

John Wesley Theological College

THESES OF THE Ph. D. DISSERTATION

Mészár Tárík

Religious minorities living under Muslim rule: the legal status, marginalisation
and identity crises of Iraqi Christians

Wesley Doctoral School of Theology and Religious Education

Supervisor:

Prof. Em. Dr. Bukovics István

Budapest

2025

Table of contents

1. Formulation of the Scientific Problem	3
2. Hypotheses	4
3. Research Objectives	5
4. Research Methods	6
5. Structure of the Dissertation (Concise Description of the Chapters)	7
6. Summary Conclusions.....	11
7. New Scientific Results	13
8. Applicability of Research Results	14
9. List of Publications and Presentations Related to the Topic	15
10. Professional and Scientific CV	17
Bibliography	19

1. Formulation of the Scientific Problem

Within Hungarian academia, little research has been devoted to non-Muslim communities in the Arab world or to indigenous ethnic and religious groups in Islamic countries, especially those living as minorities. This research examines non-Muslim and non-Arab ethnic groups in Iraq, focusing in particular on the legal status, social and religious life, and identity of Christian communities (Assyrians, Syriacs, Chaldeans).

The topic is relevant due to the combination of several important factors. The ongoing demographic decline, for example, is linked to various crises that are still ongoing today. One of these is the issue of security threats, which have not disappeared even after the fall of the Islamic State. This is partly because the group has not disappeared but rather transformed, shifting from territorial control to targeted attacks. In addition, some militias continue to seize land, and in some cases, discrimination is evident at the state level, particularly in the Nineveh Plains. Another factor that makes this issue relevant is political marginalization; Christians are officially present in Iraqi politics (thanks to the quota system), but they are underrepresented in decision-making and resource allocation.

The thesis takes a multidisciplinary approach, representing a novel contribution. In our experience, previous writings on Iraqi Christians have mainly focused on religious or human rights issues, while largely neglecting questions of language and identity, or security and political aspects.

Our research has shown that in the years following the “defeat” of the Islamic State terrorist organization, there is still a lack of comprehensive analyses of the possibilities for rebuilding Christian communities, their legal status, the representation of their interests, and their role in Iraqi society. In order to provide some kind of prognosis, we also discuss the previous crises of other Iraqi minority groups (e.g., Jews) and their consequences, drawing a kind of parallel with the situation of the Christian minority.

In addition, the survival and role of the Aramaic language variants spoken by Christians in the Middle East (in this case, Syriac) in the Arab/Kurdish region is a rarely researched area.

Furthermore, in the course of developing the topics in the dissertation, we sought answers to a number of questions related to their legal status, identity, and marginal situation.

The legal status of Iraqi Christians:

1. When did the turning points in their fate occur?

2. How did relations between majority and minority groups develop in the history of Mesopotamia?

Questions related to their identity:

3. How do followers of different Christian denominations define themselves in different historical periods and today?
4. What divisions have occurred within the Assyrian Church of the East?
5. Why is the use of multiple names (Syriac, Assyrian, Chaldean, Chaldo-Assyrian, etc.) problematic in their case?
6. What exactly causes the division between followers of different Iraqi Christian churches?
7. How do Iraqi Christians relate to their native language and the language of the majority (Arabic)?

A marginalized community:

8. What problems do Iraqi Christians face today?
9. In which areas of life is their marginalization evident?
10. What conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of Iraq's social structure from a minority sociological perspective (relations between religious groups and ethnic relations)?

2. Hypotheses

We have five specific assumptions, most of which have been confirmed:

1. **We assumed that this minority group, which has decreased significantly in numbers, took a defining part of the cultural, religious, and social life of the region:** Mesopotamian Christians represent one of the oldest Christian traditions, with roots dating back to the 1st century.¹ Christianity appeared in what is now Iraq in the early apostolic period, centuries before the arrival of Muslim Arab tribes in the 7th century. In our opinion, Mesopotamian Christians were an important part of the social and cultural life of the region, as confirmed by their role in the development of early Christian theology, philosophy, and literature, as well as in the preservation and transmission of Greek and Syriac scientific traditions.²

¹ Filoni, 2015, 6; Petrosian, 2006, 113.

² Alotaibi, 2021, 100–101.

