

The Thirteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies.
Oxford, 16–21 August 1999.

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[1] The Thirteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies convened in Oxford, England during the week of 16–21 August 1999 with roughly 800 participants. Among the many papers, there were a feast of offerings for the Syriac scholar. In the Communications, twenty-three papers were delivered in the Syriac section over three days; other Syriac papers, notably one by Kathleen McVey, were presented in other Communication sections defined by broader themes. Four Master Theme papers were presented in the “Ephrem/Syria” session over the course of two days. These were given by Sebastian Brock, Phil Botha, Sidney Griffith and Ephrem Lash. In fact, this Master Theme session attracted such a large audience that the original room assignment had to be changed to accommodate the crowd! A further four papers containing substantial Syriac scholarship were delivered at other Master Theme sessions, again defined by broader themes. These were given by J.W. Drijvers, Alexander Golitzin, Simon Mimouni, and Pauline Allen. Finally, the Public Lecture by Susan Harvey drew heavily on Syriac sources as well as Greek. Syriacists were additionally happy to find a full day’s Communication section given to Armenian and Georgian papers.

[2] It was a great pleasure to find many graduate students among those offering and attending the Syriac papers, and further, to learn that these students had come from as wide a geographical expanse as the conference itself. One had every indication that Syriac studies is thriving in many universities around the world. The opportunity to meet together was, as always, a rare and wonderful treat—inspiring and energizing for all.