

## CONFERENCE REPORTS

XI Symposium Syriacum, Malta July 2012, 9th Session: Syriac Manuscripts

**FRANÇOISE BRIQUEL CHATONNET AND MURIEL DEBIÉ**

During the last Symposium Syriacum in Valetta, Malta, in July 2012, a session dedicated to manuscripts was organised by Françoise Briquel Chatonnet (CNRS, Orient et Méditerranée, Paris) and Muriel Debié (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes et CNRS, Institut de recherches et d'histoire des textes, Paris). It aimed at giving an overview of the present state of research in relation to Syriac Manuscripts. A total of 13 papers was given in one of the 3 panels: codicology, manuscripts and their texts, collections and cataloguing enterprises. Three young scholars had the opportunity to attend and give papers thanks to grants from COMSt (Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies, European Science Foundation, <http://www.esf.org/activities/research-networking-programmes/humanities-sch/current-esf-research-networking-programmes-in-humanities/comst.html>).

The following papers were presented:

Youssef DERGHAM (Bibliothèque patriarcale, Charfet, Liban) and François VINOURE (Centre de conservation du livre, Arles), « Les reliures syriaques conservées à Charfet. Comparaison des techniques avec celles des autres reliures orientales: byzantines, arméniennes, islamiques »

Françoise BRIQUEL CHATONNET (CNRS Paris), « Le passage du parchemin au papier dans les manuscrits syriaques : premières constatations »

Alain DESREUMAUX (CNRS Paris), « Les encres dans les manuscrits syriaques »

Ewa BALICKA-WITAKOWSKA, Witold WITAKOWSKI (University of Uppsala), « Preliminary Observation on the Layouts Applied in Syriac Manuscripts »

Emilie VILLEY and Flavia RUANI (projet ANR SYRAB, Paris): « Traditions manuscrites syro-occidentale et syro-orientale de *l'Histoire de l'apôtre et évêque Philippe* »

A. BINGGELI, F. BRIQUEL-CHATONNET, M. DEBIÉ, A. DESREUMAUX, Stéphane IPERT (CNRS, Paris et Centre de conservation du Livre, Arles), « An electronic database for Syriac manuscripts »

Kristian HEAL (Brigham Young University), « The Mingana collection of Syriac manuscripts »

Erica HUNTER (SOAS London), « Syriac Mss from Turfan »

Grigory KESSEL (Marburg University), « Manuscript Collection of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Meryem Ana in Diyarbakir »

A. BINGGELI, F. BRIQUEL-CHATONNET, M. DEBIÉ, Y. DERGHAM, A. DESREUMAUX (CNRS Paris et patriarcat Charfeh), « Cataloguing Syriac manuscripts in Charfeh (Lebanon) »

Kristian HEAL (Brigham Young University), « Report on the Syriac Projects of the Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts »

Ayda KAPLAN (CECO : Centre d'étude sur les Chrétiens d'Orient, Bruxelles-Belgique) : « La paléographie syriaque à l'âge digital ».

Columba STEWART & Adam MCCOLLUM (Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Saint John's University, USA) & Fr. Nageeb Michael (Centre Numérique des Manuscrits Orientaux, Iraq): « Manuscript digitization and cataloguing work in the Middle East and India ».

This session attracted a wide interest and was such a success that many could not find a seat in the room were the presentations took place. The field of Syriac studies, so far quite neglected, continues to attract more and more attention and scholarly work. This is especially true of codicology. Some fascinating research on bookbinding showed that a distinct form can be identified, which is somehow different from Byzantine, Armenian or Islamic binding and specific to Syriac manuscripts. It is also worth mentioning that a number of projects deal with digitization, cataloguing, databases and digital studies.

The papers of this session as well as others dealing with manuscripts from other sessions or prepared by scholars who could not attend the Symposium will be published next year as a volume in the series *Cabiers d'études syriaques* (<http://www.etudes.syriaques.org/public.php#ces>).

