

Aras, Ramazan, “Deconstructions, Reconstructions and Transformations: The Ethno-Religious Relations between Assyrian Christians and Muslim Kurds in Kerboran Mardin 1900-1980”

In my paper, I will explore the formations of ethno-religious relations between Assyrian Christians and Muslim Kurds in the small Assyrian/Kurdish town of Kerboran/Dargecit in Mardin, Turkey from 1915 to 1980. My argument will be based on the ethnographic fieldwork that I have done among the Assyrian community in Sweden and the Kurdish community in Kerboran/Dargecit Mardin Turkey in 2005. I will analyze the deconstructions and reconstructions of ethno-religious relations between both communities from the “*Fermana Fileha*” (the Christian Decree) in 1915 to the last Assyrian forced migration from Kerboran in 1980. By focusing on socio-political and religious relations, transformations and conflicts, good days and bad days in that particular locality, I will emphasize the fragmentedness of relations and identities in the region. In the light of the narratives and life stories of Kerboranian Assyrians and Kurds, I will analyze the “imagined Christian and Muslim Kerboranian community” in Kerboran.

Argárate, Pablo F., “Perfected and Perfection in the *Book of Steps*”

Since the publication of Kmosko’s edition, the *Ktābā dmasqātā* puzzled scholars with its manifestation of an enigmatic form of Christianity. Among many features, however, it is the profusion and variety of religious groups portrayed throughout its thirty *memres*, that particularly drew attention to our anonymous work. Along with some more traditional forms such as the leaders of the community, the priests, the “sick” and the “children”, some mysterious sorts of Christian enter into the picture like the group of faith and that of love. Nevertheless, the most frequent and consistent ones are the Upright and the Perfect. This distinction is closely associated to that one between major and minor commandments or between corporal and spiritual ministries. The origin of the separation between Perfection and Uprightness is traced by the *Liber Graduum* to the very origins. Adam, created in Perfection, by failing to keep God’s commandments fell from that state and Uprightness was sanctioned until the coming

of Christ, who would manifest in himself the true nature of Adam and Perfection.

The LG portrays Perfection in a rather negative way, by denying the features of Uprightness. Whereas the upright live in the world and care for it, working, possessing and getting married, the Perfect are characterized by radical renunciation of the world (they “fast to the world”), neither working nor marrying nor having any tie with that world. On the contrary, they closely follow Christ by taking his cross in complete poverty and lowliness. Their functions within the community comprise teaching to all the new life and the distinction between major and minor commandments. However, repeatedly our book places the hallmark of the Perfection in unlimited love and forgiveness, in the footsteps of the Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. The Perfect are thus required to love and forgive all, without distinction: women, heretics, pagans, sinners and even their own murderers. It is an in-depth research into this close association between Perfection and love for enemies that forms the topic of this paper.

Badwi, Rev. Abdo, “The Two Miniatures of the Manuscript Vat Syr 118”

The manuscript Vat Syr 118 contains the metric Homilies of Jacob of Sarug. These were used by the Maronite patriarchate, as is attested in the marginal annotations which are similar to those we find in the Rabboula Gospels, and which are dated up to the years 1121 and 1141. Joseph Simon Assemani, who left us a description of the Vatican manuscript, reported to us that he himself brought it to Rome from the East and dated it to the tenth century, based on the writing.

Since the manuscript does not have the first and last sheets, there is no colophon. Thus, we know neither the place nor the date of its composition. There are only two full page miniatures. One represents the Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (f.212r) and the other the Crucifixion (f. 262r). They appear to have been executed by the same hand. The features of the faces have disappeared, probably because of the friction of the pages.

These two miniatures can be studied in parallel with other contemporary or similar art works, such as the Crucifixion in Sancta Maria Antiqua in Rome, another representation in Nea Moni in

Chios and yet another one in Saint Saba in Eddé (Batroun), Lebanon. As a whole, our comparisons lead us, therefore, to place the miniature in the wake of Byzantine art. However, some features lead us to note, in certain ways, the fidelity to particular models. These models are exceeded by the art of the capital and the provinces still forming part of the empire. With some others of typical local characters, however, one can also find a more intimate and spontaneous expression.

Bcheiry, Rev. Iskandar Sharbel, “The Registration of Consecrated Ecclesiastics in Southeastern Anatolia during the 16th Century”

The Oxford Library owns a currently unpublished historical document in Syriac, containing precious historical information with regard to the ordination of bishops, priests, monks, and deacons performed in the region of southeastern Anatolia (Diyar Baker, Mardin, al-Sawr) during the 16th century. The document is a list made of the following more or less occurring elements: Introduction (*the Holy Spirit consecrated...*) + name of the consecrated person + church for which he was consecrated + region of the church + Seleucid date + conclusion (namely a wish).

The interest of this list goes much beyond its role of recording successive ordinations. It offers factual data related to villages, monasteries, churches, and ecclesiastical leaders who played important roles within the Syriac Orthodox Church during the Ottoman period for an entire century. In my discussion of this list of consecrations, I will focus on the ecclesiastical and social conditions of Syriac Christian communities in that part of the world at a time these are not necessarily well known or documented.

Benjamin, Mikhael, “Translation as a Medium of Cross-Cultural Exchange”

Although the Syriac (Aramaic) language has had the zenith of its activity in translation during the Abbasid Caliphate throughout which virtually hundreds of masterpieces in medicine, philosophy and science were first translated from Greek into Syriac and then into Arabic, translation into Syriac actually began a few centuries prior to the Abbasid Caliphate. Syriac first established a bridge between Greek and Mesopo-

tamian cultures, then it extended the bridge to the Arabic culture. Thus, translation is not new to Syriac, but since Syriac has been gradually losing its dynamism and productivity roughly after the Mongol invasion, modern Syriac is in much need of revitalization, especially lexical enrichment and overall stylistic innovation. Once again translation seems to be one of the primary avenues for enrichment and revitalization of Syriac. This presentation focuses on a recent translation of the masterpiece of Gibran Khalil Gibran *The Broken Wings* from Arabic into Modern Syriac by George Ishāq Gewargis pen-named *Mokhib Yauma*. There are three linguistic areas where the translator excels in rendering his translation very successful and efficient. The three areas are: a) recycling of classical Syriac vocabulary that remained captive in Syriac dictionaries; b) coining new derivations from existing roots; and c) using lexical and other grammatical forms common in various Syriac spoken dialects. All those three areas will be surveyed with numerous examples.

Borbone, Pier Giorgio, “Greek Physiognomics in Syriac Disguise: Chapter XX of Barhebraeus’ *Laughable Stories*”

About 80% of Barhebraeus’ *Laughable Stories* derive from an Arabic original (as shown by U. Marzolph already in 1985). But the last chapter (XX, devoted to physiognomic characteristics) lacks any parallel in the Arabic source singled out by Marzolph. The paper will present a critical edition of the chapter (based on three Syriac MSS, among them the most ancient, MS Vat. Syr. 173), a translation into English with a glossary, and a study about the possible Greek source of this chapter.

Briquel Chatonnet, Françoise, “Les inscriptions syriaques de Syrie”

La mission franco-syrienne « Les inscriptions syriaques de Syrie » a été fondée en 2006 sous les auspices de la Direction Générale des Antiquités et des musées de Syrie. Elle a accompli sa première mission de terrain en 2006 et la seconde aura lieu en juin 2007, juste avant le congrès de Toronto.

Son but est de relever les inscriptions syriaques en vue de l’établissement du volume correspondant du *Recueil des inscriptions syriaques*, qui sera publié par l’Académie des Ins-

criptions et Belles-Lettres, à la suite de ceux sur l'Irak et le Kérala, pratiquement achevés. Partant des repérages faits par Pognon, Littmann mais aussi les P. Pena, Castellana et Fernandez, la mission ramasse une documentation systématique : fiche de description, photos et relevés sur calques grandeur nature, parfois estampages, afin de pouvoir publier des fac-similés.

La plus grande partie de ces inscriptions sont dans le massif calcaire dans l'arrière-pays d'Antioche. La mission a commencé les relevés dans le Jabal Barisha et poursuivra cette année dans le Jabal el A'ala et le Jabal Wastani. Elle a relevé en 2006 plus d'une trentaine d'inscriptions, monumentales pour certaines, mais aussi des graffitti. Celles-ci jettent une lumière intéressante sur la société, le culte, les communautés religieuses, mais aussi les relations entre l'utilisation des différentes langues. La communication se propose d'illustrer ces premiers résultats.

