PERSPECTIVES ON SYRIAC LINGUISTICS

Volume 1

Series Editor
Terry C. Falla
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SYRIAC LEXICOGRAPHY I
FOUNDATIONS FOR
SYRIAC LEXICOGRAPHY I

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Syriac Language Project

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A. DEAN FORBES
AND
DAVID G.K. TAYLOR

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SERIES PREFACE

When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order and energetic without rules: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated; choice was to be made out of boundless variety, without a settled test of purity; and modes of expression to be rejected or received, without the suffrages of any writers of classical reputation or acknowledged authority.

Samuel Johnson, ‘Preface’ to A Dictionary of the English Language

Perspectives on Syriac Linguistics contains peer-reviewed essay collections, monographs and reference works that have relevance to Classical Syriac lexicography. It is a publication of the International Syriac Language Project (ISLP), an interdisciplinary group which meets annually to reconsider the theory and practice of Classical Syriac lexicography and to lay the foundations for a future comprehensive Syriac-English lexicon.

Lexicography, the art and science of dictionary making, became a serious discipline about four centuries ago. Compared to the evolution of human language which may go back as far as 100,000 years, it began only yesterday. Modern linguistics, the science of the study of language, is even more recent, beginning in the 1830s and experiencing rapid growth in the latter half of the twentieth century. Today, lexicography may be viewed as a sub-discipline of linguistics: sound lexicography requires sound linguistic theory. The aim of this series is therefore to address issues of linguistics as they relate to a contemporary approach to lexicography.

It is also the aim of the ISLP, and thus of this series, to be collaborative and interdisciplinary. There are three primary reasons. The first is that many linguistic disciplines meet in the making of a modern lexicon. The second is that developments in the study of one language, theoretical and applied, are often pertinent to another. The third is that the emergence of electronic lexica requires attention to be paid to advances in computational linguistics. Thus our planning for a Classical Syriac-English lexicon for a new generation is not pursued in isolation, but embraces a multidisciplinary understanding of what is taking place in the study of other ancient languages and in the wider worlds of lexicography, linguistics and digital technologies.

Terry Falla
BEGINNINGS

The idea of a new kind of Syriac-English lexicon finds its origins in 2001 in a mid-summer morning in Atlanta and in Chicago nights in the flat of a Syriac-speaking family. In Atlanta, Beryl Turner and I were hosted by Kent Richards, Executive Director of SBL. At his prompting, I outlined the birth and progress of my lexical work *A Key to the Peshitta Gospels* and the methodologies it employs. I described how the conceptual framework begins with the idea of a new kind of lexical work that is able to collate within the compass of a single entry a wide range of essential, interrelated, but previously unpublished, information in a succinct and accessible form. The discussion also turned to the significance for modern lexicography of subjecting every detail to thorough investigation, and of eschewing the recycling of untested information. It was at the end of this conversation that Richards proposed that I coordinate sessions on Syriac lexicography on an annual basis at SBL international meetings.

Two days after our Atlanta meeting my colleague and I were introduced to the wonderful hospitality of the Saadi family. After evening meals and late into more than one night we discussed with Abdul-Massih Saadi, who has been cataloguing the Arthur Vööbus collection (in Syriac) at the Lutheran School of Theology, how the SBL invitation might become a reality. Three months later, after a further visit to the Saadi home, I took a tentative idea to Dean Forbes in Palo Alto and a few days later to England, where I chatted it over with Alison Salvesen, Sebastian Brock, and David Taylor. I will always be grateful to them all for their taking an emerging but tender proposal seriously. An exploratory interdisciplinary Syriac lexicography group was formed and grew. The intention was to meet at the 2002 SBL Berlin meeting, but that proved too soon for the schedules of those who were now involved: Janet Dyk, Dean Forbes, Andreas Juckel, George Kiraz, Abdul-Massih Saadi, Alison Salvesen, David Taylor, Peter Williams, and my colleague Beryl Turner and myself, to be joined in 2003 by Bas ter Haar Romeny and Wido van Peursen, and in 2004 by Michael Sokoloff.

The first full-day meeting was at the International SBL Meeting in Cambridge in 2003. Subsequently, we decided on the International Syriac Language Project (ISLP) as a title for the group’s endeavours. We met again in 2004, and will continue to convene at SBL Meetings until SBL and ISLP feel ISLP has fulfilled its tasks. I record here my profound thanks to all those who helped bring the first meeting to fruition, and to those who have since expressed their support by encouraging us to continue.

