

The Canadian Society for Syriac Studies

# JOURNAL

*Volume 15*

*2015*



- Daniel Kölligan - University of Cologne
- Gagik G. Sargsyan - Institute of Archaeology (Yerevan) and Amir Harrak - University of Toronto
- Adam Lehto - University of Toronto
- Emanuela Braidà - University of Toronto
- Kristian S. Heal - Brigham Young University
- Narmin 'Alī Amīn and Parwīn Badrī Tawfiq - Salāh-ad-Dīn University, Iraq
- Aaron M. Butts - Catholic University of America

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Toronto - Ontario - Canada

# Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies/ de la Société Canadienne des Etudes Syriaques

The *JCSSS* is a refereed journal published annually, and it contains the transcripts of public lectures presented at the Society and possibly other articles and book reviews

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## Publisher

Gorgias Press

180 Centennial Avenue, Suite 3

Piscataway, NJ 08854 USA

# The Canadian Society for Syriac Studies La Société Canadienne des Etudes Syriaques

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The aim of the CSSS is to promote the study of the Syriac culture which is rooted in the same soil from which the ancient Mesopotamian and biblical literatures sprung. The CSSS is purely academic, and its activities include a series of public lectures, one yearly symposium, and the publication of its Journal. The Journal is distributed free of charge to the members of the CSSS who have paid their dues, but it can be ordered by other individuals and institutions through Gorgias Press ([www.gorgiaspress.com](http://www.gorgiaspress.com)).

Cover

Ceremonial Cross inscribed in Armenian and Garshuni from Qaraqosh, Iraq

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## FROM THE EDITOR



**J** CSSS 15 (2015) contains a diverse range of articles which advance research in Syriac and cognate studies. We have managed once again to highlight both textual and archaeological research. Two articles in the latter area are all the more timely, given the current instability in Iraq.

In “The Armenian Version of Aphrahat’s Demonstration Ten ‘On Shepherds,’” Daniel Kölligan of the University of Cologne tackles a topic in Armenian-Syriac studies and shows how keen the Armenian translator of Aphrahat was to produce a translation faithful to the original text. This does not mean, however, that his translation is literal: he sometimes provides two verbs, one almost auxiliary as in Semitic, even if the Syriac original has only one; he sometimes deviates from the Syriac, especially in biblical quotations where he relies on the Armenian version; he omits copulas, as is expected, and the fact that he sometimes opts for idiomatic Armenian expressions make him a good translator. It is likely (though not yet proven) that the translator followed the same practices in his translation of the other *Demonstrations*.

Keeping with Armenian-Syriac topics, Gagik G. Sargsyan of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography at Yerevan, Armenia, and the present writer embarked on publishing for the first time ever Armenian graffiti scratched on the stone walls of the Church of the martyr Mār Behnam, a structure whose fate is now unknown after it was captured in July

2014 by the infamous Islamic State. Included also in this article is an edition and translation of a bilingual Armenian-Syriac inscription that had been placed below a rare Khachkar dated to 1171. This typical Armenian cross, carved in relief, decorated one wall of the octagonal martyrium of Mār Behnam, but this 6<sup>th</sup> century edifice was dynamited by the Islamic State in 2015, turning the tomb and its epigraphic and iconographic treasures to dust.

Adam Lehto, of the University of Toronto, turns his attention to Greek-Syriac encounters in his paper “John of Apamea and the Syriac Reception of Greek Thought.” From the time of Bardaisan in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century to the ‘Syriac Renaissance’ of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, an engagement with various forms of Greek thought is an important component of each of the several Syriac Christian traditions. John of Apamea, who wrote in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and who thus predates the major Syriac ecclesiastical divisions, should be recognized as a key figure in the early history of this engagement. He can be seen as someone who preserves features of the major sources of the 4<sup>th</sup> century yet clearly moves beyond them to a more nuanced and substantial interaction with Greek intellectual culture.

Emanuela Braidà, who completed her postdoctoral research at the University of Toronto in 2013, published an edition and translation of the Neo-Aramaic tale of Ahiqar in *JCSSS* 14 (2014). She now continues her investigation in “The Romance of Ahiqar the Wise in the Neo-Aramaic MS London Sachau

9321: Part II,” where she concentrates on the ‘publication’ of the tale in Antiquity under the name of Aesop, exploring how it eventually reached Neo-Aramaic, modified and augmented, but also kept the ancient wisdom component of the longest-lived tale ever in the worldwide production of fables.

The 2015 Spring Guest Lecture, “Five Kinds of Rewriting: Appropriation, Influence and the Manuscript History of Early Syriac Literature,” was presented by Kristian S. Heal of Brigham Young University and is now published here. The corpus of Syriac literature is a product not only of original authors but also of scribes who in the process of copying also attribute, appropriate, redact, extract, select, rework, and thus, in various ways, rewrite, activities which leave traces in extant manuscripts. Heal discusses five scribal practices in detail and rightly calls for a new comprehensive history of Syriac literature, a successor to Baumstark’s venerable *Geschichte der Syrischen Literatur* of 1922.

The last paper, “Following the Footsteps

of Father Fiey: Topographical Observations in ‘Aqra and its Region,” is contributed by two scholars who specialize in the Christian monuments of Iraq. The authors call attention to the need for a systematic probe of the ecclesiastical geography of that country to add to the seminal work of the great scholar Jean Maurice Fiey (+ 1995), a task made all the more urgent given the destruction that Iraq is suffering at the present time.

We are also grateful to Aaron M. Butts for contributing an informative report on the 7<sup>th</sup> North American Syriac Symposium, which was held at the Catholic University of America in July 2015.



The publication of *JCSSS* 15 was made possible thanks to the financial assistance of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, through its “Aid to Scholarly Journals” program.

A.H.  
15 October 2015