Casey, Kevin, "The Spiritual Interpretation of Scripture: An Example of Cultural Continuity in the Early Islamic Period"

Christian and Muslim mystics of the early Islamic Near East developed and used similar techniques for elaborating a distinctly mystical understanding of their respective scriptures. This shared technique included an understanding of the multivalent nature of scriptural meaning and an intersection of spiritual practice, scriptural interpretation and mystical meaning. In both Muslim and Christian circles this technique was controversial and provoked opposition and debate. There are interesting parallels in the elements of the debate over the spiritual interpretation of scripture in both Christianity and Islam in the early Islamic period. This paper will examine these similarities through the works of the Christian monk Dadisho' Qatraya and several mystical exegetes of the Qur'an including Sahl al-Ṭustari and 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī. The shared techniques and parallel nature of the debate over scripture and meaning in this period suggests that the spiritual interpretation of scripture is an important example of cultural and religious continuity in the early Islamic Near East.

Clocks, William, "A High Accuracy Character Recognition System for Old Printed Books in Connected Script languages such as Syriac and Arabic"

This paper describes recently developed software for converting images from old printed books into machine-readable text form. The system does not require a lexicon. The only language-specific information built into the system are the orthographic rules common to all connected script languages. The script-specific language information required is a template for each character in each variant, together with a symbol model for diacriticals, vowel marks, and other punctuation. The output from the system is a no-loss transcription including all the diacritical marks. This transcription can then be post-processed to any desired format such as a standard transliteration or a modern Syriac font edition.

The system has been designed specifically with the requirements of scanning old printed books. These sources offer new challenges to the software developer. In addition to the usual characteristics of context sensitive letter shape, old printed books, typeset by hand, have significant variation compared to modern typesetting. Connection rules are usually broken, and diacritical marks are placed with wide variation.

The system has been used for transcribing text in the three major Syriac scripts: Estrangelo, West Syriac, and East Syriac. Texts were scanned copies of old manually typeset works kindly provided by Beth Mardutho, the Syriac Institute. In addition, the generality of the system has been tested by transcribing modern printed text in a Geezastyle Arabic font from the standard DARPA corpus.

The technical details of the system are as follows. The scanned image of a page is converted to a boundary representation: a set of closed polygonal curves around each connected blob or hole. Diacritics are identified using a hypergraph matching algorithm. Text lines are extracted using an algorithm based on minimal spanning trees, and word spacing is estimated using an expectation maximisation algorithm. Contours on each line are matched with the character model by matching flexible templates using dynamic programming. A knapsack de-

coder emits characters found within a connected blob. The purpose of each diacritic is finalised, and associated with a character. A no-loss transcription is printed.

Performance details on historical manually typeset text are as follows. Character recognition rate is near 100%. Diacritical recognition rate is usually above 99%. Transcription speed ranges from 25-40 words per minute depending on the complexity of the script. The only limiting factors have been found to be: (a) a rare few severely broken characters, (b) a few diacritics too small to be identified, and (c) scanning issues such as colour and foxing.

Corbett, John H., "The Ascetic Life as Holy War: The Biblical Basis of the Book of Steps"

Robert Murray has established that the Deuteronomic Call to Holy War underlies the fundamental conceptual structures of (ancient) Christian life and faith, as the Syriac Christian tradition very eloquently attests. The evidence of the Book of Steps now makes it clear that the Deuteronomic Call to Holy War played a primary role in structuring the ascetic experience of Syriac Christians in ancient times. When the person who desires to become "Perfect" is called to avoid the entanglements of the married householder - not to marry, build a house, or work the ground, we hear the echo of the Deuteronomic Call from almost every page of this collection of substantial and powerful homilies.

Our curiosity to understand the Deuteronomic world view leads us first to the Book of Amos, which (with Hosea) expresses the earliest preserved version of the Deuteronomistic ideology.

An appropriate analysis will bring to light the essential elements of this metaphoric system and demonstrate how carefully they are articulated in support of the values implicit in Deuteronomy. The two poles of this metaphoric system are cosmic warfare and cosmic feasting. But the core narrative, with its major metaphoric focuses, all centres on cosmic warfare. The challenge here is to develop a methodology which brings out the close associations of these symbolic structures, and suggests how a number of discrete texts could be generated from a common core narrative or from a group of dominant symbolic structures.

A brief analytical overview of the major texts on this "generative trajectory", from the archaic hymn fragments to the Book of Amos, the Gospels and the Book of Steps will suggest how the Deuteronomic Call to Holy War underlies and structures central texts in the (Jewish and) Christian tradition(s).

Dinno, Khalid, "The Chronology of the Patriarchs of Antioch according to the Syrian Orthodox Tradition"

The chronologies of the heads of the apostolic seats are of an interest that goes beyond names and dates, since these chronologies also reflect the history of the respective churches and, in particular, the changes and upheavals that these churches witnessed over two millennia. Antioch as the seat of one of the original Apostolic Sees had a turbulent history, partly before but mainly after the Council of Chalcedon. This paper focuses attention on the chronology of patriarchs according to the Syrian Orthodox tradition. It considers and correlates the contributions made over the past half a century and comments on them. In addition to the main line of patriarchs, it includes the secondary patriarchates that were set up in Mardin and Tur Abdin at various periods from the 13th to the 19th centuries.

Donabed, Sargon, "Transparent Assyria: Ethno-Cultural or Religious Causes of Devastation in Iraq 1961-1990"

Persecution of indigenous people, something North America is all too familiar with, spread rapidly against the Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire and continued in the wake of the succeeding 'western construct states,' an inclination which continues to the present day. Recent events in Iraq have put such issues 'on the map' again and made detailing the Assyrian situation in Iraq during the second half of the 20th century in both theory and numerical data an essential element to an understudied case. The Anfal Campaign, though known to have occurred specifically in 1988, was a sustained effort by Pan-Arabists to eliminate all threats to the creation of a homogenous nation-state. It is evident that this Arabist ideology (proceeded and succeeded by other ultra-nationalist campaigns against minorities) and its political and military battles had

begun most strongly in the 1960s.

Preliminary estimates numbered 183 villages destroyed from 1963 to 1988. Later estimates saw a significantly higher number between 1974 and 1989, citing 220 Assyrian villages destroyed and their people killed or forcibly resettled. However, though general statistics are given, many vital questions are left unanswered. The numerical figures concerning persons killed or captured, and churches and schools coupled with motivation for the discrimination are also incomplete.

This continued focus on the elimination of the Assyrians was vividly apparent in 1915, later during the Simele Massacre in 1933, and persisted through the 20th century. Consequently, it is evident that since research concerning those Assyrians is deficient, so too has the mapping of their ancestral lands been incomplete with regard to detailed settlements including demographic distribution, and the geographic distribution of churches, monasteries, and related cultural sites. This work is the initial attempt to remedy this quandary as well as an attempt to illuminate whether the above mentioned destruction was religious or ethno-culturally based persecution, both, or neither.

Ebied, Rifaat, "A Collection of Letters in Syriac and Arabic addressed to Eduard Sachau (1845-1930)"

The purpose of this paper is to make available for study a hitherto unpublished corpus of *Letters* in Syriac and Arabic written and sent during the 1880's and 1890's from Mosul to the German scholar, Eduard Sachau. The interest and value of these *Letters* lies in the fact that one can glean from their contents an insight into the depth of knowledge of the addressee, the type of books and manuscripts, both in Syriac and Arabic, he was interested in acquiring and their prices, names of the various scribes and book collectors and entrepreneurs in Mosul and its surroundings, the type of language(s)/dialect(s) most commonly used in the region at the close of the nineteenth century, e.g. *Swadaya*, *Fellehi*, etc. Equally important is the fact that the *Letters* furnish valuable information pertaining to certain historical events that took place at the time

as well as the conditions of life under the Ottoman Rule in Northern Iraq. They also shed light on the relations, contacts and dealings of the Christians living in the region with other communities, e.g. Muslim Kurds, Arabs and Turks. Similarly, they give a glimpse of the role played by Western diplomats, British, French and American, as well as the activities of the Dominican Fathers and other Christian Missionaries during that time.

Ginkel, Jan van, "Ignatius of Melitene (ca. d. 1095), another Byzantine Syrian-Orthodox Historiographer?"

"Ignatius, who came from the Monastery of Mar Harun (Aaron) al-Shaghr, was deeply versed in the books of the two Testaments as well as in both the Greek and the Syriac languages, grammar, rhetoric and philosophy. ... This learned man was engaged in translations from the Greek following the method of Jacob of Edessa. He also wrote a brief profane history and an ecclesiastical one after the manner of the two histories [by] Jacob of Edessa and Dionysius of Tall Mahre, while adding to their histories many events which he copied from Greek histories, beginning with Constantine the Great until his time" (Ignatius Aphram I Barsaum [tr. Matti Moosa], *History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*; Pueblo: Passeggiata Press, 2000, p.138).