2. **We also assumed that Mesopotamian (Iraqi) Christians have been marginalized in various periods of the past and in the present, but have made great efforts to preserve their identity, which differs from that of Arab-Muslim society:** primarily, we wanted to demonstrate that their marginalised position has led to numerous obstacles in terms of both legal enforcement and social acceptance; secondly, we sought to prove that they have consistently shown serious resistance to assimilation efforts through historical examples.
3. **We assumed that certain Iraqi Christian groups, in addition to forming independent religious communities, also belong to ethnic groups that differ from the Arab ethnic group, although central politics rejects this idea:** it caused a serious dilemma as to whether to define the groups under study as ethnic or religious communities. To substantiate our claim, we draw on the work of other researchers, draw conclusions from our personal interviews conducted in Iraq, and explore related linguistic issues.
4. **We assumed that the different names used by the various Christian denominations in Iraq generate divisions, which in turn hinder their ability to assert themselves:** an excellent example of this is that their representation is not uniform, as organizations, alliances, and parties with different names have been established (e.g., the Assyrian Democratic Movement, Chaldean National Congress), which do not cover all indigenous Iraqi Christian groups. In our view, this also hinders their efforts to achieve autonomy.
5. **Furthermore, we hypothesized that the marginalization of the groups studied partly stems from their emphasis on victimhood, rather than from seeking solutions and strengthening their ability to assert their interests:** most examples of this can be found in the media they operate, where some of the articles, posts, and news reports emphasize the marginalization and persecution of their communities.

3. Research Objectives

During the process of our research, we set personal and professional goals as well:

1. Since my bachelor's thesis already discussed the situation of Christians in the Middle East, it was an inevitable goal to elaborate much deeper in the topic.
2. Another personal objective of mine was to raise my proficiency on the subject to the highest possible level.

3. Among our professional goals was to provide a comprehensive picture of the legal status through different historical periods of Mesopotamian Christians, particularly the political, social, and legal aspects that led to their situation.
4. Another professional objective was to examine the history of the Iraqi Christian Church with particular attention to the schisms that occurred within it and to explore the various factors that led to them.
5. Another important goal of the research was to present the current circumstances of middle-eastern Christians, which includes topics such as the majority-minority relations, the restrictions of rights, and the issues of emigration.

4. Research Methods

The research combines several methodological approaches in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the topic under investigation. Among the methods used, source and content analysis, interviews, and the systematic processing of secondary sources play a significant role.

The analysis of Arabic-language texts provides direct insight into the current challenges facing Iraqi Christians. The sources analyzed include contemporary case studies, proclamations by Christian religious dignitaries, and writings reflecting political and social discourse on Christianity in Iraq. The purpose of the source analysis is twofold: on the one hand, we aim to demonstrate that non-Muslim groups have been marginalized by state and social actors. On the other hand, these Arabic-language sources shed light on the specific problems faced by Christians living in Arab states in the Middle East today, for example in the area of law enforcement or in the context of religious discrimination and violent persecution. Arabic-language texts on the subject provide insight into the dynamics of the given period.

During the 20th and 21st centuries, there were several turning points in the history of Iraqi Christians. Among the most significant were the Sayfo genocide of 1914–1918, the Summayl massacre of 1933, the Kurdish-Arab clashes of 1961–1963, the Sorya massacre of 1969, the deportations and destruction of villages along the border in 1977–1978, and the emergence of modern terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq. An analysis of various sources clearly shows that attacks on Christians and other minorities have been repeated at regular intervals, the primary causes of which include domestic political instability and the lack of structure and order in the situation of different ethnic groups. Another important aspect of anti-minority pogroms is that they highlight the integration problems of the non-Muslim population, caused on the one hand by the unstable “identity” of the newly created modern Iraq,

and on the other hand by the emergence of Muslim-non-Muslim tensions. Because of the latter, it is not appropriate to blame Islam or Iraqi Arabs specifically, as such social processes have always been part of human civilization, since every “ethnocentric”³ group has its own world, which it often seeks to express at the expense of another group.

Another key methodological tool used in the research was in-depth interviews with Iraqi Christians. Our fundamental goal was to obtain essential information directly from members of the community about the issues that affect them and concern them most. The main topics revolved around the security situation, experiences of religious and social discrimination, and narratives and interpretations of identity within the community. The interviewees shared their personal experiences, views, and perceptions, which not only provided valuable data for the research but also supplemented and reinforced information from other sources. The methodological approach of the interviews is mainly qualitative, and its aim is to understand the challenges faced by the community, especially in the areas of security, religious freedom, and identity preservation, through the community’s own voice. Based on the results, patterns and trends emerge that help us to support our hypotheses.

The third pillar is the analysis of secondary sources, which includes the processing of both Hungarian and international literature. These sources make it possible to place the situation of the group under study in a broader historical and social context and help to compare and interpret the findings of the research.

Methodological diversity allows for a comprehensive and in-depth examination of the situation of this non-Muslim minority group. Arabic-language sources and interviews focus directly on the historical and contemporary experiences of the community, while the analysis of secondary sources ensures the scientific validity of the results. This complex approach helps the research to provide relevant and well-founded answers to the research questions posed.

