

VIIum Symposium Syriacum in Uppsala (11th-14th August, 1996)

The picturesque university town of Uppsala in Sweden was the venue for the recent *VIIum Symposium Syriacum*.

140 registered participants from many parts of the world, including Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and India, attended the conference which took place between 11th – 14th August, 1996. After the official opening of the Symposium by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Uppsala University, the inaugural lecture, by J. F. Coakley (Harvard University), highlighted the development of Syriac printing types between 1840 and 1960.

The Symposium was organised into parallel sessions to cater for the 65 papers which were read, their diversity and range often making it difficult to choose between them. Papers on *Syriac Authors*, notably Ephrem and Jacob of Edessa were read at the Monday session (chair: Sebastian Brock), whilst Ephrem was the subject of another entire session on the Tuesday morning (chair: Michel van Esbroek). Bar Hebraeus was the main author of the papers discussed on the Wednesday morning session featuring *Syriac Liturgy* (chair: M. Thekeparambil). An innovation of this symposium was the session devoted to *Archaeology and Art History* (chair: Michal Gawlikowski), a development which is to be recommended for future symposia. Papers on *History and Historiography* were well represented with sessions on both Monday afternoon (chair: Hubert Kaufhold) and Tuesday afternoon (chair: Sidney Griffith). Other sessions were devoted to *Linguistics* (chair: Gideon Goldenberg), *Philosophy and Rhetoric* (chair: James Coakley), *Syriac Computing* (convenor: George Kiraz), *Asceticism and Monasticism* (chair: Erica Hunter). Tryggve Kronholm, Rifaat Ebied and Han Drijvers also chaired sessions.

The lectures were complemented by evening entertainment, with dinner at the Camel Club restaurant in Uppsala on the opening night. Monday evening was devoted to a cultural exhibition, as well as dinner and dancing at Södertälje, courtesy of "The Syrian Association in Sweden" whose hospitality was most generous. On Tuesday evening, participants were treated to a reception in the opulent surrounds of Uppsala University Rector Magnificus' rooms, before seeing the beautiful countryside of Uppsala, during the dinner cruise on the ship "Kung Carl Gustav".

In keeping with the emphasis on the contribution of modern communities to Syriac studies, the conference concluded with a video of the churches of Tur Abdin, which was filmed during a recent visit by Hans Hollerweger (Linz University). The following business meeting voted Sydney, Australia to be the venue for the *VIIIum Symposium Syriacum*, scheduled for July, 2000. The elected organiser, Prof. Rifaat Ebied, Dept. of Semitic Studies, University of Sydney will communicate further details.

The organisers, Witold Witakowski and his wife Ewa Balicka-Witakowska, are to be congratulated on their industry and imagination which made this conference both an enjoyable and stimulating occasion. Participants were given a beautiful colour poster advertising the symposium, in addition to the now traditional photograph. These mementos complement the wonderful memories of colleagues and their papers, each contributing to the success of the *VIIum Symposium Syriacum*. Selected papers from this conference will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*.

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