Based on material preserved by Michael the Great and Bar 'Ebroyo, Aphram I Barsaum describes an important figure within the Syrian Orthodox tradition, a scholarly author and church leader. As bishop of Melitene in the 11th century he acted as a bridge in the politics of his time, being heavily involved in various negotiations with the Byzantine authorities. At the same time he also was responsible for the introduction of Byzantine literary material and culture in the Syrian tradition. For a while it seemed, in his days, that the Syrian Orthodox church would yet again become situated within the Christian Empire, Byzantium. The problems and opportunities of the Sixth century came to the fore again. Within a generation Islamic powers took hold of the Syrian heartlands and much of what occupied Ignatius' mind became of less importance to his successors. Only fragments remain of this intriguing period. The

paper will provide a brief glimpse of this forgotten period and an intriguing man.

Greatrex, Geoffrey, “The Romano-Persian Frontier and the Context of the *Book of Steps*”

As is well known, the *Book of Steps* (henceforth *LG*) is a notoriously hard work to pin down. The author quite deliberately provides few or no details, chronological or geographical, that would allow us to situate the work. Nevertheless a consensus seems to have been reached, according to which the work belongs to the fourth century A.D., even if some prefer an earlier date within the century and others tend towards a later one. Geographically, the consensus favours the notion that the author was writing in Upper Mesopotamia, perhaps in Adiabene, a region undoubtedly more christianised than many others; several scholars suggest that the author originally may have lived on Roman soil, but chose to migrate during the Diocletianic persecution at the start of the fourth century. Our aim here is not to pick through the slender evidence once again in a vain attempt to offer greater precision; rather, it is to place the work in its more general context, the marchlands of the Roman and Persian empires in the fourth century. Because of the enduring uncertainty as to the provenance of the work, it will be necessary to examine the situation on both sides of the frontier - itself in any case subject to marked variation in the period - although we shall concentrate on the Persian side.

Greisiger, Lutz, “‘Kush will Hand Over the Power to God:’ Nubia and the Last Emperor in 7th Century Syriac Apocalypses”

The famous Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodios and its minor variant, the Edessene apocalyptic fragment composed towards the end of the 7th century, both predict a Byzantine world empire of peace, wealth and godliness to be established in the endtime before the actual end of the world. They further state that the Last Emperor at the end of his reign will place his crown on the cross at Golgotha, thereby surrendering his power to God. From Ps 68,32 (syr.: 31) which in Syriac reads “Kush will hand over the power to God” Pseudo-Methodios gathered that the Last Emperor will be of Kushite descent and constructed an elaborate genealogy to prove that the

empire of Alexander the Great, the Byzantine and the Roman empire all are one and the same, going back to the Kushite princess Kush(y)at.

All scholarly comments have proceeded on the assumption that the Kingdom of Kush in this construction was designating Ethiopia, more precisely, the Aksumite empire. In this paper it will be demonstrated that this assumption is more than likely to be wrong and that the name Kush rather refers to the Christian kingdoms of Nubia. This interpretation is supported not only by the ancient geographical nomenclature, of which Syriac writers were well aware, but also by a Coptic source of the 8th century providing information on the state-ideology of the united Nubian kingdom of Nobadia and Macuria which bears several traits reminiscent of the notion of “Kush” in the Syriac apocalypses. Furthermore it will be argued that Nubia, due to the historical events of the 6th and 7th centuries, was an appropriate candidate to be assigned an eschatological role and to attract the hopes for redemption from Muslim domination in the whole Monophysite world of the 7th century.

Griffin, Carl, “Syriac Projects and Publications at BYU’s Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (CPART)”

I will report on several recent Syriac projects and publications at CPART. These include:

(i) Vatican Syriac Manuscript Project: The first publication from this project was a DVD-ROM containing thirty-three electronic facsimiles of Syriac manuscripts from the Vatican Apostolic Library. These include important singula such as Vat. Syr. 110 (Ephrem, Comm. Gen. & Exod.) and Vat. Syr 163 (Chronicle of Edessa). I will discuss the next phase of this project.

(ii) Eastern Christian Texts/Library of the Christian East: Two ongoing text and translation series focusing primarily on the Syriac Christian tradition, in which have recently appeared *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Select Poems* and *Theodore Abu Qurrah*.

(iii) BYU-CUA Syriac Studies Reference Library: A joint project of Brigham Young University and the Catholic University of America, which provides Web access to 103 rare Syriac printed works from the CUA collection, including catalogs, lexica, grammars, text editions, and studies.

(iv) Syriac Corpus Project/Ephrem Concordance Project: BYU has for some years been engaged in the transcription of Syriac texts to produce a database of Syriac literature. Circa 2.5 million words have been transcribed to date. We are now developing text markup standards and tools for morphological tagging and higher-level markup of the corpus. This tagging will first be applied to the works of Ephrem the Syrian and used to produce a complete concordance of his works.

Griffith, Sidney H., “Syrian Christian Intellectuals in the World of Islam: Faith, the Philosophical Life, and the Quest for Interreligious *Convivencia* in Abbasid Times”

The story of how Greek philosophical, mathematical, medical and other scientific texts in Arabic translations by Syriac-speaking Christians came to enliven the intellectual life of the Islamic world in early Abbasid times has long been part of the standard history of the growth and development of classical Islamic culture. Less often do we hear at any appreciable length the story of how these same Syrian Christian students of Greek logic and philosophy served not only as translators, but as scholars in their own right, who came to use the Hellenic sciences of reason in the service of the clearer exposition of their Christian faith in a way that would find enthusiastic followers among the Arabic-speaking Christians of the caliphate of Baghdad. In addition to their cultivation of Greek logic and Christian apologetics, these same Christian intellectuals engaged in conversations with their Muslim counterparts about the philosophical life itself as a way to promote the conditions necessary for the realization of a virtuous polity that would accommodate the well being of all its citizens.

In this lecture, the speaker will highlight the careers of several Syriac-speaking, Christian intellectuals who became famous for the books they wrote in Arabic in the heyday of the much studied Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement of Abbasid times. Their names are well-known to students of this movement, men such as Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (809-873), Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (893-974), and Elias bar Shināyā of Nisibis (975-1046). While all of them are relatively well known as authors of apologetic tracts in defense of the credibility of Christian doctrines, they also all wrote works of a more general intellectual appeal, in which they discussed the virtues of the philosophical life. A

discussion of several of these compositions will show that in the cultural context of the World of Islam in their times, these Christian thinkers joined with a number of Muslim intellectuals in their milieu to propose that traditional Christian philosophy had much to offer to the contemporary search for “Godly wisdom and true science,” as Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī put it. It was a search that Yaḥyā’s Muslim teacher, Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Farābī (870-950) had described as the effort, on the basis of religion and philosophy, to promote public support for a vision of the ‘Virtuous City’, one in which a modicum of good will could be found to foster the commonweal of all its citizens in a *convivencia* based on the cultivation of the values of their shared humanity.

Grillo, John L., “Fire from Heaven: A Theological Analysis and Contextualization of Aphrahat’s *Demonstration 4: On Prayer*”

Aphrahat, the Persian Sage’s fourth *Demonstration* (“*On Prayer*”) provides us with a kind of vignette illustrating the truly unique theological context in which he was writing in the mid-fourth century, a context that was almost completely isolated from the theological milieu of the Greek-speaking west. Perhaps most striking is his heavy reliance on the Old Testament in his exposition of prayer. The symbolic palate of the Levitical sacrificial cult, while present in other Christian writers, has not been utilized to the same degree of fullness to describe “pure prayer.” What is even more interesting about Aphrahat’s theology of prayer is what is conspicuously *absent*. For instance, Aphrahat is strictly biblical in the exposition of his subject, unlike Origen in whose treatise on the same subject, one can clearly see the outline of the Greek philosophical, academic framework into which he is writing. The Persian Sage shows no awareness of the Trinitarian controversies that took place in Greek Christianity only eleven years prior. Finally, there is no theology of the Holy Spirit in direct connection with Aphrahat’s “pure prayer,” which not only sets him apart from other Christian writers on the subject, but also departs from Paul’s “pneumatology of prayer.” This, of course, does not mean that Aphrahat does not have a pneumatology, but rather that his is unique among his Greek and Latin contemporaries and immediate predecessors.

Harrak, Amir, “An Inscribed Bronze Disc at the Royal Ontario Museum”

The Royal Ontario Museum owns a bronze disc bearing a Syriac commemorative inscription on one side and the depiction of a stylized cross on both sides. The disc is perforated along the round edge, suggesting that the object is a liturgical fan (*marūhō*). According to the record of the museum, the disc comes from Iran. This paper will describe the disc, decipher its inscription, and suggest that the place of its origin must be Iraq not Iran for two reasons: 1) The Syrian Orthodox Church uses such fans in its liturgy and this Church was prominent in Iraq; 2) the composite name of the commemorative inscription made of *mār* + a Saint’s name occurs only in the inscriptions of Takrit.