5. Structure of the Dissertation (Concise Description of the Chapters)

The dissertation covers several major topics, each of which contains further subchapters. The discussion of identity issues formed **the first major section**. The fundamental questions are: who exactly are the Iraqi Christians, how did they appear in Mesopotamia, and what status do they have in the social life of the region? Some of the Christian groups in Mesopotamia can be considered indigenous to present-day northern Iraq, southeastern Turkey, northwestern Iran,

³ For more details, see: Csepeli, 2006, 117-134.

and northeastern Syria, as according to their traditions, the presence of Christianity in these areas dates back to the time of the apostles.⁴ There are several historical churches operating in the region, such as the Assyrian Church of the East, the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Chaldean Catholic Church, and the Syriac Catholic Church.

Among some of the Iraqi Christians the term Assyrian is an existing category of identity, but the Iraqi governments of the past century have never officially recognized it. According to the group's narrative who identify themselves as Assyrians, they are a community originating from former Mesopotamia that speaks Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic) - and existed long before Christianity appeared.⁵ Modern researchers generally fall into two groups: one of them believe that the cultural kinship between ancient and modern Assyrians can be proven, while the other deny this idea. The former group believes that the Assyrians have always been aware of their own, distinct identity from the Arabs, and they claim there are many linguistic and cultural examples to support this.⁶ However, there are also opponents, who do not see any proven continuity between ancient and modern Assyrians. According to them there is no conclusive evidence of a presumable relationship between Assyrians from different eras.⁷

With regard to linguistic relations, it has been established that the native language of Iraqi Christians is an eastern dialect of Aramaic, also known as Syriac. Aramaic has been spoken in what is now Iraq for about three thousand years, but its use has been steadily declining since the Arab-Muslim conquest in the 7th century.⁸

The next major unit examined the legal status of Christians in different periods, with a particular focus on the 20th and 21st centuries. In addressing this topic, we employed source and content analysis methodology. Within this framework, we examined secret internal reports, contemporary case descriptions, and trial transcripts in English and in the original Arabic. We examined the different periods of Mesopotamia in chronological order and explained that a large Christian community had already been established under the Sassanid rule in Mesopotamia, which is supported by several pieces of evidence.⁹ The Arab-Muslim conquerors conquered Mesopotamia in the 630s. Non-Muslim groups with revelations were granted protection in exchange for paying a poll tax.¹⁰ During the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258), non-

⁴ Petrosian, 2006, 113.

⁵ Donabed, 2015, 3.

⁶ Crone-Cook, 1977, 87.

⁷ Becker, 2008, 394–415.

⁸ Iványi, 2000, 1312; Khan, 2007, 98.

⁹ Etheredge, 2011, 72.

¹⁰ Kárpáti, 2009, 36; Nissen-Heine, 2009, 135.

Muslims could more easily assert themselves and attain quite high positions, and they also played an active role in the transmission of ancient culture.¹¹ In 1258, the Mongol armies led by Hülegü conquered Baghdad, but Christians continued to play an important role in the Mongol-led imperial administration for several decades.¹² In the 15th century, Timur Lenk and his armies persecuted the local population, and Christians were afflicted by epidemics and heavy taxes.¹³ From the middle of the 16th century onwards, the Ottomans showed relative tolerance towards minorities. The so-called millet system they introduced offered economic opportunities and guaranteed their internal autonomy.¹⁴ The westernization of Christians in the 19th century provoked the hostility of the majority society, which upset the delicate balance between denominations and ethnic groups.

In the 20th century, power structures changed frequently, which had a strong influence on the lives of non-Muslim communities. In the early 1940s, the Iraqi nationalist leadership led by Rašid ‘Ālī al-Gaylānī considered the country’s Christians to be allies of the British, who were subject to violations of their rights and harassment.¹⁵ In July 1958, ‘Abd al-Karīm Qāsim, in line with Iraqi nationalist ideas, accepted the public practice of Christian cultural and religious customs and abolished discriminatory policies against minorities. During this period, sectarian hostility receded into the background and social tensions were significantly reduced.¹⁶ However, the political direction that followed 1963 prevented less loyal groups from asserting themselves. Their primary target was citizens who did not think “properly,” regardless of their ethnic affiliation. The Ba‘ṭ Party-dominated governments were indifferent regarding the cultural differences of minorities and sought to assimilate these groups.¹⁷

The 2003 US intervention did not fulfill hopes for an improvement in the political situation in Iraq. Following the arrival of the Americans, the Iraqi administration collapsed, creating an even bigger political turmoil than before. Violence broke out between religious and ethnic groups, and communities such as Christians were severely affected by the events following the regime change. Radical groups such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State emerged and grew stronger, and in many cases their activities deliberately targeted minority groups. The violence

¹¹ Alotaibi, 2021, 100–101.

¹² Dawson, 1955, XXV; Royel, 2007, 7.

¹³ Starr, 2013, 478–479.

¹⁴ Alexander, 2004, 17; Aral, 2004, 467–468.

¹⁵ Hunt, 2005, 71; Meir-Glitzenstein, 2004, 10.

¹⁶ Naoum, 2018, 10.

