

## Project Report

Canadian Centre for Epigraphic Documents (CCED)

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In November 2013, the Canadian Centre for Epigraphic Documents (CCED) launched the world's first Syriac inscriptions database. This project aims at promoting and preserving Syriac epigraphic heritage. The CCED website is in English, French, Arabic, and both traditional and simplified Mandarin.

The CCED publishes photographic copies of inscriptions in digital format. The website offers original images and Photoshop enhanced copies. Catalogue entries for each inscription include location, material, size, script type, and date. Transcriptions and translations are also included. Shapes of letters, especially of dated inscriptions, are defined to help date fragments and non-dated inscriptions. A mapping feature locates places and buildings where listed inscriptions are found.

The Centre is currently working with the Harrak Collection, the largest corpus of Iraqi Syriac and Garshuni inscriptions in the world. These date between the 7th and the 20th centuries. A number of these documents are only extant copies of now damaged or lost inscriptions. The CCED has since received further collections: the St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI) Collection, and the Association to Preserve the Saint Thomas Christian Heritage (APSTCH) Collection. These collections contain Syriac, Malayalam, Pahlavi (Middle Persian), and Tamil inscriptions from southern India, c. 9th/10th - 20th century. Many of these inscriptions have never before been published.

The CCED will be presenting at the Eighth World Syriac Conference this September in Kerala, India. The Centre will also be presenting at the New Horizons in Intercultural Dialogue Conference at Trinity Hall College, Cambridge University, in November.

Work is underway to establish the CCED Journal. The journal will include papers and articles on a variety of aspects relevant to epigraphic studies. Epigraphic Studies includes historical or philological aspects of inscriptions; art historical perspectives of inscriptions and their surrounding decorative motifs; digital humanities or

information/library studies approaches to documenting inscriptions; numismatics and sigillography. Articles on inscriptions from the CCED online collection, and editions of unpublished inscriptions are especially welcome.

This publication will be open access and peer-reviewed, and submissions to the journal may be in either English or French. Submissions can take the form of notes or observations (1/2 - 3 pages) or short articles (4-8 pages, plus references).

The CCED Journal editorial staff includes Editor-in-Chief: Colin S. Clarke, MIST, Director, Canadian Centre for Epigraphic Documents, and Co-Editors: Amir Harrak, Professor of Aramaic and Syriac, University of Toronto; Dr. Amal E. Marogy, Founding Director, Aradin Charitable Trust; István Perczel, Professor of Byzantine and Eastern Christian Studies, Central European University; and Kyle Smith, Professor of Christianity, University of Toronto.

The CCED is located at the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto. The CCED is currently staffed by volunteers from the information profession: archivists, librarians, and graduate students from the University of Toronto Faculty of Information. Recently, the Centre has also been joined by volunteer academics. The CCED is working in collaborative partnership with Aradin Charitable Trust (A.C.T.), the St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI), the Association to Preserve the Saint Thomas Christian Heritage (APSTCH), and the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies (CSSS).

The CCED: Syriac Inscriptions Project is rapidly growing, and collaboration with committed scholars would be welcome.