Harvey, Susan Ashbrook, “Gendered Sanctity: Jacob of Serug on Jephthah’s Daughter”

Jacob of Serug wrote often about biblical women, offering characterizations that were notably bold, surprising, and frequently discordant with the prevailing social order. These portrayals do not in any way represent an argument for social change, however, for Jacob invariably uses them to re-inscribe the existing social order with renewed authority. Nonetheless, since Jacob is often seen as a writer whose primary vocation was to represent classic Syriac traditions and views, his tendency to craft these unusually powerful female figures is especially striking. In this paper, I will examine this premise through consideration of Jacob’s Homily on Jephthah’s Daughter (Hom. 159, Bedjan 5: 306-30), in which the Syriac homilist takes up the unnerving narrative of Judges 11. Ephrem had treated the incident briefly in his Hymns on Virginity 2:10-12, but in Homily 159 Jacob allows himself luxuriously expansive style, taking as his point of departure the Peshitta’s referencing of the daughter as an *ihiditho*, an ‘only begotten’, ‘single’ child, slain by her father. As was characteristic of hymnography and homiletics for both Christian and Jewish writings in late antiquity, Jacob uses the technique of imagined first-person speech to craft the characters in his retelling of the biblical narrative. For this paper, I am interested in how Jacob’s use of imagined

speech for Jephthah and particularly for his unnamed daughter represents her as prefigurement and type for Christ.

Kayaalp, Elif Keser, “Architectural Sculpture of the 8th Century Tur Abdin Churches”

By the 5th and 6th centuries, the classical elements in architectural sculpture started to disappear in Constantinople and in the wider Byzantine Empire. Northern Mesopotamia appears as a conservative region in that particular period in terms of its sculpture which was classical in character. In the following centuries, after the Arab conquest of Northern Mesopotamia, transformed forms of the old patterns of this established tradition started to appear in the 8th century churches which were concentrated in the Tur Abdin region. This paper will look at the continuity and preservation of classical features and introduction of new patterns in the sculpture of the 8th century Tur Abdin churches. The sculpture of these churches will be suggested as the bridge for the classical looking sculpture of medieval buildings, both Christian and Islamic, of Mardin and its environs.

Kiraz, George, “The Structure of the West Syriac *Šhimo*”

This paper will describe the liturgical structure of the West Syriac *Šhimo* (or Daily Offices) text based on the ‘received tradition’. The paper will begin with a textual description of the liturgy, and then will complement that with a description of the received tradition which thus far has not been documented. Use will be made of the Syriac Orthodox and Syriac Catholic liturgical traditions, with minor comments on the Maronite tradition (which differs somewhat from the two other traditions).

Kitchen, Robert A., “Jonah’s Oar: Christian Typology in Jacob of Serug’s *Mēmrā* 122 on Jonah”

No one loses the opportunity to retell the story of Jonah, and certainly not the exegetical poets of the Syriac tradition. Ephrem returns again and again to Jonah and Nineveh in a number of *mēmrē* and sermons, interpreting the narrative from various perspectives. Narsai also has written a lengthy *mēmrā* on the wayward prophet.

But it is Jacob of Serug (d. 521) who weaves the familiar tale in the most unforgettable fashion: *Mēmṛā* 122, included in Paul Bedjan's *Homiliae Selectae*, endures for 122 pages.

Jacob of Serug slowly and poetically proceeds through the original text verse by verse, but along the way interweaves an unabashedly Christian typology and interpretation of the prophet's dilemmas and mission. Some sections of these sections are lengthy enough that the Old Testament tale is almost forgotten.

Because of the length of the text, I will focus on presenting an outline of Jacob's commentary and argument, and reconstructing how he uses Christological typologies to present the Christian Gospel. Jacob is not a systematic theologian, but in this *mēmṛā* he has given himself enough space to build a full description of the Christian message in which Jonah becomes a type of Christ. Particularly imaginative are the occasions in which Jacob describes the Old Testament book's events as prefigurations of Gospel events, for instance, depicting Jonah's entry into the belly of the whale as a type of immaculate conception. The choices of imagery and typology employed by Jacob will be contrasted in a preliminary fashion with those made by Ephrem and Narsai.

Lehto, Adam, "Nature as a Category in Early Syriac Theology"

Recent decades have seen increasing attention being paid to the role of Christian theology in shaping attitudes toward the natural world in the West, prompted by a deepening sense of ecological crisis. Ecologically-minded theologians from different religious communities, Christian and otherwise, have begun to assess the strengths and weaknesses of various contributions from the past as they seek to construct an informed environmental theology for today. How do early Syriac authors fare in this regard? My presentation will consider the role of non-human creation in the thought and practice of Aphrahat, Ephrem, and Philoxenus. Does Aphrahat, in this regard, differ in significant ways from his near contemporary Ephrem? Does Philoxenus display a strongly hellenized theology of nature when compared to his predecessors? How much continuity is there

alongside the discontinuity in these authors' approaches to nature? The analysis here will make use of the works of Paul Santmire and Sallie McFague to consider the basic metaphors that inform early Syriac views of non-human creation.

Loopstra, Jonathan, "Glossing the Glossators: Preserving the Biblical Reading Traditions of Ṭubana, Theodosius, and the Monks of the Skull Monastery"

J.P.P. Martin and N. Wiseman, working in the nineteenth century, compiled extensive lists of marginal readings, or glosses, found in manuscripts of the so-called "Syriac Massorah." Many of these marginal readings are attributed to eminent Syriac philologists, or "masoretes," living between the eighth to tenth centuries. In these same centuries a philological movement arose which is often associated with the *Qarqāptā* (Skull) Monastery. This movement was an attempt to preserve and standardize Syriac biblical readings in the midst of a shifting linguistic milieu. Chaim Brovender, in his 1976 PhD dissertation for the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, argues that these marginal glosses were an integral part of the system developed by the Syriac masoretes.

Both Martin and Wiseman limited their studies of these glosses to only a few of the Massorah manuscripts. Neither scholar attempted to compare these marginal notations across a wider collection of known Massorah texts. When multiple manuscripts are compared, it becomes clear that identical glosses often appear in manuscripts which differ in date of composition, location, and Massorah textual tradition. Copyists of some later Massorah manuscripts preserved these glosses by integrating them into the main body of the Massorah text.

The following communication will compare and discuss patterns of glosses in available manuscripts of the Syriac Massorah. The highlighted readings will be selected from a comprehensive list of glosses developed during the speaker's close examination and comparison of most Massorah manuscripts. Recurring patterns will be evaluated and notations of interest discussed. Particular attention will be given to notations attributed to the philologists Ṭubana and Theodosius. The marginal readings presented here should help present a fuller

picture of these philologists and how their work was transmitted in the Syriac tradition.

Lund, Jerome A., “Telltale Signs of a Semitic Prototext for the Peshitta of Daniel”

While Martin Jacob Wyngarden in his 1923 dissertation *The Syriac Version of the Book of Daniel*, the source of all recent statements about the prototext of Peshitta Daniel, correctly states that the Peshitta of Daniel had a Semitic prototext as over against a Greek prototext, his argumentation is less than desirable. He offers three categories for scholarly reflection. First, he offers a list of readings that are common to ‘the Semitic original’ (presumably the text contained in the MT) and ‘the Syriac’ as over against the readings of the Greek versions, namely the Old Greek and the Theodotionic versions. Second, he offers a list of errors in the Peshitta of Daniel that he attributes to mistakes in reading ‘the Semitic original’. Wyngarden brings a list of isolated examples as proof with no attempt at explaining them and assumes that the reader agrees with his evaluation. Moreover, he alleges that the translation attributed to Theodotion ‘colored’ the Peshitta text of Daniel. This presentation offers two different lines of argumentation that, to my way of thinking, are far more convincing than those offered by Wyngarden that absolutely demonstrate the truth that Peshitta Daniel was based on a Semitic original. I will bring an argument from vocabulary and an argument from syntax.

Maier, Carmen, “Ephrem and the Rabbis in Conversation”

Similarities in the exegesis of Ephrem and the Rabbis are explored by D. Gerson already in 1868. He shows Ephrem’s familiarity with Jewish Haggada and his dependence upon Jewish exegetical techniques. T. Kronholm in 1978 examines Ephrem’s exegesis of Genesis 1-11, drawing extensive parallels to the Jewish exegetical tradition, but only in footnotes, without bringing these parallels into dialogue. In fact, G. Stemberger in a 1996 article notes the lack of methodology available by which to evaluate parallels in Jewish and Christian exegesis.

This paper seeks to show a viable method by which to do so. I follow G. Anderson in his

2001 work, *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Interpretation*. Anderson allows texts of both traditions to stand side by side as though equals in a conversation. In my presentation, I highlight sections from Ephrem’s *Commentary on Genesis* in conjunction with his *Hymns on Paradise*, and from *Genesis Rabbah*, where these texts retell the Garden narrative of Genesis 3:1-11. As Ephrem and the Rabbis relay the fateful events in Eden, it will be shown that both believe that it is the exegete’s task to draw out and even participate in the revelatory character of scripture. The very conversation between them is enabled by their “textualizing of existence,” to borrow M. Fishbane’s phrase. Ephrem and the Rabbis find their own respective stories written between the lines of the scriptural narrative.

