

Short Report on the Symposium:
“Conference on the Influence of Saint Ephraim the Syrian”
School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London,
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- [1] This conference was focused on the task of measuring the influence of St Ephraim, not only on his fellow-Syrians and their neighbours, the Armenians, the Georgians, the Greeks, and, through these last, the other Eastern Orthodox, including the Christian Arabs, but also on Western Europe and on the world today.
- [2] The twenty-two speakers came from eight different countries in three different continents. A special effort was made to include three speakers from Kerala, one from Syria, one from the Lebanon and one from Romania. The major funding for this came from the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, the School of Oriental and African Studies, the Charles Wallace India Trust and the Worshipful Company of Mercers.
- [3] The sessions were chaired by distinguished scholars in the various fields who contributed greatly to the long discussions in the new Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre. Attendance was good (around seventy people) and socially varied. The papers and the discussions held the attention of participants from various backgrounds, some academic, some religious, as was evident from the large number of oral and written compliments received by the organiser.
- [4] On each of the two days there was a musical event. On the first day this took the shape of a varied recital of liturgical music in the tradition of St Ephraim and Romanos the Melode, in which the Syrian Orthodox, the Assyrian Church of the East, the Maronites, the Antiochian, Greek and Russian Orthodox, the Armenian Apostolic, the Malankara Orthodox and the Ethiopian Orthodox took part. On the second day there was a recreation with harp accompaniment by Andrea Schmidt of Madrasa 15 on the Nativity by St Ephraim in Andrew Palmer's English translation.
- [5] The final lecture was by Sidney Griffith, Professor at the Institute of Oriental Christian Research in the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. He drew together all the threads of the conference and added much of his own, including the important discovery that the ascetical sermon attributed to St

Ephraim, which was composed in Greek and translated into nearly all the languages of medieval Christianity, is built around a solid skeleton of material translated from the original Syriac of St Ephraim.

- [6] Detailed studies included papers on the following subjects by the scholars whose names and workplaces appear in brackets after their titles :

Syriac Literature. *Ephraim's ideas on singleness* (T. Kunammakkal, Kottayam); *The tears of the sinful woman: Ephraim's theology of redemption* (H. Hunt, Leeds); *Did Ephraim sing for everyone, or did he write for an intellectual elite?* (A. Palmer, London); *Ephraim in the eyes of later Syriac tradition* (S. Brock, Oxford); *Ephraim and Jacob of Serugh* (M. Papoutsakis, Oxford); *Ephraim and Philoxenos of Mabbugh* (M. Mar Severios, Kottayam).

Eastern Christianity. *Ephraim's influence in Egypt and Ethiopia* (H.-G. Brakmann, Bonn — paper sent); *Ephraim's influence in Armenia and Georgia* (B. Outtier, Paris); *Ephraim in Christian Palestinian manuscripts* (A. Desreumaux, Paris—paper sent); *The Arabic Ephraim* (S. Khalil Samir, Beirut); *Ephraim's influence on the Indian Christians of St Thomas* (M. P. George, Kottayam); *Ephraim's influence on the Greeks* (D. Taylor, Birmingham); *The Greek Ephraim and the Metre of Mar Afrem* (E. Lash, Manchester); *Ephraim's thought and imagery as an inspiration to Byzantine artists* (Z. Gavrilovic, Birmingham); *Ephraim's influence on Orthodox theology* (D. Oancea, Sibiu).

Western and Modern. *Merovingian readers of Ephraim* (D. Ganz, London); *Ephraim in seventh-century Canterbury* (J. Stevenson, Warwick); *Some parallels between Ephraim and Hildegard of Bingen* (M. Schmidt, Eichstaett—paper sent); *John Wesley and Ephraim* (G. Wakefield, Lichfield); *Ephraim and the Oxford Movement* (G. Rowell, Basingstoke); *The position of women in the church: what did Ephraim change?* (F. Boulos, Aleppo); *Ephraim and the theology of the environment* (R. Murray, London).

- [7] Papers from this conference will be published in the upcoming issues of Hugoye.