

PROJECTS AND CONFERENCE REPORTS

Syriac Symposium III: The Aramaic Heritage of Syria
The Summer Syriac Institute, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, 17–20 June 1999.

SyrCOM-99: The Third International Forum on Syriac Computing
(in association with Syriac Symposium III)
University of Notre Dame, Indiana, 18 June 1999.

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- [1] The Syriac Symposium III (SSIII) met at the University of Notre Dame, IN, 17–20 June 1999.¹ Dr. Joseph P. Amar, Director of the Summer Syriac Institute and Chair, Department of Classics at the University of Notre Dame was the principal organizer. SSIII was presented by The University of Notre Dame's Summer Syriac Institute with the support of a Henkels Lecture series grant. The theme of the Symposium was "The Aramaic Heritage of Syria." A highlight of the Symposium was Dr. Lucas Van Rompay's slide presentation and report on the paintings and Syriac inscriptions recently discovered at Dayr al-Suryan in Egypt. SSIII and SyrCom-99 met in Notre Dame's Center for Continuing Education, McKenna Hall. The convenience of the conference facilities, and the organizational skills and warm hospitality of Dr. Amar and his local program committee deserve special mention. SSIII and SyrCom-99 were well attended, with some one hundred registrants from the United States, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, The Netherlands, and Syria. Booksellers and distributors included Peeters Publishers and The Scholars Choice. Participants were also invited to visit the new Hammes Notre Dame Bookstore in the Eck Center on campus.

- [2] Twelve SSIII panels were scheduled: Aphrahat; Apocalypse; Spirituality; Ephrem; Language; Armenian; Crises in the Syrian

¹ The Syriac Symposium is a quadrennial meeting of Syriacists in the United States. SSI was held at Brown University in June 1991. Dr. Susan Ashbrook Harvey was the principal organizer. SSII was held at The Catholic University of America in June 1995. Rev. Sidney H. Griffith and Dr. Robin Darling Young were the principal organizers.

Churches of India; Musical Tradition of the Syrian Christians of India; Exegesis; The Cave of Treasures; Historical Writing; Syriac Bible. The Exegesis panel showcased the work of Notre Dame graduate students. The program list of forty-two panel papers is appended at the end of this report.²

[3] Eight keynote addresses were presented in addition to the panel papers:

“Past and Present Perceptions of Syriac Literary Tradition,” by Lucas Van Rompay, Chair of Aramaic Language and Literature, University of Leiden, The Netherlands.

“Syriac Lexicography: The State of the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* Project,” Stephen Kaufman, Editor, *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio.

“Disputing with Islam in Syriac: The Case of the Monk of Bet Hale and a Muslim Emir,” by Sidney H. Griffith, Institute of Christian Oriental Research (ICOR), The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

“Why the Perfume Mattered: The Sinful Woman in Syriac Exegetical Tradition,” Susan Ashbrook Harvey. Religious Studies, Brown University, Providence, RI.

“The ‘Chronicle’ of Eusebius: Its Continuation and Type in Syriac Historiography,” by Witold Witakowski, University of Uppsala, Sweden, Department of History.

“Les Maronites à travers les sources syriaques du VII^e au XIII^e siècle; *Encyclopédie Maronite*—Progress and Development,” by Karam Rizk, Directeur de l’Institut d’Histoire Université Saint-Esprit, al-Kaslik, Jounieh, Lebanon.

“Sin, Death, Satan and Christ: the Drama of Salvation in Ephrem’s *Carmina Nisibena*,” Gary Anderson, Professor of Hebrew Bible, Harvard Divinity School.

“Patriarch Athanasius I Gamala and Paul of Edessa—The Patron and his Protégé: Contemporary Motifs and Promotion of the Syriac Translation of Gregory of Nazianzenus’ Homilies (7th c.),” by Andrea Barbara Schmidt, Institut Orientaliste, Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.