McDonough, Scott, “A Prophet for All Faiths? The Cult of Daniel in the Late Sasanian World”

The Armenian historian Sebeos reports that in the final decade of the sixth century, the Roman emperor Maurice asked the Sasanian king Kusro II Aparviz to give him a body kept in a copper lined sarcophagus in a royal treasury at Susa, believed to be the prophet Daniel. While Sasanian kings had a long tradition of translating inconvenient relics to the Roman world, here Kusro found his wishes stymied by his wife, Shirin, who organized Christians to beseech Christ to keep the prophet’s remains at home. In the end, Christ, and Shirin, had their way, when the city’s streams dried up and the mules transporting Daniel’s remains refused to depart.

Although this particular story comes from an Armenian source, the Biblical Daniel was one of the most popular figures in the imagination of Syriac-speaking Christians in the Sasanian world. Imagery from the *Book of Daniel* informed the martyrologies and hagiographies of Christians living a new exile born of repeated Sasanian deportations, persecuted by Sasanian Nebuchadnezzars. Images of Daniel grace a number of Sasanian-era seals and even one of the earliest surviving illuminated Syriac Bibles (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS syr. 341). In addition, a variety of cult sites associated with Daniel developed in the Syriac-speaking world, at Babylon, where relics of the fiery furnace were uncovered during the reign

of Bahram V (421–438), and, most importantly, at Susa.

In this paper, I examine the vital role the cult of Daniel played linking Sasanian Christians to their Old Testament past and to the wider Christian *oikoumene* of their present. Further, I will explore how the cult of Daniel, and sites like Susa, served not just Christians, but Jews, Manichaeans, Magians and, following the collapse of Sasanian rule, Muslims. In this, the Syriac cult of Daniel illustrates the fluid nature of religious identity in the Late Sasanian world, where a single prophet might serve many faiths.

McVey, Kathleen E., “Spirit Embodied: Contemplative Interpretations of Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture”

In early Christian and Byzantine contexts the buildings associated with religious functions came to be regarded as themselves sacred. That is to say, not only the rites performed in them and those who performed those rites but also the architectural elements and the structures in their entirety assumed the task of mediating between the everyday and the sacred, the finite and the infinite. This did not take place immediately, nor was it a universal phenomenon, but it was a significant aspect of the frame of mind of eastern Christians of diverse linguistic, cultural and theological affiliation by the sixth century (A.D.) – both more and less educated and both clerical and lay.

These notions were founded upon a network of symbols rooted in Scripture and in Christian theology as it developed in dialogue with later Platonism. Temple, Tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant were identified with the Body of Christ – itself understood as *ecclesia* in many senses: as the community comprised of living and dead, human and angelic members as well as the church building. Mary, the Theotokos, also understood as the dwelling place of holiness on earth, acquired many of the same resonances both with Biblical *loci* of holiness and with the constructions of brick, wood and stone in which Christians worshipped.

Both Philo and Eusebius contributed to the development of spiritual interpretations of Jewish and Christian places of worship as well as of

the clergy and cultic appurtenances. But the earliest clear applications of these ideas to actual buildings emerge in Syriac and Armenian documents of the 5th century; they quickly appear in Greek compositions as well. In this paper we will briefly survey the pertinent literary sources from the 5th and 6th centuries and their main themes.

Mengozzi, Alessandro, “‘Suraye wa-Phrangaye’: Late East-Syrian Poetry on Historical Events in Classical and Vernacular Syriac”

From the 13th century onwards, in the East-Syrian milieu, historical thinking found fertile ground in the literary space of liturgical poetry. A number of hymns with historical content have been preserved, in Classical and Vernacular Syriac. Especially from the 18th century, poems in Modern Syriac (Neo-Aramaic or Sureth, as it is called in North Iraq) on historical, mostly catastrophic, events (war, pestilence, famine) seem to become rather popular.

This paper will focus on two texts: A Classical Syriac *‘onitha* on the Crusades and a Modern Syriac *dorektha* on the Russian-Turkish War of 1877.

The first text is preserved in an 18th-century collection of *‘onyatha*, attributed to Giwargis Warda. As the editor correctly pointed out (Nöldeke 1873), this poem gives us an insight into the East-Syrian perception of that dramatic Christian-Muslim conflict. Beside the rather problematic study of its sources (Nöldeke made no detailed *Quellenstudie*), the *‘onitha* should be read in the wider framework of the late East-Syrian poetic tradition in the classical language and its continuation in the vernacular.

The second text, in the modern language, addresses similar topics, dealing with the attitude of the Western Christian Powers (Russia, Germany, England, USA, and Italy) towards the Ottoman oppression of Eastern Christians (Bulgarians, Georgians).

Analysis of ethnonyms such as ‘Syrians’ and ‘Franks’ and epithets such as ‘barbarians’ and ‘heathens’, brings to the fore the dynamic system of cultural identities which the two texts reflect and leads us to appreciate vivid East Syrian narratives on the confrontation of East and West, Christians and Muslims, Eastern and Western Christians.

Michelson, David A., “Religious Practice and the Defense of Miaphysite Orthodoxy: Observations on Philoxenos of Mabbug”

Summarizing the conclusions of my dissertation research, this paper examines a half-century of the Post-Chalcedonian Christological controversies (ca. 470-520) through a contextual approach to Philoxenos’ life and work. It argues that a cultural landscape of ritual practice and collective imagination shaped his concerns over Christology and provided the firepower for his polemics. Specifically, it situates his involvement in the controversies within various contexts of praxis such as the contingencies of episcopal administration, habits of scripture reading, liturgical practices including the Eucharist and baptism, and the spiritual combat of the ascetic life. These shared activities of the Christian community provided a context within which doctrinal disagreements took on meaning and significance. Generalizing from these contexts, this paper argues that for Philoxenos, the late antique doctrinal controversies must be understood within a framework of praxis. Particularities of doctrine mattered, but their potency often came from their implications for religious practice. Philoxenos’ objection to dyophysite Christology stemmed from more than just a desire for exactitude in the minutiae of doctrinal terminology. He held pastoral, liturgical, and spiritual duties upon which errant Christology impinged. His response was, therefore, not merely that of a theologian, but that of a churchman. Philoxenos conceived of theology (and theological polemic) as a devotional, rather than an intellectual exercise. In sum, the formation of Christian orthodoxy must be understood through its context of communal orthopraxy.

Monnickendam, Yifat, “Betrothal laws In Ephraem and their sources”

The laws of betrothal in the early church, and especially in the Syriac church, have hardly been studied. The rare discussions on the laws of betrothal and marriage deal either with the New Testament and the laws that are revealed in it or with late codices.

The writings of Ephraem the Syrian do not discuss betrothal laws directly, but they men-

tion the subject on different occasions and as such are the earliest source from within the Syriac church to reflect the church’s laws of betrothal.

Ephraem mentions betrothal a number of times, both as part of his description of the marriage between Jesus and the church and in the course of various passages of biblical interpretation in both of the Old and the New Testament. According to Ephraem the status of the betrothed is similar to the status of the married woman: She is called by the name of her spouse from the time of betrothal and not from the time of marriage; she is forbidden both to her fiancé and to anybody else, but the result of violation in each case is different. Having intercourse with a stranger requires divorce from the fiancé whereas having intercourse with her fiancé before the marriage is not allowed but is not considered as adultery.

These laws show extremely close resemblance to the Jewish law, not only in content but also in literal expression. Ephraem and the Syriac church of his time seem to preserve the Jewish law on this subject as well as some of the Jewish terminology and biblical interpretation leading to these laws.

Morehouse, Robert, “Image Manipulation for eBeth Arké Content”

In the summer of 2004 Beth Mardutho, The Syriac Institute’s initiative for the eBeth Arké Digital Library began with the digitization of more than 650 volumes of interest to Syriac scholars. These books were scanned and then reviewed for quality assurance. They were backed up on an external hard drive and dvds. In September of 2006 a new phase of processing began as I, technical editor for the Institute, began cleaning the images to prepare them to be turned into PDFs, bookmarked for ease of reference, and uploaded to the Beth Mardutho website. The cleaning of these images entailed several steps. This presentation will carefully rehearse that process, demonstrating the techniques used to split, clean, deskew, and crop these images in the most efficient way possible—creating macros and running batch jobs in PhotoShop as well as selecting settings and processes batches of files in ScanFix.