¹⁷ Donabed, 2015, 199; Marr, 2012, 117; Nissen–Heine, 2009, 157; Hunt, 2005, 82.

further worsened the living conditions of minorities in Iraq. Since 2003, they have clearly had to fight for their survival.¹⁸

Another major, separate section of the dissertation focuses on the marginalised position of Christians. To demonstrate this, we examined contemporary and modern Iraqi daily newspapers and online content, and published a quantitative analysis. In addition, our media analysis found that following the regime change in Iraq in 2003, the Iraqi media became the subject to the power of several different actors. These can be classified into one of the following four categories:

1. government media;
2. private and party-oriented media;
3. private and independent media;
4. media outlets associated with minorities, which also emphasizes their separation from the majority Arab society.

If we analyze the media specifically associated with Iraqi Christians, we can say that it has a number of shortcomings:

- They often forget to emphasize their Iraqi identity, thereby reinforcing their separation.
- The Iraqi Christian media has little influence and is of low quality.
- Minorities are usually portrayed as victims.

The majority of content found on Iraqi Christian news sites (online) can be divided into four categories:

1. Emphasis on victimhood;
2. Religious news;
3. Emphasis on their indigenous status;
4. Promotion of their own culture.

The writings of Iraqi Arab Muslims about Christians can be evaluated from two perspectives:

1. the independent Iraqi press;
2. media outlets that operate with hostile rhetoric and hate speech.

¹⁸ Fagen, 2009, 4; Tárík, 2022, 169–184.

The first group is characterized by objective reporting, while the second group often publishes articles containing hate speech directed at minorities.

Finally, **in a separate section**, we briefly outlined our theory that the history and fate of Iraqi Jews and Christians can be compared. The emigration of the former was the result of a complex historical, political, and social process. It contributed to the transformation of the ethnic and religious structure of the Middle East. We concluded that the lessons of history draw attention to the fact that the protection of minorities and the preservation of their cultural heritage are of fundamental importance for society as a whole. If the current abuses targeting non-Muslim communities in Iraq persist, there is a significant risk that Christianity in Iraq, a community that has endured for over two millennia, may cease to exist in practice and be preserved solely through historical records.

6. Summary Conclusions

Most of the hypotheses presented in the dissertation have been confirmed, but in some cases we could only draw conclusions from subjective examples.

Christians were an integral part of the cultural, religious, and social life of Mesopotamia. We provided specific examples of their significant role in the development of early Christian theology, philosophy, and literature, as well as in the preservation and transmission of scientific texts in Greek and Syriac.¹⁹ For example, the Nestorian Christian physician and scholar Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, who published medical writings in Arabic, made the works of Greek philosophers (such as Plato) available; while ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, also a Christian religious scholar from the city of Baṣra, is known for his theological texts, among other things.²⁰ However, determining the extent of their contribution is only possible in a subjective manner, so we have not attempted to do so.

Furthermore, we have confirmed that the Assyrians, Syrians, and Chaldeans form indigenous communities that have been marginalized at various times in the past and in the present, but have always shown serious resistance to assimilation. In this regard, numerous primary and secondary sources have been processed and presented, including petitions written by Assyrians (e.g., the “Assyrian National Petition”), international reports (e.g., UN reports), and even proclamations by Iraqi Christian religious leaders (e.g., statements by the Chaldean Patriarch).

¹⁹ Alotaibi, 2021, 100–101; Beaumont, 2003, 55.

²⁰ Beaumont, 2003, 55; Hourani, 1991, 101.

We have established that certain Iraqi Christian groups, in addition to being independent religious communities, also have an ethnicity that differs from that of Arabs. To substantiate our claim, we have presented the work of other researchers as well as the findings of personal interviews conducted in Iraq. When asked during the interviews whether “the term Assyrian refers to a separate ethnic group,” 76% of respondents answered yes. However, only genetic testing could provide conclusive evidence, so this part of the research was based on subjective experiences, historical analysis, and a discussion of language use. These helped us establish a partial cultural continuity between ancient and modern Assyrians.

During our research, we also confirmed our hypothesis that the different names used by the various Christian denominations in Iraq cause division, which significantly reduces their ability to assert themselves. This theory is mainly espoused by researchers, historians, and other experts on the subject who identify as Assyrians. When studying the sources and talking to the people involved, it became clear that they're often unaware of the past divisions in the Assyrian Church of the East and don't take their common origins into account. According to our theory, the different names used by the denominations also contributed to the current situation.

In addition, we had an important assumption that their marginal position is also contributed to by the fact that they often emphasize their own victimhood. We confirmed this, as there are countless examples of this, especially in the press they operate. The search for solutions is consistently neglected, which is related to the problem described above, namely that their ability to assert themselves is declining due to disunity, so that often the only means available to them is to emphasize their victimhood.