² There were last-minute changes to the formal SSIII program. It has not been possible to verify all of them. Avril M. Makhlof, Petra Heldt, and Victoria Erhart were unable to attend and present their papers. Joseph J. Palackal’s paper was read in his absence. The panel **Musical Tradition of the Syrian Christians of India** was expanded to include a demonstration of web pages on Syriac chants at the Syrian Orthodox Resources web site by George Kiraz.

Two of the keynote addressers gave progress reports on important Syriac reference tools. Dr. Stephen Kaufman made an emphatic plea for support of *The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon (CAL)* by Syriacists. (See the *CAL* Webpage at: <http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/index.html>) He reminded the audience that *CAL* can use computer files of Syriac texts in preparation or already prepared by individual scholars. In return *CAL* can generate concordances, bibliographies and other tools from these donated computer files to assist the work of the donors. He invited Syriac scholars to submit lexicographically relevant entries in Syriac texts even beyond the time frame defined for the Syriac material in *CAL*. Dr. Karam Rizk, editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopédie Maronite*, asked for volunteers to contribute entries to the encyclopedia. It is being published in ten volumes by the Université Saint-Esprit in Kaslik, Lebanon. The first volume 'A–A' appeared in 1992.

- [4] SyrCom-99, The Third International Forum on Syriac Computing met in association with the Syriac Symposium III on Friday, 18 June 1999. SyrCom-99 was divided into three parts: Wordprocessing and Fonts, Education and the Internet, and Projects on Neo-Syriac. The closing session included an overview of ongoing projects of the Syriac Computing Institute. Dr. George A. Kiraz, Bell Laboratories, was the principal organizer of this and two earlier forums: The Second International Forum on Syriac Computing at Uppsala University, Sweden in 1996 in conjunction with the VIIum Symposium Syriacum; the First International Forum on Syriac Computing at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. in 1995 in association with the Syriac Symposium II. He has been instrumental in bringing together computational projects related to Syriac studies and in assisting Syriac scholars with computer applications.

- [5] The Forum papers are listed at: <http://syrcom.cua.edu/SCForum/FSC3Sched.html>. They already have been published in print form by the Syriac Computing Institute: *SyrCom-99 Proceedings of the Third International Forum on Syriac Computing (In Association with Syriac Symposium III): June 18, 1999, University of Notre Dame, Indiana*. Edited by George Anton Kiraz. [New Jersey]: Syriac Computing Institute, © June 1999. SSIII papers will appear in one or more formats (electronic and print) and languages (English and Arabic) in one or more publications: *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* [<http://syrcom.cua.edu/Hugoye/>], a refereed electronic journal

(soon to be available also in a print edition), and the printed journal *Karmo (The Vine)* [<http://www.aas.net/karmo/>]. The Syriac Symposium IV (SSIV) will meet in 2003 at Princeton Theological Seminary. The principal organizer will be Dr. Kathleen E. McVey.