Morrison, Craig, "The Bridge from Judaism: The Jews in Ephrem's *Commentary on the Diatessaron*"

The Scriptures held sacred by both Christianity and Judaism form a bridge that binds these two traditions. In his *Commentary on the Diatessaron*, Ephrem the Syrian explored the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. According to Ephrem, the New Testament, what he called the "Second Testament," flows from the "First Testament" (the Old Testament). In turn, the First Testament illuminates and interprets events in the Second. But this biblical bridge linking Judaism and Christianity gave rise to a dispute over how to interpret this shared patrimony. Traces of this dispute are found in the *Commentary on the Diatessaron*.

Münz-Manor, Ophir, "When Poetry Does Not Follow Religious Affiliation: Christian and Jewish Poets on Body and Soul"

In this paper I will present the preliminary conclusions of my comparative study of Christian and Jewish poetry from late antiquity. The main objectives of this project are to unveil and describe the common poetic and prosodic characteristics of Syriac, Greek, Jewish Aramaic and Hebrew poetry from the eastern provinces of the Byzantine empire between the fourth and seventh centuries. This line of inquiry sheds new light on the intersection of Christian and Jewish cultures in late antiquity and strikingly corroborates Michael Roberts' assertion that in this period 'aesthetics do not follow religious affiliation'.

Several dispute poems between personifications of body and soul will serve as a case study of the previously mentioned literary and cultural interchange. Scholars who have studied Syriac poetic disputes have stressed – with good reason – their Mesopotamian origins, and some have even pointed to the existence of corresponding Jewish Aramaic disputes. Yet, very little attention has been paid to the cultural consequences of this shared interest in dialogic poetry in general and dispute poems in particular. The comparison between these poems will demonstrate perfectly how poets, Jewish and Christian alike, turned to the literary traditions of the ancient Near East and made them the foundation for an

innovative late antique poetics that is manifested *mutatis mutandis* in the works of poets from different religions and denominations. Furthermore, the paper will stress the key role played by Syriac poetry in conveying the Mesopotamian heritage to the multifaceted cultures of the Near East in one of its decisive epochs.

Odisho, Edward Y., "Modern Syriac: A Seriously Endangered Language"

With the advent of Islam and the Arabic language in the 7th century, Syriac (Aramaic) language encountered serious competition as the predominant medium of literate civilization and knowledge. In spite of the fierce competition, Syriac held its grounds until the Mongol invasion in the 13th century and shortly thereafter. Since then, except for occasional valuable works, Syriac has been losing ground in its written and spoken forms. Presently, with total absence of security, stability and the prevalence of non-democratic rules in the Middle East– the homeland of Syriac– there is massive relocation movement among the Syriac speaking population. The relocation movement is in two directions. *First*, it is the relocation from Syriac-speaking villages and small towns to large urban areas most of which are Arabic, Farsi, Turkish and Kurdish language dominant. *Second*, it is the relocation from mostly urban areas to foreign countries specifically to North America, Australia and Europe. In both instances, Syriac speakers lose their several lines of defense (borders) which protect them against alien linguistic and cultural invasion. These borders include territorial, political, religious, economic, cultural etc... When a minority has no territorial borders of itself, no autonomous political jurisdiction and freedom over its territory coupled with poor economic resources, its population totally loses its immunity to linguistic and cultural invasion by the majority. This invasive trend by the majority which has been going on for centuries is the only explanation for the drastic drop in the population of Syriac-speakers from tens of millions to less than two million. Syriac-speakers who relocate into the countries of diaspora are even more vulnerable to alien linguistic and cultural invasion cycle that hardly goes beyond three generations. If this extremely dangerous trend of Syriac-speaking population

evacuation and drainage continues, Syriac language will cease to exist practically within half a century in the diaspora and within one century in the native homelands. Sadly, the 21st century may very likely write the obituary for Syriac as a language of civilization.

Penn, Michael, "Arabs, Muslims, and Islam as Depicted in *The Book of Governors*"

The publication of Patricia Crone and Michael Cook's 1977 book *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* led to an increased interest in early Syriac sources regarding the rise of Islam. In recent years there have appeared several important works on Syriac anti-Muslim apocalypses (especially by Gerrit Reinink), disputations (Sidney Griffith), and chronicles (Andrew Palmer, Amir Harrak). Comparatively little attention, however, has been given to late antique monastic histories that mention Islam. Partially because their legendary character makes them particularly difficult historical sources, partially because Muslims often play peripheral rather than central roles in their narratives, these hagiographic works remained relatively ignored by Syriac scholars interested in early Christian-Muslim relations.

In order to illustrate the importance of these works for reconstructing early Christian views of Islam I wish to present a paper that analyzes the role of Arabs, Muslims, and Islam in a mid-ninth century text, *The Book of Governors*. Although this work's author Thomas, Bishop of Marga (later Metropolitan of Beth Garmai) focuses on the miraculous deeds of the various abbots of the East Syrian monastery Beth Abhe, non-Christian Arabs appear in about a dozen of the work's episodes. For a text consisting of 187 folio, at first glance these seem like only brief cameo appearances, but taken together they provide an example not simply of how a single Syriac writer depicts Arabs but also important clues for the interactions between ninth century Syriac Christians and Muslims.

Pettipiece, Timothy, "Manichaeism and the Book of Steps"

Given the prominent, albeit enigmatic, place that Manichaeans held in early Syriac Christian-

ity, this paper will examine the relation of Manichaeism to the Book of Steps, an important, though little studied, witness to early Syriac spirituality and asceticism.

Possekkel, Ute, "The Theology of Eusebius of Emesa: The Syriac Fragments"

Eusebius of Emesa (d. before 359) was an influential exegete of the Antiochene tradition and a prolific preacher. Yet his name became tainted with the accusation of Arianism, and his works mostly did not survive in their original Greek. A few fragments have been preserved in Greek, while other writings have survived in Latin, Armenian, or Syriac translation. A large collection of Syriac excerpts is preserved in a florilegium which Philoxenus of Mabbug (d. 523) attached to his *Memre against Habbib*. Together with the extant Latin translations of Eusebius' sermons, these Syriac fragments provide important insight into his theological method and his position on dogmatic questions. While scholars have occasionally referred to the Syriac fragments in discussions of Eusebius Trinitarian theology, these texts have not yet received detailed study in their own right. It is the purpose of this paper to analyze and interpret the Syriac fragments contained in Philoxenus' florilegium, and to evaluate the theological position that emerges from them.

Rompay, Lucas van, "Severus, patriarch of Antioch (512-538), in the Greek, Syriac, and Coptic traditions"

Handbooks of church history assign only six years to Severus' patriarchate (512-518). For his followers, however, he remained their undisputed leader until his death in 538. Living for the last twenty years of his life in Egypt, hiding or keeping a low profile, Severus nevertheless energetically continued to guide and inspire the life of his flock in Syria. His Pisidian Greek background apparently did not hinder him in his frequent contacts with the monks and faithful of the Syriac world, while he also built a strong reputation among the Egyptian Christians, which is reflected in numerous Coptic translations of his writings.

While Severus was able to unite Syrian Christians of different linguistic and cultural

backgrounds, as well as to bring Syrian and Egyptian Miaphysites closely together, his person and his work at the same time embody the separation between the Chalcedonian and Miaphysite streams of Christianity.

This paper will reflect on Severus' different roles as creator of unity and of separation. Using Greek, Syriac, and Coptic sources – some of which were published only in recent years or did not receive sufficient attention in previous scholarship – the reception of Severus' works in the different languages and the impact they had on the formation of the different Miaphysite communities will be considered.

Royel, Cor-bishop David, “East Meets East: Byzantine Liturgical Influences on the Rite of the Church of the East”

Scholars today, both liturgical and Church historians, have often stressed the ecclesiastical isolation of the Assyrian Church of the East down through the centuries, especially since the period of the great christological controversies of the ecumenical councils. However, when it comes to the development of liturgy, theological and political boundaries are so easily crossed, oftentimes going unnoticed, save by the scrutinizing eye of the diligent student of liturgy.

With the development of what scholars of liturgy have referred to as the ‘East Syrian’ rite in the Semitic context of northern Mesopotamia, one notices not only the indigenous characteristics of the region that helped to shape the East Syrian rite to what we now know it as, but also the influence of other liturgical rites as well. No liturgical rite ever really grows or develops in a vacuum, and many times what the various Eastern (and non) Churches hold as being particularly ‘our own’ has actually been borrowed or brought in from other liturgical rites.

Two classic examples of this borrowing may be seen in the rite of the Assyrian Church of the East, especially with regard to the diaconal litanies with which all of the major hours of prayer end, and the hymn found in all of the Eastern liturgical rites known as the *Trisagion*.

In this presentation, we will examine the East Syrian diaconal litanies and the *Trisagion* in order to better understand not only their place within the various liturgical units of the rites, but also in order to arrive at their origins and

intention in being included in the divine office, and the Eucharistic liturgy as well. We will demonstrate that both the litany, or *ektene*, and the *Trisagion* have been borrowed from the Byzantine East during the course of the mid-to-late sixth century. During this historical period, there were heavy contacts between the Church of the East and the see of Constantinople, the seat of the Byzantine Empire. In the East Syrian liturgy, therefore, we can see traces of this crossroads—where ‘East meets East.’