An important conclusion we draw is that the characteristics of the historical periods presented in the dissertation, the legal status of minorities, linguistic and cultural factors, and the political environment are related to the current situation of Christian communities. With the advent of Islam, the “people of the book” became second-class citizens of the empire,²¹ which in the long run pushed them to the periphery. Furthermore, some Christians do not speak Arabic as their mother tongue, which distinguishes them from the majority population. These facts, along with often discriminatory state policies, divisions within their communities, an emphasis on victimhood, and poor security, all contribute to their emigration and the disintegration of their communities.

²¹ Watt, 2000, 46.

We also conclude that the topic we have examined will remain relevant in the future. The structural problems examined in the dissertation cannot be solved simply because their existence is often not even recognized by the central leadership. In many cases, there is not even agreement on whether ethnic or religious minorities are involved, which in turn hinders the assertion of their interests. In addition, there are attempts to centrally prohibit professions practiced by Christians (such as the sale of alcohol), which in turn jeopardizes the livelihoods of those affected. For all these reasons, it is advisable to continuously monitor the situation of Iraqi Christians, and further research is needed to find solutions.

7. New Scientific Results

We summarize the factors that make this dissertation novel in five main points:

1. During our research, we were the first to uncover the historical and structural causes of the marginalization of Iraqi Christians in Hungarian. The deterioration of their circumstances did not begin in the present day, but can actually be traced back to the period when they became a minority in their own territories. This is closely related to the emergence of Islam in the 7th century, when they became second-class citizens of successive empires, but enjoyed protection in exchange for paying a protection tax in different periods. The turning point came with the arrival of the West in the region, when, after a very brief positive period, they were subjected to abuse in many areas of life. Their current challenges are very difficult to understand without the aforementioned knowledge.
2. With this work, we have contributed to the academic discourse on the subject and confirmed that certain Iraqi Christian groups (such as the followers of the Assyrian Church of the East) do indeed have a separate ethnicity independent of Arabism, according to their own narrative. This theory is extremely difficult to prove, and during our research we examined historical, linguistic, and cultural aspects. We also substantiated our claim by exploring the relationship between the Aramaic and Arabic languages in Iraq and pointing up the important, identity-shaping role of the former. This is a novelty in Hungarian academic life, but even at the international level, there are few objective sources on the identity perception of Iraqi Christians. In fact, in our experience, even representatives of the communities concerned are often uncertain about these issues.

3. In the course of our dissertation, we discovered that stressing the narrative of victimhood has negative consequences and weakens the ability of Iraqi Christians to surmount obstacles. A diplomatic approach and a failure to develop relations with other communities only reinforce isolation, while the difficulties remain. The media associated with different Christian groups contribute to the persistence of these problems and do not offer sufficient publicity or alternatives.
4. We were the first to offer a prognosis and lessons learned based on conclusions drawn from the history and exile of Iraqi Jews regarding the future of Christians living in and originating from Arab countries. To our knowledge, no such analysis has yet appeared in the works of researchers who are thoroughly familiar with the subject. In order to address this topic, it is essential to have a thorough knowledge of the history of Iraqi Jewry, which I have spent many years studying and on which I have published numerous articles. In this context, we have confirmed that a pattern has emerged in Iraq (as well as in other Middle Eastern countries) whereby external influences on the country (Western intervention or colonization) lead to a rapid deterioration in the security situation of non-Muslim communities. This is exactly what happened in the past to Iraqi Jews, and we have highlighted that something similar is happening today to Iraqi Christians.
5. The dissertation explores and analyzes new, previously unprocessed Arabic-language sources. The Hungarian translation of part of the Ṣaddām trial, internal reports, and translations, excerpts, and analyses of descriptions of pogroms and newspaper articles contribute to the uniqueness of the thesis.

8. Applicability of Research Results

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of our work, it can be used in the fields of history, religious studies, linguistics, and security policy. As it relates to the Middle East, it can also serve as an important resource for researchers in the field of Arabic studies. In addition, it also touches on the disciplines of minority studies and religious history, as well as the fields of Assyriology, linguistics, and international law.

The topic of the dissertation can be used to develop university courses in several academic fields (e.g., Middle Eastern history, minority studies, religious history). The analysis of Arabic texts is relevant to students of Arabic, while the history of Mesopotamia and Iraq can serve as teaching material for students of Eastern languages and cultures, as well as history.

Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that, due to the focus on security, a relevant course can also be developed for students of national defense and security policy.

The sociolinguistic and language policy applications of the writing should be highlighted. The analysis of linguistic characteristics and relationships can be useful in the field of minority language rights and education research. It can also serve as a valuable resource for researchers studying language change (e.g., language death) and the interactions between different languages.

The dissertation includes interviews, source analysis, and content analysis, so it can also be used to develop teaching materials on social science research methodology.

It can also be applied on a practical level. It can support the work of civil society organizations and international institutions helping Iraqi Christians and other local communities, and it can also serve as background analysis for experts dealing with minority policy in Iraq or the Middle East.

