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Ibn Bukhtīshū' family

The **Ibn Bukhtīshū'** were a celebrated **family** of Nestorian Christian physicians from Jundīshāpūr (Gondēshāpūr; also written Jundaysābūr in Arabic sources), in southwestern Iran, who, with their expertise in Galenic medicine, served 'Abbāsīd caliphs and *amūrs* in the Islamic world from the second/eighth to the fifth/eleventh centuries. Bukhtīshū' (the name has also commonly been written as Bakhtīshū' and Bukht-Yīshū') is a Middle Persian-Syriac name signifying "Jesus has redeemed"; it is well attested among Nestorians from the early fifth century C.E. onward, reflecting the mixed cultural environment of Sāsānian and early Islamic Iraq (Richter-Bernburg).

The first of the line was Jūrjis b. Jibrīl b. Bukhtīshū', who enjoyed the favour of the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75). The physician's reputation preceded his invitation to the 'Abbāsīd capital, Baghdad, and reports relate that when al-Manṣūr was troubled with persistent stomach pains, which none of his doctors had been able to relieve, he asked them to recommend someone else. They

unanimously advised him to consult Jūrjis, who was then head physician at the hospital in Jundīshāpūr, and the caliph immediately sent for him. Once in Baghdad, Jūrjis brought about al-Manṣūr's recovery and thereby secured for himself permanent employment, considerable prestige, and substantial wealth. The caliph even intervened in person to ensure that his physician was able to enjoy an uninterrupted supply of good wine:

Delighted at his recovery, al-Manṣūr ordered that the physician's every wish should be granted. A few days later, however, the caliph said to his chamberlain, al-Rabī', "That man looks discontented to me. You haven't been depriving him of the kind of drink he prefers, have you?" "Well," said the chamberlain, "we're not allowing him to bring any wine into the palace." At this, the caliph cursed him roundly and said, "You—you personally, do you understand?—will go and obtain for him as much wine as he wants." Al-Rabī' obediently went out to Quṭrabbul [a village near Baghdad celebrated for its wine] and brought back as much good wine as he could carry for Jūrjis (Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, 1:124).

Jundīshāpūr was reputed to be a centre of medical learning, complete with a hospital and an academy, where the teachings

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