art - The Christian Temple, Alef Publications, Mansourieh, 2007.
- Kassab, Louis and Youssef El Touni. The Art of Painting at Syriacs in Medieval History, Mar Pauls House - Baghdida, Iraqi Kurdistan, Damascus, 2008.
- Khoury, Emma Gharib. The Icon Explained and Meditation, Al-Nour Publications, Beirut, 2000 AD.
- Al-Sheikhly, Ismail Ibrahim. Perspective, University of Mosul, Dar Al-Kutub for Printing and Publishing, 1999.
- Laibi, Shaker. Islamic Art and Arab Christianity, 1st Edition, Riad Al Rayes for Books and Publishing, Beirut, 2001 AD.
- Al-Mukhalisi, Mansour. Narour, an introduction to the history of Christian art, Al-Taif for printing, Baghdad, 2010.
- Hussey, J.M. The Byzantine World, see: Raafat Abdel Hamid, Ain for Human and Social Studies and Research, Cairo, 1997.

Yusab, the Syriac. Coptic Art, Volume 1, Association of Coptic Antiquities, Cairo, (D, T).
X X X . Encyclopedia of the Bible, a group of experts, Dar Manhal Al-Hayat, Mansouriya, 1993 AD.
Marko Ivan Rupnik: https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marko_Ivan_Rupnik
Rabbula Gospels: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbula_Gospels
Temple, Richard. Icons Divine Beauty, saqi books, London, 2004.
Teshuva, Jacob Baal. Marc Chagall, taschen, koln, 2002.