It can also be important teaching material in terms of trauma research, as the persecution of religious minorities appears in several chapters: violent events such as the Sūmayl massacre or Operation Anfal can also be processed from the perspective of collective trauma and memory research.

9. List of Publications and Presentations Related to the Topic

Publications:

- Tárik, Meszár (2022): *Irak [Iraq]*. In: Demkó Attila (szerk.): *A világ 2022-ben*. Budapest: MCC Press. 351–358.
- Tárik, Meszár (2022): *Az Irakban élő etnikai és vallási kisebbségek helyzete az Iszlám Állam terrorszervezet fennhatósága alatt és kiűzését követően [The Situation of Ethnic and Religious Minorities Living in Iraq Under the Rule of the Islamic State Terrorist Organization and After its Expulsion]*. In: Tóth, Zoltán Balázs; Dudlák, Tamás (szerk.): *Válságtól válságig - Válogatott tanulmányok az észak-afrikai és közel-keleti régió országaiból az „arab tavasz” és a COVID–19 pandémia közötti időszakban [From Crisis to Crisis - Selected Studies from Countries in the North African and Middle Eastern Region Between the “Arab Spring” and the COVID–19 Pandemic]*. Budapest: Külügyi Műhely Alapítvány. 169–184.
- Tárik, Meszár (2022): *Az iraki asszírok nyelvi helyzete a kereszténység felvétele után [The Linguistic Situation of the Assyrians of Iraq After the Adoption of Christianity]*. *Alkalmazott Nyelvtudomány*, 2022 (1), 129–142.

- Tárik, Mészár (2022): *A kereszténység kihívásai a Közel-Keleten* [Challenges to Christianity in the Middle East]. In: Zoltai, Alexandra (szerk.): *Eurázsia hajnala: Absztraktfüzet*. Kecskemét: Neumann János Egyetem, Eurázsia Központ. 24.
- Tárik, Mészár (2022): Politikai, gazdasági és szociális krízisek Irakban és Iránban [Political, Economic and Social Crises in Iraq and Iran]. *Horizont: a Migrációkutató Intézet időszakos kiadványa*. 1–16.
- Tárik, Mészár (2022): Aid Activities of Hungary Helps in the Middle East. *Limen: Journal of the Hungarian Migration Research Institute*, 2022 (1), 104–118.
- Tárik, Mészár (2023): *Geopolitika és Gazdaság a Közel-Keleten* [Geopolitics and Economics in the Middle East]. Budapest: Neumann János Egyetem.
- Tárik, Mészár (2023): *Irak* [Iraq]. In: Demkó Attila (szerk.): *A világ 2023-ban*. Budapest: MCC Press. 391–399.
- Tárik, Mészár (2023): *Irak keresztény lakosságának identitáskérdései és jelenkori kihívásai* [Identity Issues and Contemporary Challenges of the Christian Population of Iraq]. In: Csurgai-Horváth, Gergely (szerk.): *Bonus intra melior exi: Az MCC PhD programjának zárótanulmányai – 2021–2022-es évfolyam* [Bonus Intra Melior Exi: Final Studies of the MCC PhD Program – 2021–2022 Academic Year]. 101–120.
- Tárik, Mészár (2024): Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iraq. *Eurázsia Szemle*, Vol. 4 (4), 166–181.
- Tárik, Mészár (2024): A Közel-Kelet helye és szerepe az új világrendben [The Place and Role of the Middle East in the New World Order], *Kommentár*, 2024 (4), 165–174.
- Tárik, Mészár (2024): *Irak* [Iraq]. In: Demkó Attila (szerk.): *A világ 2024-ben*. Budapest: MCC Press. 442–450.
- Tárik, Mészár (2024): *Iraki keresztények: identitáskérdések, marginalizálódás és az elvándorlás okozta kihívások* [Iraqi Christians: Identity Issues, Marginalization, and the Challenges of Migration]. In: VI. Eurázsia hajnala konferencia absztraktfüzet: *A Neumann János Egyetem Eurázsia Központja által tartott konferencián elhangzó előadások kivonatai* [VI. Dawn of Eurasia Conference Abstract Booklet: Excerpts from the Presentations Given at the Conference Held by the Eurasia Center of John von Neumann University]. Budapest: John von Neumann University. 28.
- Tárik, Mészár (2024): *Etnikai és vallási kisebbségek az arab világban* [Ethnic and Religious Minorities in the Arab World]. In: Dezső, Tamás; Pócza, István (szerk.): *BLA Doktori Ösztöndíjprogram Tanulmánykötet 2023/2024* [BLA Doctoral Scholarship Program Study Volume 2023/2024]. Budapest: Batthyány Lajos Alapítvány. 72–85.
- Tárik, Mészár (2024): Az asszír, szír és káld keresztények kihívásai Irakban [The Challenges of Assyrian, Syriac and Chaldean Christians in Iraq]. *Horizont: a Migrációkutató Intézet időszakos kiadványa*. 1–16.

