

Forging On

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You will note a slight make over with this, our 19th issue of JAAS. Why are we suddenly the *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies*? More importantly, what does this portend for our readers?

It must be said emphatically at the outset that the decision to rechristen ourselves is in no way intended as a hostile act towards any organization, least of all towards the *Assyrian Academic Society* in Chicago. For several years, there existed what can be described as a loose affiliation between the *Journal* and the *Society*. This arose largely from the fact that both the *Journal* and the *Society* were the brainchild of the Assyrian scholar Dr. Edward Y. Odisho and a small number of individuals.

But there is no mystery why our action was inevitable: All too often, the *Society* and the eponymous *Journal* were being confused one for the other. This was an inaccurate portrayal, fueled in part by the fact that we continued publishing under the previous name far longer than we should have. In the end, our editorial board concluded that the adoption of a new name for the *Journal*, albeit delayed, would be the most reasonable way to eliminate any ambiguity.

The record will confirm that from its creation the *Journal* dedicated itself to the visionary mission of its founders, including its first Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Odisho. All of these founders moved on several years ago, but the *JAAS* objective remained steadfast. Our goal is a free-wheeling examination of the multi-faceted Assyrian experience, past and present. If we are to believe reader feedback, we have made great strides in pursuit of this vision. This achievement is due in large measure to the harmony and dedication of our small-knit editorial team, and it is made possible by an environment free of undue outside influence. The English section of the *Journal* has established a benchmark of exacting scholarship earning the respect of an increasing number of scholars. For its part, the Assyrian section has featured an increasing number of researched articles, and it is now widely considered an essential catalyst in the revitalized efforts in modern Assyrian literature. The results are far from perfect, but we are fortunate to have the same editorial team in place, and our aim is to continue to work hard to improve all sections of this publication.

If it is to remain on course, the *Journal* clearly cannot be a general membership organization. We know that there is little risk of this. The *Journal*'s demands are such that very few acolytes have volunteered their services. But beyond this, the *Journal* cannot be seen as subordinate to the will of any other

membership organization, and it must remain non-political and non-sectarian, both in fact and in appearance. This point was repeatedly driven home to us by a broad consensus of the individuals we consulted prior to our decision. We also knew in advance that the simple act of renaming the Journal contained seeds of misunderstanding. Nevertheless, that risk had to be taken.

The choice of a new name on the occasion of our 19th edition is nothing other than a restatement of our commitment to scholarship, research, and editorial independence. Our great journey continues. We count on your continued support.