Terry Falla
The authors of this first volume in the International Syriac Language Project (ISLP) series represent a wide range of disciplines. Their work explores new horizons in lexical thinking. Their papers are the result of the first meeting of the ISLP in Cambridge, England, at the SBL International Meeting, 20–25 August 2003. They focus on issues pertinent to Syriac lexicography and the lexicography of ancient languages with special attention to the optimal content of a Classical Syriac lexicon.

In a substantial introductory essay, Terry Falla outlines a conceptual framework for a new comprehensive Syriac-English lexicon. His essay draws on the insights of ancient Greek and Hebrew lexicography. Alison Salvesen’s contribution is closely related in that it looks at the range of users that the lexicographer should speak to.

One of the aims of the ISLP is to create a multifunctional modular database for the project. For this reason, George Kiraz presents the history of Syriac computational lexicography and points to the future of computing the Syriac lexicon. Dean Forbes, also a computational linguist, has long worked on computational analysis of the syntax of the Hebrew scriptures. His essay introduces a distributional approach to computational taxonomic analysis.

Janet Dyk, aware of the importance of syntax for the making of a lexicon, outlines desiderata for the lexicon from a syntactic point of view.

Many Syriac corpora are translations, a feature that the lexicographer must take into account. Peter Williams discusses how to match Syriac words with their Greek Vorlage. Andreas Juckel raises the question of whether the Harklean version should be included in a future lexicon of the Syriac New Testament.

In a final essay that provides a fitting inclusio to Falla’s and Salvesen’s presentations, Sebastian Brock reflects on resources and sources of Syriac lexica.

This book is at the forefront of Syriac lexical studies. It has much to offer those studying dialects of Aramaic other than Syriac and other ancient languages such as Hebrew and Greek.

Initially, the volume was to include a major essay by David Taylor. The essay became a book which will be published as the second volume in this series: *An Annotated Bibliography of Printed Syriac Lexica*.

Our huge gratitude goes to Managing Editor Beryl Turner, coordinator *par excellence*, and to Ellen Forbes, amazingly vigilant copy editor.

We thank George Kiraz of Gorgias Press for publishing these proceedings.

A. Dean Forbes & David Taylor
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University of California, Berkeley;
University of Cambridge;
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Whitley College, University of Melbourne, and the supporters of its Syriac Language Research Centre.
ABBREVIATIONS

For abbreviations of books of the Bible, refer to the Abbreviations section of the New Revised Standard Version. For abbreviations of journals and series, refer to the Bibliography section of each paper. Abbreviations of lexical works cited only in Terry Falla’s essay are cited on pages 3–7.

> deriving from
† died
\ - obelos and metobelos, indicating words absent from the Greek Vorlage used by Thomas of Harqel, but helpful for an intelligible rendering of the Greek.
// parallel
act. active
adj. adjective
adv. adverb
attrib. attribute, attributive
Audo Audo’s Syriac-Syriac Lexicon: Simta d-lshana suryaya
BAGD Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker
Barn The Letter of Barnabas
BDAG Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich
BFBS British and Foreign Bible Society edition of the Syriac New Testament
Brockelmann Lexicon Syriacum, 2nd ed.
Brun Dictionarium Syriaco-Latinum, 2nd ed.
c. st. construct state
da. circa
CE Common Era
cent. century
chap(s). chapter(s)
compl. complement
conj. conjunction
Costaz Dictionnaire syriaque-français
cp., cf. compare, frequently in reference to citation from ancient texts
crit. ap. critical apparatus
ed. edited, editor, edition
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<td>Society of Biblical Literature</td>
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<td>var. lec.</td>
<td>varia lectio (variant reading)</td>
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1. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR A NEW COMPREHENSIVE SYRIAC-ENGLISH LEXICON

Terry C. Falla
Whitley College, University of Melbourne

For many reasons the time has come to reassess the theory and practice of Classical Syriac lexicography and discuss what kind of Syriac-English lexicon would best serve the requirements of the twenty-first century. This essay begins by outlining the need for a new Syriac-English lexicon. It then proposes a conceptual framework, initially for a comprehensive lexicon to the Syriac New Testament, and in the long-term as a basis for the lexicalizing of other Syriac literature.