Saint-Laurent, Jeanne-Nicole, “Hagiographical Memories of Jacob Baradaeus”

The gradual process through which the Miaphysites became a separate “Church” lasted several centuries after the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Struggles over doctrine and vying claims to religious authority culminated in 519 with imperial persecutions against bishops who refused to accept Chalcedon.

Anti-Chalcedonian leaders, such as John of Ephesus, wrote hagiographies to construct outstanding models of sanctity for their dissident group. Through these texts, they enshrined religious heroes to edify their societies and communities. Anti-Chalcedonian hagiography remembered Jacob Baradaeus as a missionary itinerant bishop who ministered to communities within the Roman Empire and beyond its borders. His ordinations nurtured Anti-Chalcedonian expansion. The Miaphysite Church elevated Jacob in its religious tradition and memory; it would later be known as the “Jacobite” Church.

This paper will explore Miaphysite hagiographical constructions of Jacob Baradaeus, with special attention to his missionary practices. His rigorous pastoral attention and extensive travel throughout the eastern Roman Empire revitalized Anti-Chalcedonian communities. I will analyze hagiographical portraits of Jacob and contrast these representations with those found in historiographical sources as well as East Syriac Dyophysite and Chalcedonian texts.

I will argue that Anti-Chalcedonians and their later Miaphysite descendants forged in Jacob an icon to symbolize themselves in the sixth century: poor, ascetic, and struggling, yet holy, energetic, and enterprising. Through articulating Jacob's story and emphasizing his

missionary traits, they constructed a portrait of an expanding community. This self-presentation was an effective antidote to the memory of Chalcedonian persecutions and internal struggles that had threatened the Anti-Chalcedonians throughout the sixth century.

Saleh, Walid, “An Islamic Diatessaron”

In 861/1457 al-Biqai, a Quran exegete, decided to use the Bible in his interpretation of the Qur'an. Soon he was copying large sections from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. While he opted to cite the Hebrew Arabic translation verbatim when he quoted it, he developed what can only be described as a diatessaron method of quoting from the four Gospels. In this paper I will try to assess the extent of his quotations from the four Gospels and more importantly establish if he by this method has offered his reader a full diatessaron of the four Gospels.

Smine, Rima E., “Syriac Illuminations during the Crusades: The Evidence of British Library ADD 7154”

Les manuscrits syriaques à enluminures, by Jules Leroy, remains to this day the major source for the study of Syriac miniature paintings. For the scholars who rely on it for their study of this tradition, one evidence clearly emerges: a great number of the manuscripts discussed hail back to the 12th and the 13th century AD. It is not surprising that Leroy himself coined this period as the Renaissance of Syriac Art, in an article in the *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, since it witnessed the rise of great figures of Syriac civilization such as the Patriarch Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus.

Art Historians have tended to catalogue Syriac manuscripts of this period in the realm of Byzantine Art, but recent research is discovering a varied and rich cultural background in the Middle East. The Crusaders brought a new impetus in artistic production, especially amongst the local Christian populations, and their influence appears in many monuments from this period. In the Syriac tradition, one manuscript in particular provides examples of this influence. British Library Manuscript Add.7154 is a Psal-

ter book that reflects the international trend of this period. Despite the small number of images, all in the beginning of the book, the variety of influences is obvious. Some images have a distinct Byzantine iconography and others are derived from Crusader prototypes. The present paper will present the miniatures and compare them to examples from other traditions. Then, it will proceed to identify the origin of the manuscript, its date of production and its possible patron.

Smith, Kyle, “Dendrites and Other Stangers: Evidence from the Newly Translated *History of the Exploits of Bishop Paul and Priest John*”

The *History of the Exploits of Bishop Paul and Priest John* was the recent translation project of a Syriac reading group at Duke University. The text, which will appear in a forthcoming volume prepared by the group, is preserved in at least two sixth-century manuscripts [mss. British Library, Add. 14,597, f. 144v-156r and 12,160 f. 134v-152v].

This paper will summarize the adventures of Bishop Paul and Priest John, previously unknown characters from Syriac late antiquity. After discussing their story—which references Rabbula and presents stylistic parallels to the *Life of the Man of God*—the focus of the paper will shift to the intriguing ascetic phenomena discussed in the *History*: dendrites, mourners, and mountaineers. One section of the text speaks explicitly of an ascetic who stood in a tree for thirty-five years. This part of the *History* is particularly interesting as very few dendrites are mentioned in Syriac Christian literature.

By way of locating Syriac as a “bridge culture,” the anonymous dendrite of our text will be considered in conjunction with Michael Williams’ broader investigation into the theme of stability (“standing”) in late ancient gnostic and Jewish sources. Michael Whitby’s article about Maro the Dendrite, a tree-dweller mentioned in John of Ephesus’ *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, examines the question of “anti-social” holy men vis-à-vis their more celebrated and well-known confreres, the stylites. Whitby’s article, along with the broader evidence for dendrites presented by the Byzantinist Alexander Vasilev, will be addressed in order to propose a concep-

tual framework for thinking of “standing saints” in Syriac late antiquity.

Talia, Shawqi, “Lamentations in Neo-Aramaic *Dorekyatha* of Northern Iraq”

Poetic lamentations have been part of the literature of the Ancient Semitic World, especially Ancient Israel and Mesopotamia. Like their brethren of these ancient lands, the Neo-Aramaic speaking Chaldean Christians of Northern Iraq have developed this literary genre as a cardinal part of their oral literature. The Chaldean community, mostly from the towns of Alkush and Telkepe, has produced many poems, including lamentations, under the common rubric of *Dorekyatha* (sing. *dorektha*). These poems are a portrait of grief, sorrow, distress, despair, and disconsolation over the passing of person, group, or the desolation of a homeland. In lamentations, the poet is remonstrating against the vicissitudes of times.

Though a *dorektha* has its stanzas joined together by the basic motif of lament (or other subjects), many stanzas stand alone, sounding to the listener with a specific message. The poet addresses the theme of lamentations via the application of literary devices, used throughout the poem. The poet is adept in the use of imagery, metaphors, supplications, alliteration, the use of verbal tenses, parallel ideas, hendiadys and parataxis. In harmonizing the use of all these literary devices, the poet brings his listener into the pathos of lamentations. Yet the poet is not the prolocutor in any particular *dorektha*. The prolocutor is the listener, who may be an individual or the whole community. However, the poet laments with his audience and helps them in alleviating the wrenching circumstances. Hence each *dorektha* of lamentation is a catharsis for one and all. The bard calls the community to mourn; yet this mourning is not some abstract concept or a simple emotional wailing. Neo-Aramaic oral lament is an articulation of the individual and the community. In lamenting, the soul is petitioning God to give solace and comfort. It is a requiem to the virtue of hope.

Taylor, Richard A., “The Book of Daniel in the Bible of Edessa”

In this paper I highlight certain textual and

translational features of the Peshitta text of Daniel in relationship to other ancient textual traditions for this book. These features will be evident in a forthcoming annotated English translation of the Syriac text of Daniel that will appear as part of a larger project known as the Bible of Edessa, which will make available to non-specialists a reliable English translation of the Syriac Bible.

Thekeparampil, Rev. Jacob, “Syriac Inscriptions in Kerala”

Christianity in India, as per tradition, goes back to the Apostle Thomas, who is said to have landed in Kodungallore in A.D.52 and established seven churches on the so called Malabar Coast. Through him and the later immigrants from regions like Edessa and Seleucia-Ctesiphon, who started to come to South India from 4th century onwards, these churches became ‘Syriac’ in as much as they welcomed Syriac bishops and clergy and adopted Syriac liturgy, Church practices etc. They remained faithful to the Syriac heritage in spite of the attempts of latinisation imposed by the Portuguese Missionaries in the 16th century and the reformation projects of the Anglican Missionaries who came to Malabar after the Portuguese. Thanks to the laudable initiation of the Syriac clergy, the Christians of the Malabar coast started using Syriac as their liturgical language, learning it not only for liturgical purposes, but also for producing or better reproducing Syriac manuscripts in Kerala and recording the important events and dates of their family members especially the deceased clergy, the historical details regarding their churches, parish houses, quotations from the Bible or from the works of the Church Fathers on or above their altars. Here the reference is to the Syriac manuscripts written by the Indian members of Syriac Churches and the Syriac inscriptions found in churches and church related objects. These written vestiges attest to their Church affiliations and to their love of and appreciation for the Syriac language, which as Christ’s own language is still held in high esteem among the nearly nine million Christians of Syriac tradition living in Kerala or elsewhere.

