



[AP 203 / AP2-02 - Wilson Muriyadan : One of a Kind in the Syriac World.](#)

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Call Number	AP 203 / AP2-02
Part Number	Part II - The Assyrian Church of the East
Title	Wilson Muriyadan : One of a Kind in the Syriac World.
Duration	13:00
Place of Recording	Residence of Wilson Muriyadan at Trissur
Date of Recording	08 August 2017
Youtube URL	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNKHgNrQSS8
Video Segment(s)	

Notes

Wilson Muriyadan : One of a Kind in the Syriac World

Wilson Muriyadan : Self-appointed guardian of an intangible cultural heritage of Kerala.

Wilson Muriyadan, who is a member of the Chaldean Syrian Church of the East, India, is a person of particular interest to the Aramaic Project. Wilson is the owner of the most extensive private collection of books and manuscripts in Syriac in Kerala. Wilson's collection includes many rare manuscripts and books that shed light on the history of the Syriac churches of the St. Thomas Christians in India. Wilson's life story includes several subplots. First, Rekha, Wilson's wife, is a member of the Syro Malabar Catholic Church. Rekha realized that her husband was "Syriac-crazy" only at the time of the wedding ceremony. Life went on smoothly, and later they baptized both their children in the Syriac ceremony. The children, who are growing up in a house full of Syriac books and manuscripts, have started learning the Syriac language. Second, how Wilson got the first set of books in his collection is part of a larger story connected to the Thrissur Provincial House of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate. The librarian of the Provincial House at Patturiakkal decided to clean the shelves and sold the books and manuscripts as scrap paper to a street vendor. The street vendor, a Muslim, knew Arabic but did not recognize the Syriac script. Yet he thought those books could be valuable. He happened to meet Wilson and asked Wilson if he would be interested in purchasing the books. Wilson bargained and bought a set of rare books for the value of a mere five dollars. Third, Wilson intends to bequeath his extensive collection to his daughters. Ultimately, the fate of Wilson's home library depends on his two daughters. The older daughter, Ann Lia, already knows to read and write Syriac texts. While safeguarding his collection zealously like a mother-lion, Wilson is willing to share his knowledge and resources with researchers. I recently requested Wilson to help solve the controversy regarding the famous Syriac chant, Bar Maryam ("Son of Mary"). Some members of the Knanaya community objected to promoting this chant among the Syro Malabar Catholics on the website of the Aramaic Project. They put forward an unsubstantiated claim that this particular chant is exclusive to the Knanaya communities. I had already recorded several samples of the text and melody from different Syro Malabar Church musicians in the last decade. (see examples in [Aramaic Project-51M](#) , [Aramaic Project-53](#)). Yet, I lacked textual evidence. Fortunately, Fr. Placid Podipara, an expert in the history of Syriac Christianity in India, had referred to the earliest available source of the text of this chant (see Collected Works of Rev. Dr. Placid J. Podipara, C. M. I. (1899-1985). Vol. IV., edited by Dr. Thomas Kalayil, C. M. I., Sanjos Publications, Mannanam. 2007. Pp. 39-40). I had no way to find those resources. Wilson came to the rescue and located the sources and resolved the issue by providing textual evidence to my hypothesis that Bar Maryam is part of the common patrimony of the East-Syriac Christians. Christian Musicological Society of India is honored to introduce Wilson to the Syriac aficionados around the world. We are grateful to Rekha for participating in this interview. Wilson and his daughters are our resource persons for Part II of the Aramaic Project.

[Joseph J Palackal, CMI](#)



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