

Guest lecture on 15 October, 3 p.m.

## Discovering a New World in the Old: Revealing, Preserving, and Sharing the Syriac Manuscript Heritage in the Near East and India

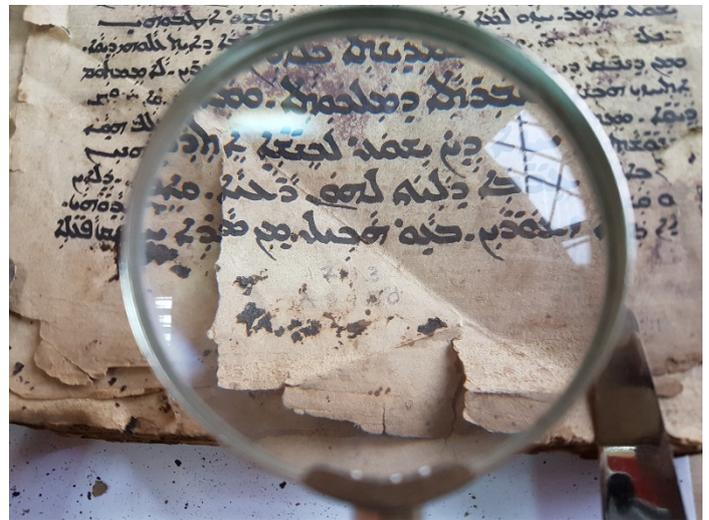


By Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB, DPhil, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library

*On the occasion of the appearance of the fifteenth volume of the edition of the Peshitta, the second-century Syriac Bible still used by Syriac Christians in the Middle East and the Diaspora. This is the first volume prepared in Amsterdam after the move of the Peshitta Institute from Leiden.*

Since 2003 the [Hill Museum & Manuscript Library](#) (HMML) at Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, has been partnering with Syriac-tradition communities throughout the Near East and South India to digitize, catalog, and share their manuscript heritage. HMML's work with Syriac manuscripts is part of a broader effort that began on the eve of the US-led invasion of Iraq and continued throughout subsequent tragedies, particularly the rise of Daesh (ISIS) in 2014, when Christians were uprooted from Mosul and villages throughout the Nineveh plain.

The result has been the digitization of more than 15,000 Syriac and Garshuni manuscripts from five countries (India, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey) and the Old City of Jerusalem. These include manuscripts from the Chaldean Catholic, Malankara Orthodox, Maronite, Syriac Catholic, Syriac Orthodox, Syro-Malabar Catholic and Syro-Malankara Catholic traditions. Together these represent a largely unstudied array of manuscript material complementing the well-known collections in Europe and North America. Most of these manuscripts were previously inaccessible to scholars. In recent years some collections have been moved or hidden because of war, while others have been destroyed. Complete digital versions are now coming online through vHMML Reading Room, with more than 4000 Syriac manuscripts already freely accessible, including scans of almost 50 manuscripts from the microfilm collection of the Peshitta Institute.



*The lecture will be followed by short talks on the new Brill Peshitta Portal (Wido van Peursen) and the on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peshitta Institute (Bas ter Haar Romeny). After these, the new volume will be presented to H.E. Mor Polycarpus, Metropolitan and Patriarchal Vicar for the Netherlands of the Syriac Orthodox Church, and Fr. Columba Stewart. The meeting will be concluded by a drinks reception.*

15 October 2019, 3 p.m., room Agora 1 (third floor, main building), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam  
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