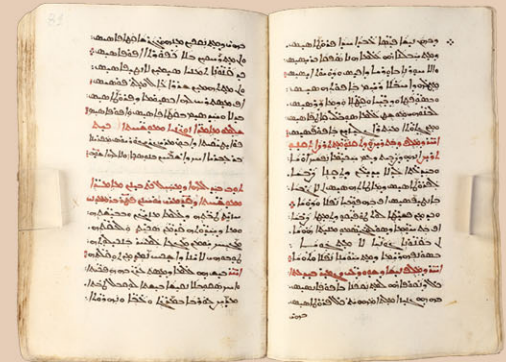


Writing Elegantly in Both Syriac and Arabic: John bar Ma'danī, Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch (1252–1263)

The lecture introduces the literary and intellectual personality of the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch John bar Ma'danī (1252–1263), a prominent thirteenth-century figure who combined ecclesiastical leadership with accomplished literary activity in both Syriac and Arabic. It traces his formative years in the monasteries of Melitene, where he received his Syriac education, and his later years in Abbasid Baghdad, where he developed his knowledge of Arabic philology and refined his literary style. The presentation examines his multifaceted oeuvre, including philosophical and ascetic poetry in Syriac, highly stylized Arabic homilies (*tarājīm*) composed in rhymed prose (*saj*'), as well as his liturgical and canonical writings. Drawing on recent manuscript discoveries and ongoing textual editing, the lecture presents Bar Ma'danī as an important example of the bilingual literary culture and intellectual activity of Middle Eastern Christians in the medieval Islamic world.



December 2, 2026 11:15-12:45 pm Rubinstein Commons Room 1

Zoom Registration Required. Visit <https://www.ias.edu/hs/islamic-world/events>



Severus Roger Akhrass is a Syriac Orthodox archbishop and scholar specializing in Patristics and Syriac studies. He earned his Ph.D. in Patristics from the Catholic University of Paris (2013, *summa cum laude*), with a critical edition of Michael the Great's work on the confession of sins. He has taught theology at St. Aphrem Theological Seminary (Syria) and the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (Lebanon), and since 2014 serves as Director of the Department of Syriac Studies at the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate. His research focuses on Syriac Fathers, liturgy, ecclesiology and ecumenism.