

Shared Past, Shared Future:
**Interreligious Engagements, Socio-Political Involvements and Intellectual Partnerships of
Middle Eastern Christians in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval Periods.**

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In an ecclesiastical letter, Timothy I, the East-Syrian Patriarch of the Church of the East, recounts his cordial and candid theological debate with the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi in Baghdad around 781 CE. In other letters, Timothy also recounts his intellectual partnership with al-Mahdi by translating Aristotle's *Topics*, and his involvement in the caliphate's political affairs by accompanying Caliph al-Rashid on a military campaign. Timothy's relationships with Muslim rulers were not, however, unique cases. Christian sources preserve other examples of such relations between Christian and Muslim elites at the highest echelon during the early Islamic Medieval Period. This presentation examines a few cases of such relationships, shedding light on the contexts, reasons, and learning outcomes of this history, demonstrating an example of a shared past that may inform the Canadian future context.