

JAAS with a new face - Vol. XI, No. 2

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Patriarch Michael the Great (1126-1199) is a personage of great consequence to Assyrian historians. In no small measure, this is due to his extensive writings which set him apart from many of his peers; a perceptive observer with a sense of history. Thanks to Ms. **Dorothea Weltecke**, we can now read *The World Chronicle by Patriarch Michael the Great (1126-1199): Some Reflections*, an all too rare study of this great man, through the prism of his most important work. Currently working on her doctorate at Berlin Freie University, Ms Weltecke states that she came to this particular topic by her interest “*in the ways Orientals and Europeans view each other*”. She adds that her attention “*has now moved from the actual analysis of Michael’s views on the Crusades to a more general analysis of the process of making historiography ...*” Her first language is German, but Ms Weltecke’s linguistics studies have included Hebrew, Syriac, Ugaritic and Ethiopian. Her C.V. should also include English where her vocabulary is no less impressive than her analysis.

Professor **Richard N. Frye**’s “*Assyria and Syria: Synonyms*” first appeared in 1992, in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Vol.51, no.4, pp.281-285). We are grateful to JNES and to the University of Chicago for permitting us to reprint it. This version has undergone minimal adaptations by the author.

Dr. Frye is *Agha Khan Professor of Iranian*, Emeritus, at Harvard University, a world renowned scholar on Iran and Central Asia, and a prolific author on these subjects. His most recent book is *The Heritage of Central Asia* (1996). One of his previous works, *The Heritage of Persia*, has been translated into 6 other languages. Another of Dr. Frye’s distinction is his marriage to Dr. Eden Naby, who established the David B. Perley Fund at Harvard University.

It is safe to say that Professor Frye generated considerable interest with this article, both in the Assyrian community and in the small circle of scholars whose disciplines intersect this issue. In the five years which have passed, the Frye essay has also been contested, sometimes quite vigorously, for some of its conclusions. To convey a fuller measure of this give and take, we present a spirited dissent by another accomplished scholar, Dr. John Joseph, under the title “*Assyria and Syria: Synonyms?*”

Alongside the Frye reprint, we also present the author’s previously unpublished ‘postscript’. The author had written this in the form of a correspondence, shortly following the article’s initial appearance, and we thank him for permission to print it. While Professor Joseph was not furnished a copy of the ‘postscript’, his commentary seems to encompass most of the salient points.

Dr. John Joseph is *Lewis Audenried Professor of History*, Emeritus, at Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He is a graduate *cum laude* from that school, and pursued further education in the Department of Oriental Studies, Princeton University (Ph.D., 1953). Professor Joseph, himself an Assyrian, has devoted a lifetime to the study and teaching of the region's history during the Islamic period. Many Assyrians associate his name to one of his earliest works, *The Nestorians and Their Muslim Neighbors* (Princeton University Press, 1961). But he has also written numerous essays and reviews, culminating more recently in *Muslim-Christian Relations and Inter-Christian Rivalries in the Middle East: The Case of the Jacobites in an Age of Transition* (NY: SUNY Press, 1983). Both of these books have earned broad acclaim from his peers. *Choice*, the organ of the American Library Association selected Joseph's second work as the 'Outstanding Academic Book, 1983-84'. In the Preface to this book, Professor Joseph explains his use of the terms "Nestorian" and "Jacobite" "*because of their familiarity and the just fame that surrounds them... [And] no theological connotation is to be read into my usage.*"

Dr. **Zomaya S. Solomon's** "Functional and Exotic Sentences in Assyrian Aramaic" represents a continuation of his deliberate expository method. Dr. Solomon has become an invaluable cog in the image of JAAS. There is little that can be said that is new about this author. His work has now appeared in six consecutive issues of the Journal, where he is clearly our most enduring writer. As has been his trademark, once again he tackles an otherwise highly technical subject with disarming simplicity, enriching our appreciation of our language and its history.

William F. Macomber's "*A History of the Chaldean Mass*" appeared first in *Worship*, Vol.51, No.2 (1977). Dr. Macomber is a first-rate scholar who received degrees from Harvard University and Boston College. He also earned a doctorate degree from the Pontifical Institute for Oriental Studies, in Rome. For a decade and a half he taught theology and philosophy at Al-Hikma University, Baghdad. He would later spend 17 years at the Pontifical Institute for Oriental Studies, where he was responsible for explaining the rites and ceremonies of the Mass in the non-Byzantine Oriental rites. As he explained to JAAS, "*the first rite that I tackled was the Chaldean rite, with which I was directly acquainted from my many years' stay in Baghdad.*" But Baghdad was hardly his only beat in Iraq. In his years there, he used his vacation time to visit manuscript libraries in Mosul, the Monastery of Notre Dame des Semences at Alqosh, the Chaldean villages of northern Iraq and those of Mardin and Dyarbekir (Turkey). Needless to say, we are very grateful to *Worship* its editor, at Saint John's Abbey, Minnesota, for permitting the reproduction of this study.

This edition concludes with some letters from our readers on subject variously described as "religious rapprochement" and "religious unity."