The essay addresses five basic questions: for whom is the work intended (audience), what Syriac literature would it cover and would it present that literature in a single work or a corpus-by-corpus series (scope), what sort of and how much information should be included (content), how is that information to be ascertained (methodology), and how can it be organized in a user-friendly manner that is methodologically compatible with its contents and is aesthetically pleasing (arrangement and presentation)? A concluding section considers issues of implementation and then comments on the need for a collaborative approach that draws on the insights of various specialist disciplines to complement the expertise of the lexicographer. The essay ends with a tribute marking the centenary of Jessie Payne Smith’s *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary founded upon the Thesaurus of R. Payne Smith*.
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<td>Lexicon to the Syriac New Testament</td>
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### Foundations for Syriac Lexicography

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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kiraz</td>
<td>Kiraz, Concordance to the Syriac New Testament</td>
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<td>Klein</td>
<td>Syrisch-Griechisches Wörterbuch zu den Vier Kanonischen Evangelien</td>
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<td>Köbert</td>
<td>Vocabularium Syriacum</td>
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<td>Köbert’s “Addenda”</td>
<td>Köbert’s “Addenda ad Vocabularium Syriacum, Romae 1956.”</td>
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<td>KPG</td>
<td>Falla, A Key to the Peshitta Gospels</td>
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<td>Manna</td>
<td>Vocabulaire chaldéen-arabe / Vocabulaire chaldéen-arabe</td>
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<td>Pazzini</td>
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<td>Schaaf</td>
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<td>Schulthess</td>
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<td>Thesaurus Syriacus</td>
<td>R. Payne Smith, ed., Thesaurus Syriacus</td>
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<td>Whish</td>
<td>Clavis Syriaca</td>
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### Aramaic other than Syriac

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<td>Dalman</td>
<td>Aramäisch-neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch</td>
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<td>DJA</td>
<td>Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Judean Aramaic</td>
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<td>DJBA</td>
<td>Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Period</td>
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<td>DJPA</td>
<td>Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period, 2nd ed.</td>
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<td>DNWSI</td>
<td>Hoftijzer and Jongeling, Dictionary of the North West Semitic Inscriptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jastrow</td>
<td>A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature</td>
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<td>Levy’s CWTRS</td>
<td>Levy, Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim und einen grossen Teil des rabbinischen Schriftums</td>
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<td>Levy’s NCWTM</td>
<td>Levy, Neubebräisches und chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim, 1876–1889</td>
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<td>Levy’s WTM</td>
<td>Levy, Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim, 1924</td>
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<td>Tal</td>
<td>מילון הארמיא של הש褙ורוניס (A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic)</td>
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<td>(Zorell)-Vogt</td>
<td>Lexicon linguae aramaicae Veteris Testamenti</td>
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### English

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<tr>
<td>AOD</td>
<td>Moore, ed., The Australian Oxford Dictionary</td>
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<td>CED</td>
<td>Beatty and Spooner, eds., Concise English Dictionary</td>
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<td>Chambers</td>
<td>Brookes et al., eds., The Chambers Dictionary, 9th ed.</td>
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<td>Fowler and Fowler</td>
<td>The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English</td>
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<td>Johnson’s Dictionary</td>
<td>Johnson, Dictionary of the English Language</td>
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<td>New SOED</td>
<td>Brown et al., eds., The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary</td>
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<tr>
<td>OED</td>
<td>Simpson and Weiner et al., eds., The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed.</td>
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### A Conceptual Framework

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<tr>
<th>English Dictionary</th>
<th>Authors/Editors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Random House</td>
<td>Flexner and Hauck et al., <em>The Random House Dictionary of the English Language</em></td>
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<td>Webster's TNID</td>
<td>Gove, ed., <em>Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language</em></td>
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<td>DEL</td>
<td>Dubois et al., <em>Dictionnaire encyclopédique Larousse</em></td>
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<td>DHO</td>
<td>Corréard and Grundy, eds., <em>Le Dictionnaire Hachette-Oxford</em></td>
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<td>LDLF</td>
<td>Dubois et al., eds., <em>Lexis: Dictionnaire de la langue française</em></td>
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<td>CNGED</td>
<td>Betteridge, ed., <em>Cassell's New German and English Dictionary</em></td>
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<td>MEL</td>
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<td>Abbott-Smith</td>
<td><em>A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament</em></td>
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<td>BAAR</td>
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<td>BDAG</td>
<td>BDAG, <em>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</em></td>
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<td>DGENT</td>
<td>Mateos, ed., <em>Diccionario Griego-Español del Nuevo Testamento</em></td>
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<td>Lampe</td>
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<td>LEH 2003</td>
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<td>Glare, ed., assisted by Thompson, <em>A Greek-English Lexicon</em></td>
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