

Dietmar W. Winkler, ed., *Syriac Churches Encountering Islam. Past Experiences and Future Perspectives*, Pro Oriente Studies in the Syriac Tradition 1 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010). Pp. 253; \$139.75.

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This publication presents the contributions of scholars who participated at the First Colloquium Syriacum in Salzburg, Austria, on November 14–16, 2007. The meeting was sponsored by the Austrian Foundation “Pro Oriente,” whose main aim is facilitating and promoting the work of ecumenical encounters between the Roman Catholic Church, the Chalcedonian churches in communion with the Patriarch of Constantinople (Eastern Orthodox), and the non-Chalcedonian (Oriental Orthodox) churches. The First Colloquium Syriacum focused its study on the encounter of the Syriac churches with Islam in the past, while hoping to derive from such a retrospective directions for developing new perspectives for the future.

The volume offers thirteen main articles, followed by four documents (reports, press releases, and list of conference participants) in an appendix. The articles are arranged chronologically, extending from the beginnings of Christian-Muslim encounters in the seventh century down to the more recent past. The impact of the current situation in the Middle East, where Christians and other non-Muslims or minority Muslims experience atrocities and violence in Syria and Iraq in their encounter with some forms of Islam, may change expectations for future perspectives regarding the Christian-Muslim encounter in the Middle East drastically. The book’s geographical focus is clearly on the Middle East, augmented by Baby Varghese’s contribution on Christian-Muslim relations in Kerala.

This edited volume appeared in print as the first contribution to a new series, “Pro Oriente Studies in the Syriac Tradition.” Establishing such a series is without doubt a laudable goal. Yet the intended audience of this series is unclear. Several of the articles in the volume offer fully documented, polished presentations of the subject matter they propose to discuss. Others offer scant documentation, missing the opportunity to orient the reader toward a fuller understanding of the context of a given discussion. It may be that the primary intention of this volume was to provide

the community involved with *Pro Oriente* access to unedited documentation of oral presentations. Those who approach these contributions as a starting point for understanding the scope and complexity of the questions which the contributors have addressed, or as a resource for independent research will face a certain hurdle on account of the paucity of references. Irrespective of the intended audience(s), it would be of great advantage for the readers as well as the contributors if the editors of future volumes would take greater care in supervising the copyediting of the volume in order to produce a book free of typographical and stylistic errors in the medium of communication, in this case, English.