10<sup>th</sup> workshop of the Société d'études syriaques (Paris): Les églises syriaques

**FRANÇOISE BRIQUEL CHATONNET, CNRS, LABORATOIRE ORIENT & MÉDITERRANÉE**

The Société d'études syriaques, founded in 2003, held its 10<sup>th</sup> workshop this year. With one book published annually, the aim of the related series 'Études syriaques' ('Syriac Studies') is to offer an overview of a specific topic in Syriac studies, together with a number of tools: bibliography, maps, index or tables as required, thus allowing not only syriacists, but academics in related fields and advanced students to get an up to date view of the ongoing research. Nine volumes have been published so far, the last one about Syriac Hagiography (see [www.etudessyriaques.org](http://www.etudessyriaques.org)).

In order to celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> workshop, 2 days (16-17 November 2012) were devoted to the study of the architecture of churches in the various places where Syriac communities were found. It attempted to follow the birth and development of churches in the Syriac world, tried to define whether there exists architectural features that could be assigned specifically to the Syriac tradition in contrast with other Christian denominations present in the same regions (Syria, for example), and it addressed the question of the existence of regional or confessional characteristics.

The workshop turned out to be a great success with more than a hundred people in attendance. We are glad to say that Gorgias Press was present for the first time, in addition to Geuthner, our publisher, Brepols and Peeters, all with very attractive books and discounts.

The papers from the workshop will be published in the series 'Études syriaques' in 2013 as the 10th Anniversary issue. This event was made possible thanks to the support of two laboratories of the CNRS-National Center for Scientific Research (UMR 8167 Orient & Méditerranée and UPR 841 Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes), Paris Sorbonne University as well as several other public fundings: the SYRAB program "Script and Writing in the Formation of Identities in the Syriac and Arabic World 3th-7th centuries", funded by the French ANR (Agence Nationale de la Recherche) for 2009-2013, the Excellence Laboratory RESMED ("Religions et sociétés en Méditerranée"), and the Ville de Paris.

Here is the program:

Françoise BRIQUEL CHATONNET (CNRS, Laboratoire Orient & Méditerranée) : Introduction

Widad KHOURY (DGAM, SYRIE) ET Bertrand RIBA (doctorant Laboratoire Orient & Méditerranée) : « Les églises de Syrie : essai de synthèse »

Jean-Luc BISCOP (Ministère de la culture, Laboratoire Orient & Méditerranée) « L'architecture des monastères anciens en Syrie et la place des églises »

Widad KHOURY ET Bertrand RIBA (doctorant Laboratoire Orient & Méditerranée) : « Peut-on discerner des modèles liés à des communautés ecclésiales ou linguistiques? »

Elizabeth KEY FOWDEN (Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin): « Churches for the Arabs, churches for nomads? »

Françoise BRIQUEL CHATONNET : « Que sait-on des églises par les textes ? »

Anne MICHEL (Université de Bordeaux) : « Les églises de l'Arabia : particularités de structure et de répartition par rapport à la Syrie »

Levon NORDIGUIAN (Université Saint-Joseph, Beyrouth): « Les chapelles rurales du Moyen Age au Liban Nord. Étude architecturale »

Elif KESER KAYAALP (Mardin Artuklu University) : « Architecture in the Making : Evolution of the Churches and Monasteries in the Tur Abdin »

Amir HARRAK (Université de Toronto) : « 'Son architecte est saint Paul' : l'architecture traditionnelle des églises de Mésopotamie »

François CASSINGENA (Abbaye de Ligugé et Institut catholique de Paris) : « Construction, destruction, inhabitation divine : mystère et vie des églises à travers les écrits des premiers auteurs syriaques (IV<sup>e</sup>- VI<sup>e</sup> siècles) »

Florence HELLOT (Laboratoire Mondes iranien et indien) : « Les églises d'Iran »