[6] Syriac Symposium III Panel Papers

Aphrahat (chair: Robin D. Young): "Aphrahat on the Temptation of Joseph at the Waters of Meribah," Stephen Ryan; "Aphrahat the Sage: A Study of his Anthropology," Stephanie Skoyles; "The Embodiment of a Christian Vocation: Aphrahat's Conceptualization of Virginity," Naomi Koltun-Fromm. **Apocalypse (chair: Paul S. Russell):** "The Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel (Harvard Ms Syriac 42, fols. 117a–122b)," Matthias Henze; "Two Late Fifth-Century, Syrian Christian Responses to the Merkabah Tradition: Jacob of Serug's Homily, "On the Chariot that Ezekiel the Prophet Saw," and the Corpus Dionysiacum," Alexander Golitzin. **Spirituality (chair: Blake Lyerle):** "Christ as Physician in the Early Syriac Tradition," Ute Possek; "The *Plerophoriae* of John Rufus and Spiritual Authority Based on Discipleship," Jennifer Hevelone-Harper; "In Search of Lost Apophthegmata in John the Solitary of Apamea," Robert A. Kitchen. **Ephrem (chair: Alexander Golitzin):** "St. Ephraem on the Duality of Christ and the Duality of the Creation," Paul S. Russell; "Claiming Christianity: Early Syriac Christianity and the Anti-Manichaean Rhetoric of Ephrem's Prose Refutations," Tina Shepardson; "Syrian Ephrem and Middle English Pearl," Zacharias P. Thundy. **Language (chair: Abdul Massih Saadi):** "Tawldotho II/Syriac Neologisms. Principles: Criteria and Examples, Part II," Abrohom Nuro; "Burhan: Study of a Word on a Journey from the Heart to the Mind and Back," Avril M. Makhlof. **Armenian (chair: Richard Taylor):** "Eznik of Kolb and Ephrem the Syrian Against Heresies," Monica J. Blanchard; "Syriac Christian Influence on Early Armenian Monasticism and the Evidence of the *Collected Homilies* Ascribed to Gregory the Illuminator," Robin Darling Young; "The Ephod and the Pelican: An Analysis of Christology and Atonement in Early Syro-Armenian Iconography," Erin Roberts. **Crises in the Syrian Churches of India (chair: Victor Z. Narively):** "Conflicts in the Indian Syrian Church: a Historical Overview," Cyriac Pullapilly; "Chaldeanize or Dechaldeanize? Current Liturgical Controversies in the Indian Syrian church," Jose Kuriedeth; "Mar Thoma Sliva or Manichean Cross?," Jose Kuriedeth. **Musical Tradition of the Syrian Christians of India (chair: Kuriakose Athapilly):** "Melodies of the Indian Syriac Liturgy and the Divine Office," Victor Z. Narively & Zacharias P. Thundy; "Problems and Issues in the Study of Syriac Chants in India," Joseph J. Palackal;

“Melodies of St. Ephrem and Other Syrian Masters in the Syrian Church of India.” **Exegesis (chair: Gregory Sterling):** “Ode 19 and the Textual History of John 1:13,” Basil S. Davis; “The Pledge of the Spirit in the *Liber Graduum*,” Amy Donaldson; “Exegetical Techniques in Ephrem’s *Homily on Our Lord*,” Angela Kim; “Jewish Exegetical Themes in Two Memre Attributed to Mar Ephrem,” Walter Ray. **Cave of Treasures (chair: Monica J. Blanchard):** “Anti-Judaism in the Syriac Cave of Treasures,” Clemens Leonhard; “Exegetical Concepts in the Oriental Syriac Cave of Treasures,” Petra Heldt; “Swearing by Abel’s Blood and Expulsion from Paradise: Two Exegetical Motifs of the Cave of Treasures in Context,” Serge Ruzer. **Historical Writing (chair: John Cavadini):** “Syriac Historiography in the Thirteenth Century: The Histories of Bar Hebraeus,” Hayat Bualuan; “Facts, History and Historiography. The Correspondence between Jacob of Edessa and John of Litarba,” Jan Van Ginkel; “Two Historical Homilies by Isaac (of Antioch?) On the Arab Destruction of Beth Hur,” Victoria Erhart; “Beth Abhe: An Economic Case-Study,” Cynthia Villagomez; “Textuality and Intertextuality: Moshe bar Kepha’s Use of Earlier Syriac Sources in his Commentary on Luke,” Abdul Massih Saadi; “Dair al-Suryan (Egypt), A Center of Syriac Culture in the Early Islamic Period,” Lucas Van Rompay. **Syriac Bible (chair: James VanderKam):** “Non-Canonical Syriac Psalms,” Shane Kirkpatrick; “Exegetical Readings in the Peshitta Text of 1 Samuel,” Craig E. Morrison; “Melchizedek in Judeo-Christian Tradition,” Edward Mathews; “Converse Translation in Peshitta Ezekiel,” Jerome Lund; “2 Baruch,” Mark Whitters; “The Syriac Old Testament in Recent Research,” Richard A. Taylor.