

Symposium on Michael the Syrian (1126–1199).
Ma'arat Saydnaya, Damascus, 1–8 October 1999.

*Adapted for Hugoye from a Communiqué
by the St. Ephrem Theological Seminary, Damascus.*

- [1] The 800th anniversary of the passing away of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and scholar Mor Michael the Syrian was celebrated at an international Symposium convened by H.H. Patriarch Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, and H.E. Metropolitan Mor Gregorios Yuhanna Ibrahim, Metropolitan of Aleppo.
- [2] The Symposium met at the Patriarchate's new educational facility, St. Ephrem Theological Seminary at Ma'arat Saydnaya outside Damascus on Oct 1–8, 1999. Twenty scholars from Belgium, England, Germany, Lebanon, Syria and the United States delivered papers on a wide variety of topics related to the great historical chronicle produced in the 12th century by Mor Michael, at what was the first scholarly meeting in modern times devoted to the study of Syriac historiography. Each session concluded with rigorous and learned discussions. A concert of sacred music presented by the seminarians of St. Ephrem's preceded the symposium. Participants were also entertained with an excursion to local shrines and monasteries, and a magnificent dinner hosted by H.H. Mor Ignatius Zakka I. Speakers included: Prof. Michael Van Esbroeck, Prof. Susan Ashbrook Harvey, V. Rev. Dr. Joseph Tarzi, Ms. Dorothea Weltecke, Ms. Emma Loosley, Prof. Michael Morony, Dr. May Touma, H. E. Metropolitan Mor Gregorios Yuhanna Ibrahim, Rev. Fr. Abdo Badwi and Mr. Fadi Baroody, Rev. Fr. Elias Khalifeh, H.E. Archbishop Theophilos George Saliba, Prof. Dr. Robert Betts, and Prof. Dr. Seta Badoyan.
- [3] H.H. Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas gave the Inaugural Address of the Symposium, stressing the importance of the Syriac scholarship in establishing a true history not only of the Syrian Orthodox people, but also of the Middle East as a whole. "I do implore respectful scholars and orientalists," said H.H. "to attempt rewriting the history of this part of the world depending not only on western sources, but also on the historians from our Syrian Orthodox Church like St. Michael, and not only on the history recorded by the victorious, but also on the history written by the defeated people."