

Cultural Exchange and the Translation of Early Christian Literature

This project addresses cultural exchange among Middle Eastern Christian communities through the translation of Greek and Syriac exegetical sermons into Arabic and from Arabic into Ethiopic. It focuses on a set of homilies on the Apostle Thomas's scene of doubting in the upper room authored by the Syriac homilist Jacob of Serugh (451–521 CE) and pseudonymously attributed to John Chrysostom. The adoption, modification, and selective transmission of these homilies reveal a narrative of encounters among diverse Christian communities.

This project involves three distinct stages. The first stage entails the identification of manuscript witnesses and the production of critical editions of the homilies. These editions reveal the path of transmission and allow close analysis of the translators' modifications and interpretations of these homilies. The second phase involves research on the communities that produced, translated, and transmitted these homilies. This will disclose close connections between the decisions of the translators and the communities that used these texts during the Middle Ages. The third and final stage will involve the composition of a monograph that highlights the cultural exchanges that occurred through the translation of early Christian literature.

The resulting monograph, entitled *Cultural Exchange and the Translation of Early Christian Literature*, will integrate several aspects of Middle Eastern Christian history through the transmission and translation of these homilies. The chapters on the composition of these homilies in late antiquity will highlight the intersection of biblical exegesis and doctrinal conflicts from the sixth through eighth centuries. The chapters on the Arabic translations and transmission of these homilies will emphasize the connections among biblical exegesis, the development of the Arabic bible, and the reception of doctrinal conflicts. The final chapters on the Ethiopic recensions will reveal the means by which early Christian literature reached Ethiopia and its role in the formative period of Ethiopian Christianity.