P.-G. BORBONE (Università di Pisa) : « Les églises d'Asie centrale et de Chine, essai de synthèse à partir des textes et des découvertes archéologiques »

Jacob THEKEPARAMPIL (Saint Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, Kottayam, Inde) et Alain DESREUMAUX (CNRS, Laboratoire Orient & Méditerranée) : L'architecture des églises des chrétiens de saint Thomas, Kérala (Inde) »

Justine GABORIT (Laboratoire Orient & Méditerranée) et Gérard THÉBAULT : « Mar Ya'qub de Nisibe »

Vincent DÉROCHE (CNRS, Laboratoire Orient & Méditerranée) : « Le site de Bazyan, Iraq »

Saba FARÈS (Université de Lorraine) : « L'église du monastère de Kilwa en Arabie »

Simon BRELAUD et Narmin Muhammad ALI AMEN (Salahaddin University, Erbil) : « Remarques sur la restauration des églises du monastère de Rabban Hormizd »

Jean-Pierre SODINI (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres) drew the conclusions.

EU Grundtvig Workshop Programme:

*AN INTERGENERATIONAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF GENOCIDE*

Rijssen, Netherlands, June 10-16, 2011

Workshop Organizer: Inanna Foundation, Netherlands

**J.J. VAN GINKEL, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY**

This workshop was convened in order to bring scholars, promising students and activists together to discuss the impact of genocide on a community, more in particular the impact of the Seyfo (peak period 1915-1916) on the Syriac Christian communities. It was sponsored by the *EU Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Programme* and organized by the Inanna Foundation. This foundation has been established by a few young Assyrian/Syriac academics and professionals with the aim to contribute to the educational, social, cultural and political development of Assyrians/Syriacs worldwide, with a special emphasis on those in Europe.

The workshop focused on the role a genocide can play within the community of survivors. Almost a hundred years ago the Seyfo took place in a large and ethnically and culturally diverse, and often dangerous, region in the Near East. In the following century many Assyrians/Syriacs emigrated and settled in relatively safe societies in – predominantly – Western countries. Although so long ago and so far away, the Seyfo nevertheless still plays a considerable role in their life. Only a few of the Seyfo survivors are still alive but most members of the community have inherited their life stories and their pain. The aim of this workshop was to bring the voice of the survivors, the generations who inherited this voice and experts who study such acts of violence together, and to discuss how to further research, document, and deal with the historical, political and social aspects and the post-traumatic implications of the Seyfo for new generations.

A total of 25 speakers from various European countries and the USA dealt with the topic of Seyfo from various perspectives. Although there is no room to discuss all the presentations two contributions deserve special attention.

First of all Prof. Dr. David Gaunt of Södertörn University (Sweden), who has been a central figure in the factual research of

the genocide in the last decades.<sup>1</sup> His participation was invaluable, both in his own presentation (*The place of Seyfo in Modern Genocide Research* and *The Sources for the History of Seyfo*) and in his contributions in the discussion of other papers. On the one hand he described the history of modern Genicde research which has evolved from being first and foremost focused on the Holocaust as an archetypal case against which to measure genocides, to a more diverse setting of comparative research into other genocides during the world wars, European colonization, civil wars, and other contexts. In his second paper he discussed an extensive bibliography on the Seifo put together by himself, Jan Bet-Sawoce, and Racho Donef. At the end of the workshop he was honored for his extraordinary work.

Another highlight was the contribution of Dr. Ton Zwaan (Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam). In his seminal paper, *Transgenerational Consequences of Genocide*, he discussed the impact and long-term effects of a genocide on a community in general. He asserted that the only way to recovery can be found through integration into society and coming to grips with the past which includes a truthful historical understanding, an open public discussion, justice and compensation, and collective remembrance at the institutional level.

