BRIEF ARTICLES

THE TEACHING OF SYRIAC IN LEBANON: AN OVERVIEW

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[1] Notwithstanding the important role of the Syriac language in Lebanon's past, the teaching of Syriac up to the seventies was relatively modest. A new quest for roots and a new perception of history has led to a renewal in Syriac studies since the end of the Lebanese war.

[2] I had to conform myself to the realities of the Lebanese educational system in order to conduct this research. It is divided in two: private schools and universities for which there is a charge for admission, and the government schools and universities which are practically free of charge.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

[3] The private schools in Lebanon are in their overwhelming majority dependent on the religious communities (17 of them—both Christian and Muslim—are officially numbered in the constitution of Lebanon).

[4] When we consider Syriac teaching at school, it is obvious that only the Christian communities—who still use Syriac as an every day means of communication—provide such programs. This includes the Syrian Orthodox community (whose Patriarchate is in Damascus, Syria) and the Assyrian community (whose Patriarchate