The various inscriptions in Syriac that I will show may be grouped in the following catego-

ries: unique inscriptions on a church bell and patriarchal throne; altar inscriptions; sanctuary inscriptions; inscriptions on church buildings; funeral inscriptions; cross inscriptions etc. The content of these inscriptions varies according to the objects and places where they are written. These can also be grouped according to the dates of their realizations on the monuments. Their descriptions will be based on the methodology followed by my colleagues Mr. Alain Desreumaux and Mme Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet, Paris, France. My concluding remarks will highlight their relevance for the Syriac Churches in India and in general.

Tubach, Juergen, "The Hymn of the Pearl and the World of the Persian Nobility"

The Acts of Thomas (Acta Thomae), preserved in Syriac and Greek, describe the mission of Thomas to India. The text was probably composed in Edessa in the early 3rd century. The Acta Thomae stylistically rely on the New Testamental Acts of the Apostles, although the apocryphal book contains many fantastic elements unknown to the New Testament as a whole. For this reason the Acts of Thomas should be classified as an Apostle romance comparable to the antique love stories.

The Acts contain two longer hymns attributed to Thomas. The first one is the so called Wedding hymn sung by the apostle in a seaport town on the sea-route to India. The other is the far better known Hymn of the Pearl, perhaps the most beautiful poem of the Syriac literature, which is sung in prison by the apostle. The Hymn of the Pearl is only contained in one Syriac and in one Greek manuscript. A prince of the eastern hemisphere makes a journey to Egypt in order to look after a precious pearl according to the hymn. Afterwards he returns to the eastern part of the world. The literary genre to which the hymn belongs will not be dealt in detail. Normally the text is understood as allegory which is not possible. The text contains elements which can not be explained with the allegoric method. As a rule the hymn is seen as an important witness of Syriac Gnosticism. For this reason many collections of Gnostic texts incorporated the Hymn of the Pearl. But this classification is not justified, it is more a preliminary decision made by the modern exegetic

and not based on the text. A Gnostic interpretation is not evident and does not result from the hymn because the poem does not contain typical Gnostic figures and thoughts. The lecture will primarily deal with the realities mentioned in the text. The real facts are the basis for all other statements of any problem related to the hymn.

The court of the great king is described with *termini technici* (loanwords or calques) belonging to the world of the Iranian nobility. The prince of the Hymn of the Pearl is not a simple noble; he belongs to a particular social stratum within the aristocracy, the higher nobility, which forms a special group of its own. This class of nobles is further subdivided which is mentioned in the hymn. The principal organization of the Persian aristocracy is the distinction between *azadan* (syr. *here*) and *vazurgan* (syr. *raurbane*), the lower and higher class of nobility, which is not only found in the Iranian highland but also in all Vassal states in Mesopotamia and East Anatolia (Armenia, Georgia). The court of the great king residing in Ktesiphon was seen as a prototype and ideal of noble style of living. The vassals outside the Iranian highland imitated this conduct of life and the Royal household. It is not surprising to find many titles for the higher administration in the hymn. These are either loan words or literal translations of corresponding Iranian words. Several examples for this kind of words, loans or calques, are extant in the Hymn of the Pearl. Probably the author of the hymn was a member of the higher nobility or at least of the gentry.

Valgiusti, Elisabetta, "Syriac Christianity in the Iraqi Exodus: A People of Prophets between Hope and Hopelessness"

In Europe and most of the western world, the media only occasionally refers to the existence of the Christians in Iraq often with titles of a targeted religious persecution aimed at their annihilation.

What is the reality today? It is true that throughout the last two millennia, only commitment, sacrifice, and martyrdom for the sake of their religious faith made the life of these Christians possible in a particularly difficult region. The Christians of Iraq constitute a people of a long line of prophets who managed to keep their hope alive in a world full of historical conflicts.

They are like the direct heirs of those prophets and numerous spiritual masters, ecclesiastical mentors, theologians, and monastic leaders. Sadly, now their very existence and continuity in Iraq sounds like a dream. Virtually, the survival of every single Christian there is extremely endangered. We are now at a crucial bi-millennial turning-point after which any hope for further permanence might be lost. The questions now are: How to make the world know about their cultural uniqueness? How to stop their exodus out of their historical abode? We are facing a disaster that underlines the need to help the Iraqi Christians remain in their Homeland with the support of the international community and highlights the extreme urgency to preserve their brilliant cultural heritage.

The Salvaimonasteri Association, whose headquarters is in Rome, proposes two plans in order to safeguard the Syriac heritage and to support its people. My documentary *The Christians of Nineveh*, along with samples of cultural materials I have gathered for the Salvaimonasteri Association during my visits to Iraq in the last two years, will illustrate the plans in question.

Vashalomidze, Sophia G., “The Assyrian Minority in Present-day Georgia”

Modern Assyrians adhere to the Christianity of the Syrian churches. Since the 17th century Assyrians have settled in Georgia as a result of several wars. Later during World War One, Assyrians, Armenians and other Christian minorities were persecuted and Assyrian refugees came to Georgia. But Aramaic inscriptions from the 5th century BC in eastern Georgia show that cultural relations between Mesopotamia and Georgia already existed in the antique. It is also well known that the Christianization of Georgia was also influenced by Syria. In the 6th century the “Thirteen Syrian Fathers” founded a lot of monasteries in Georgia.

Nevertheless, the current Assyrian Diaspora in Georgia has not been at the core of scientific interests. Regarding the cultural relations between Georgia and (As-)Syria, it seems useful to discuss the actual social situation of the Assyrians there. For that purpose the following questions are relevant: What are the living conditions of the Assyrians in today’s Georgia like? Where are their centres of settlement? (We have to think e.g. of the

village of Kanda where 80 percent of the population are Assyrians.) How are the Assyrians integrated? Can they represent their own interests? Which media do they have? Are their minority status and their linguistic, religious and cultural identity guaranteed? How is their social situation in comparison with other minorities in Georgia? The answers to these questions describe the situation of the Assyrians in one of their original retreat areas and update the existing historical studies of the cultural exchange between Georgian and (As-)Syrians.

Wheatley-Irving, Linda, “The Architecture of Mor Abhai Monastery on the Euphrates”

Mor Abhai Monastery, now submerged by the Atatürk Dam in SE Turkey, was a witness to the growth of monastic foundations in the aftermath of the tenth century Byzantine reconquest of the Eastern frontier, as related by Michael the Syrian. The site's buildings have features related to Late Antique Syria, later Tur Abdin, and the medieval Armenian/Mamluk architecture of nearby Yeni Kale. The connection with Late Antique Syria, as well as other features, may support the claim in Mor Abhai's Vita that his monastery was built on the ruins of an earlier monastery.

Wilde, Clare, “Syriac Influences on Qur’anic Apocalyptic Themes?”

The eighteenth chapter of the Qur’an, Surat al-Kahf, is the chapter predominantly used in the Friday *khutba*. It also contains elements of tales that would have been familiar to the Christian Orient: the Sleepers of Ephesus, and a seeming conflation of Moses with a vision of Alexander the Great as depicted, for example, by Jacob of Serugh. In the light of the Qur’an’s eschatological emphasis, the appearance of the Sleepers and Alexander are not surprising – the resurrection and the kingly conquest of Gog and Magog being themes of both an apocalyptic and eschatological import in the Christian Orient even prior to Islam. Given Moses’ appearance in Q 18, might he, too, have been seen in this light before the advent of Islam? Along these lines, might the qur’anic comment on the (impending?) defeat of and by the Roman Empire be seen as an apocalyptic element of the message that Muhammad was preaching? While Christian apoca-

lyptic responses to the advent of Islam have been studied (see, for example, Hoyland's recent book), the qur'anic appropriation of Christian apocalyptic themes known in pre-qur'anic Syriac literature merits further study.

Younansardaroud, Helen, "'Abdīšō' bar Brīkā's book *Paradise of Eden*"

'Abdīšō' was the last important East Syriac writer and theologian in medieval times. He was born in Gazarta on the Tigris, in the region of Beth Zabdai (in southeast Turkey). In 1284/85 he was bishop of Šīgar and of Bēt 'Arabāyē and before 1290/91 he was metropolitan of Nisibis and of Armenia.

'Abdīšō' wrote numerous works in Syriac and Arabic which represent the whole range of

knowledge in the humanities at his time. Some of his works are lost, others are extant only as manuscripts. Among his best-known and most often used writings are the *Nomocanon*, the *Book of Pearls about the Truth of Faith*, and his catalogue of Syriac authors *mēmra d-sāyōmē*. Moreover, he composed Syriac poems in his *Paradise of Eden* (*pardaisa da-'den*). In Arabic he wrote among others a theological compendium and an introduction to the Gospel as prose poem.

Paradise of Eden is a collection of 50 *mēmre* or *maqāmat* with a theological content. The *Paradise* is a book with a purpose, representing an attempt to defend the Syriac language as a vehicle of expression from the scorn which was being heaped upon it by the Arabs.