- Tárík, Meszár (2024): *Az arab észjárás [The Arab Mindset]*. Budapest: Dream Vision 47.
- Tárík, Meszár (2025): Magyarország és az iraki keresztények [Hungary and the Iraqi Christians]. *Kommentár*, 2025 (2), 143–153.

Presentations:

- 6th Eurasia Dawn Conference, Budapest, April 26, 2023. *Iraki keresztények: identitáskérdések, marginalizálódás és az elvándorlás okozta kihívások [Iraqi Christians: Identity Issues, Marginalization and Challenges Caused by Migration]*.
- Mathias Corvinus Collegium PhD Conference, Budapest, April 7, 2022. *A kisebbségek helyzete Irakban [The Situation of Minorities in Iraq]*.
- John von Neumann University, International Week, Kecskemét, April 28, 2022. *The Middle East*.
- Dawn of Eurasia Conference, Budapest, May 6, 2022. *The Challenges of Christianity in the Middle East*.
- Dawn of Eurasia Conference, Budapest, May 6, 2022. *A kereszténység kihívásai a Közel-Keleten [The Challenges of Christianity in the Middle East]*.
- Mathias Corvinus Collegium PhD Conference, Budapest, October 6, 2022. *Az iraki keresztények jelenkori kihívásai [Contemporary Challenges for Iraqi Christians]*.
- Bandung Spirit, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne; Université Le Havre Normandie, Online, February 21–23, 2024. *Iraqi Christians are in Danger of Disappearing*.
- Batthyány Lajos Foundation Doctoral Conference, Budapest, June 20, 2024. *Etnikai és vallási kisebbségek az arab világban [Ethnic and Religious Minorities in the Arab World]*.

10. Professional and Scientific CV

I completed my undergraduate studies in 2011 with a degree in Eastern Languages and Cultures, minor in Aesthetics. Between 2016 and 2019, I obtained an MA degree with honors in Arabic Studies at ELTE BTK. I began my doctoral studies at the ELTE Faculty of Humanities Doctoral School of Linguistics in 2020, and obtained the absolutorium in 2024. I have been a doctoral

candidate at the Wesley Doctoral School of Theology and Religious Education since January 2025.

In 2017, I worked as an intercultural mediator at the Menedék Association. Before 2020, I worked as an interpreter and Middle East expert for several organizations, including the Hungarian Armed Forces and the Law Enforcement Directorate. Subsequently, I worked as a research assistant and expert at Corvinus University of Budapest and later at the Eurasia Center of John von Neumann University. In the fall of 2021, I was accepted into the Mathias Corvinus Collegium PhD Program, where I became a researcher at the Migration Research Institute and then a senior researcher in 2023.

Over the past four years, I have also been involved in teaching and analysis on a part-time basis. Previously, as a doctoral student at ELTE BTK, I taught Classical Arabic Language 1 and Arabic Language 2, as well as Arabic History 2. In addition, I worked as a lecturer at John von Neumann University and Metropolitan University on the course entitled “The New World Order of the 21st Century, the Middle East,” which discussed geopolitical processes in the Middle East, between 2022 and 2024. As a doctoral student at ELTE, I was also a guest lecturer for the course “Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the Islamic World.”

I have advanced (C1) language proficiency in Arabic, advanced (C1) written proficiency in English, and intermediate (B2) oral proficiency in English. I also studied Hebrew at university and at the Israeli Cultural Institute.

I have published numerous academic papers on the situation of minorities in the Middle East, migration processes in the region, and the international relations of the Arab world and Turkey, a list of which is available in the MTMT database: <https://m2.mtmt.hu/gui2/?type=authors&mode=browse&sel=10075335>.

I have published most of these in peer-reviewed journals such as Applied Linguistics, Foreign Policy Review, Kommentár (Commentary journal, Hungary), Múlt és Jövő (Past and Future), Eurázsia Szemle (Eurasia Era), Migration Letters, and Transnational Press London.

I have given academic presentations at events including the John von Neumann University PhD conference, the Bandung Spirit conference in Paris, The Migration Conference in Rabat, Morocco, and the doctoral workshop conference of the Hungarian Hebrew Studies Society. My lectures have covered topics such as the region-shaping effects of the Abraham Accords, Hungarian-Turkish cooperation in the new world order, the challenges facing minorities in the Arab world, and the linguistic conditions and identity crises of Christians in the Middle East.

I have published three books: *Geopolitika és gazdaság a Közel-Keleten* (Geopolitics and Economy in the Middle East), *Az arab észjárás* (The Arab Mindset), and *Zsidók egy arab országban* (Jews in an Arab Country). In addition, I have contributed as editor to three publications and was a member of the editorial board of the English-language journal *Limen* from 2023 to 2025. In addition to my academic activities, I was previously the editor of *Eurasia Magazine*.