The other papers can roughly be divided by topic. There were several historical papers: Dr. Uğur Ümit Üngör (Utrecht University) *Eastern Turkey as a Zone of Violence and the Destruction of Ottoman Christians*; Prof. Dr. Efrem Yildiz (Salamanca University) *The Armenian and Assyrian Genocide Report through the Eyewitness Testimony of Israel Odo and Jacques Rhétoré*; Jan Beth Sawoce (Mesopotamian Library, Södertörn University) *A Short Study About The Sayfo Issue in The Vatican Secret Archives*; Dr. Andrew Palmer (Münster University) *U-gubo da-qTiloye – The Cistern of the Slaughtered: Christians and Muslims in M'arre*; Scharbil Raid Gharib (University of Tübingen) *Sword and Betrayal – the Repercussions of Seyfo on the Syriac Speaking Communities*; Dr. Jan van Ginkel (Leiden University) *1917: A New Bishop in Amid/Diyarbakir. Who was this Mor Dionysius 'Abd an-Nur Aslan?*; Nineb Lamassu (Cambridge University) *The Private*

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. D. Gaunt e.a., *Massacres, resistance, protectors: Muslim-Christian relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I*, [Piscataway, NJ] : Gorgias, 2006.

*Archive of Malik Yagu Malik Ismael and Early Attempts of Compensation for Seyfo.*

The importance of the psychological aspects of a trauma like genocide on a community was discussed: Prof. Dr. Ciano Aydin (Delft University of Technology, University of Twente) *Collective Trauma and Cultural Identity*; Dr. Önver Cetrez (Uppsala University) *Genocide and Posttraumatic Stress in a Generational Perspective: Examples from Different Cases.*

Another aspect was the impact on the perception of identity of and among the Assyrians/Syriacs: Aryo Makko (Stockholm University) *From 'Forgotten Genocide' to the 'Main Pillar of Identity': The Role of Seyfo in Contemporary Assyrian Historiography*; Dr. Hannibal Travis (Florida International University of Law) *Constructing "The Armenian Genocide": How Genocide Scholars Unremembered the Ottoman Assyrians*; Prof. Dr. Michael Abdalla (Poznan University) *Opportunities and Barriers to Disseminating the Holocaust of the Assyrians in Poland*, but also the tension between the Turkish denial and the communal experience (Sabri Atman (Director of Seyfo Centre) *Seyfo Activities at the International Level*; Abdulmesih BarAbraham (Yoken-Bar-Yoken Foundation) *Turkey's Key Arguments in Denying the Assyrian Genocide*; Ibrahim Seven (Activist) *Seyfo in the Turkish and Kurdish Media*; Sanherib Demir (Bielefeld University) *Seyfo – A Result of Conflicting National Identities*; Oya Nuzumlali (Sabanci University) *Configurations of Genocide: The Case of Chaldeans in Istanbul.*

Finally also the role of the genocide in Assyrian/Syriac culture was presented both in theoretical papers and by practical presentations (e.g. Prof. Dr. Shabo Talay (University of Bergen) *Impacts of Seyfo on the Aramaic language*; Naures Atto (Leiden University) *Lyrics about the Seyfo*; Mousa Elias (Composer & Oud Player, Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm) *The Place of Seyfo in Mousa Elias' Music*; Nahrin Malki Atto (Artist, Netherlands) *Presentation and discussion of her Seyfo-related paintings*).

The workshop can only be described as an intense meeting, not only because of the breadth of topics presented, but also because of the subject itself. The organizers, notably Naures Atto and Soner Önder, much be congratulated with their determination to bring together more or less the first academic meeting with the Seyfo as its central theme. It certainly should encourage others to add to this endeavor and preserve and analyze and deal with such an important topic within Assyrian/Syriac culture.



The meeting was fruitful for the participants, but will also have broader repercussions. The organizers are already in the process of editing and publishing a collection of papers, which includes also work of some scholars that could not attend the workshop itself.

Finally it should be mentioned that we also had time for a warm and very social get together, where it became very clear that Assyrian/Syriac culture is certain alive and not only mourning events from the past, but also joyfully celebrating past, present and future.