I regularly comment on Middle Eastern issues in the media, including on ATV, Hír TV, Kossuth Radio, 24.hu, Index, Növekedés.hu, Magyar Nemzet, and The Times of Israel.

In 2023 and 2024, I was a PhD scholarship holder at the Batthyány Lajos Foundation, and I won the main prize in the ELTE Alumni prose writing competition with my piece entitled “Az egyetem fogságában” (In the Captivity of the University).

My professional goal is to contribute to a more accurate understanding of the Middle East and to the development of domestic academic discourse on the region through my research.

Bibliography

Alexander, Ari (2004): *The Jews of Baghdad and Zionism: 1920–1948*. Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of Masters of Philosophy in Modern Middle Eastern Studies. Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford.

Alotaibi, Hussah. 2021. A Glimpse of Tolerance in Islam Within the Context of Al-Dhimmah People (Egypt and Baghdad Model). *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*. Vol. 11 (1), 99–111. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.111.06>.

Aral, Berdal. 2004. The Idea of Human Right as Perceived in the Ottoman Empire. *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 26 (2), 454–482.

Beaumont, Mark. 2003. ‘*Ammār al-Baṣrī* ont he incarnation. In: Thomas, David (ed.): *Christians at the heart of Islamic rule: church life and scholarship in ‘Abbasid Iraq*. Leiden: Brill. 55–62.

Csepeli, György. 2006. *Antiszemitizmus a változó világban*. In: Grüll, Tibor – Répás, László (eds.): *A zsidóság és Európa*. Budapest: Kossuth Szabadegyetem Egyesület – Jószoëveg Műhely. 117–134.

Becker, Adam H. 2008. *The Ancient Near East in the Late Antique Near East: Syriac Christian Appropriation of the Biblical East*. In: Gardner, Gregg – Osterloh, Kevin (eds): *Antiquity in*

- Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. 394–415.
- Crone, Patricia – Cook, Michael A. 1977. *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dawson, C. 1955. *The Mongol mission: narratives and letters of the Franciscan missionaries in Mongolia and China in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries*. New York: Sheed and Ward.
- Donabed, Sargon George. 2015. *Iraq and the Assyrians in the Twentieth Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Etheredge, L. S. 2011. *Iraq*. Edinburgh: Britannica Educational Publishing.
- Fagen, Patricia Weiss. 2009. Iraqi Refugees: Seeking Stability in Syria and Jordan. *CIRS Occasional Papers*. 1–49. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2825853>
- Filoni, Fernando Cardinal. 2017. *The Church in Iraq*. (Translated by: Condon, Edward) Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Hunt, C. 2005. *The History of Iraq*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Iványi, Tamás. 2000. *Szír szócikk*. In: Fodor István (ed.): *A Világ Nyelvei*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó. 1312–1313.
- Kárpáti, Judit (2009): *A zsidó-arab koegzisztencia kultúraszociológiai és vallástörténeti dimenziói*. Doktori értekezés. Országos Rabbiképző – Zsidó Egyetem. Zsidó Vallástudományi Doktori Iskola, Budapest.
- Khan, Geoffrey. 2007. *Aramaic in the medieval and modern periods*. In: Postgate, J. N. (ed.): *Languages of Iraq, Ancient and Modern*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 95–114.
- Marr, Phebe. 2012. *The Modern History of Iraq*. Third Edition. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Meir-Glitzstein, Esther. 2004. *Zionism in an Arab Country. Jews in Iraq in the 1940s*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Naoum, Jonah. 2018. *When the Rivers Wept: Government Persecution of Iraq's Minorities*. Senior Honors Thesis. University of California, San Diego.
- Nissen, Hans J. – Heine, Peter. 2009. *From Mesopotamia to Iraq. A Concise History*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press.

Petrosian, Vahram. 2006. *Assyrians in Iraq*. Caucasia Centre for Iranian Studies, Yerevan. Leiden: Brill.

Royel, Mar Awa. 2017. The Assyrian Church of the East: A Panoramic View of a Glorious History. *Church of Beth Kokheh Journal*. Vol. 5, 1–12.

Starr, S. Frederick. 2013. *Lost Enlighement. Central Asia's Golden Age From The Arab Conquest to Tamerlane*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Tárik, Meszár. 2022. *Az Irakban élő etnikai és vallási kisebbségek helyzete az Iszlám Állam terrorszervezet fennhatósága alatt és kiűzését követően*. In: Dudlák, Tamás – Tóth, Zoltán Balázs (eds.): *Válságtól Válságig. Válogatott tanulmányok az észak-afrikai és a közel-keleti régió országairól az „arab tavasz” és a Covid-19 pandémia közötti időszakban*. Budapest – Pécs: Külügyi Műhely Alapítvány. 169–184.

Watt, William Montgomery. 2000. *Az iszlám rövid története*. Budapest: Akkord Kiadó.