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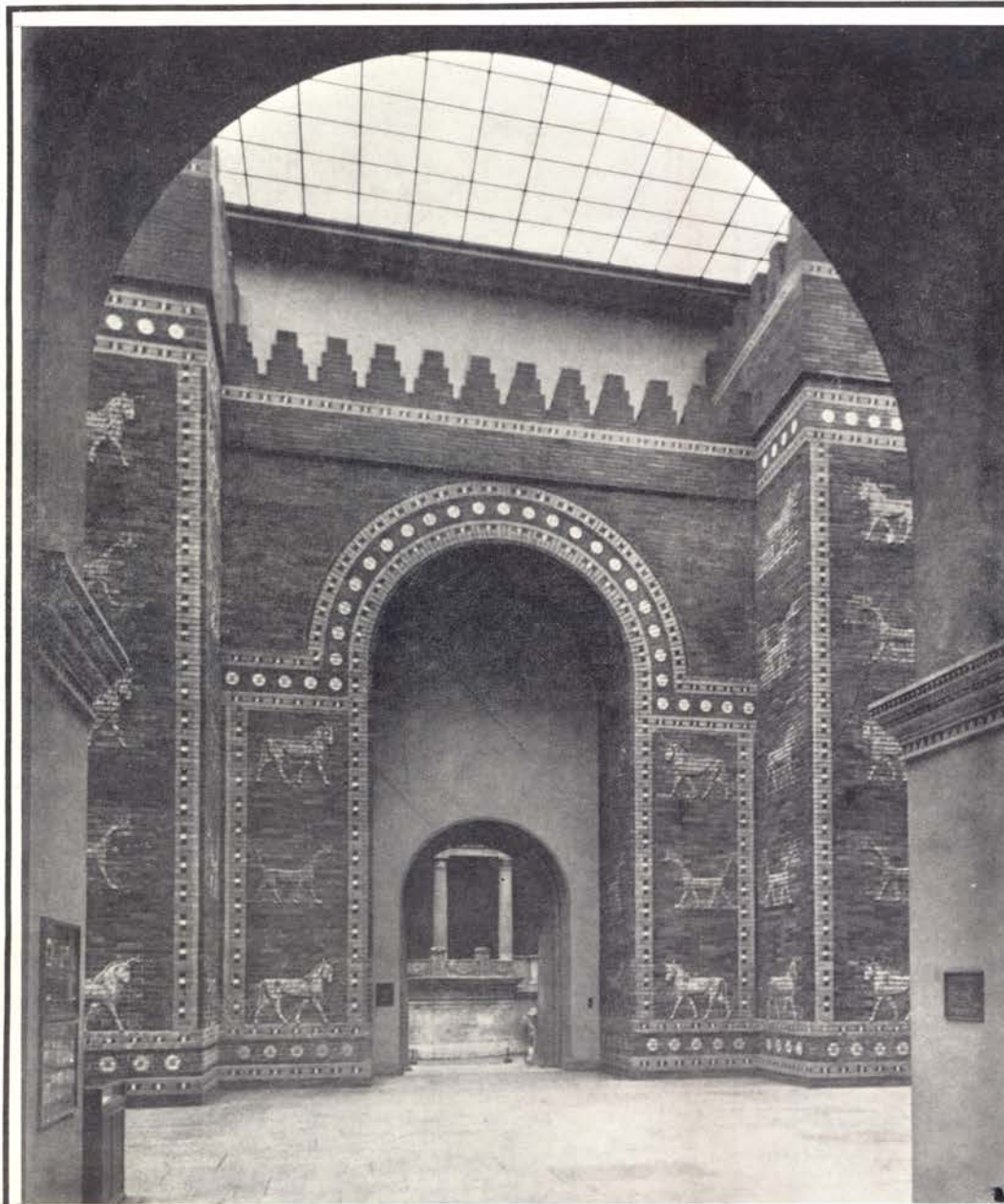


Established 1964

*Dedicated to the
Advancement of Education
of Assyrians*

MARCH-APRIL 1979

VOLUME 2 NO. 2



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CULTURAL—EDUCATIONAL—SOCIAL

NINEVEH

MARCH—APRIL 1979

VOLUME 2

NO. 2

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The Cover

Babylon: The Ishtar Gate
 (7th-6th - Centuries B.C.)

Assyrian Periodicals

We urge our readers to read and support the Assyrian publications. The active participation of all Assyrians is the only guarantee of the success of Assyrian periodicals.

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Where there is a Will . . . There is a Way . . .

Among the Assyrians' sacred goals is the preservation of their language. Determined efforts to overcome difficulties in attaining this goal, have proved fruitful. A practical example is the approach that our organization has recently adopted.

The Assyrian Foundation of America has been trying for some time to conduct Assyrian classes, but due to lack of attendance, these efforts were abandoned. Subsequently, the community was blamed and criticized.

We did not give up because deeply in our hearts we recognized the need of our people to learn their mother language. It was the duty of our dedicated organization to stimulate this desire by modifying its methods and approach to the problem from a different angle, firmly and with a positive attitude. That is exactly what we did!

The Assyrian community was informed that we were starting Assyrian classes on a specified date and would proceed regardless of the number of students attending the classes. To the surprise and the delight of everyone, there was a record breaking number of students of different ages present at the opening session, willing to learn their precious language.

This experience has encouraged us to continue the difficult task of the advancement of education among our people through all the means available to us.



Pardon Us!

Due to problems encountered during typesetting and printing of *Nineveh's* last issue (January-February 1979), several errors were inadvertently overlooked.

We apologize to our distinguished readers for this mishap, and the necessary steps will be taken to prevent its recurrence.



A Message to our readers

Dear reader:

Effective with the next issue, circulation of *Nineveh* magazine will be limited to subscribers, members of the Assyrian Foundation of America, and to those who have donated to our organization.

If you have not subscribed, please do so now by filling in the form on page 6 of this issue, detach, and mail to:

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The token amount of \$6.00 (\$10.00 overseas) for an annual subscription will undoubtedly help us in sustaining this literary organ of the Assyrian people and improve its quality.

If you are a member or a contributor, please detach the above mentioned form and pass it on to Assyrian friends urging them to subscribe.

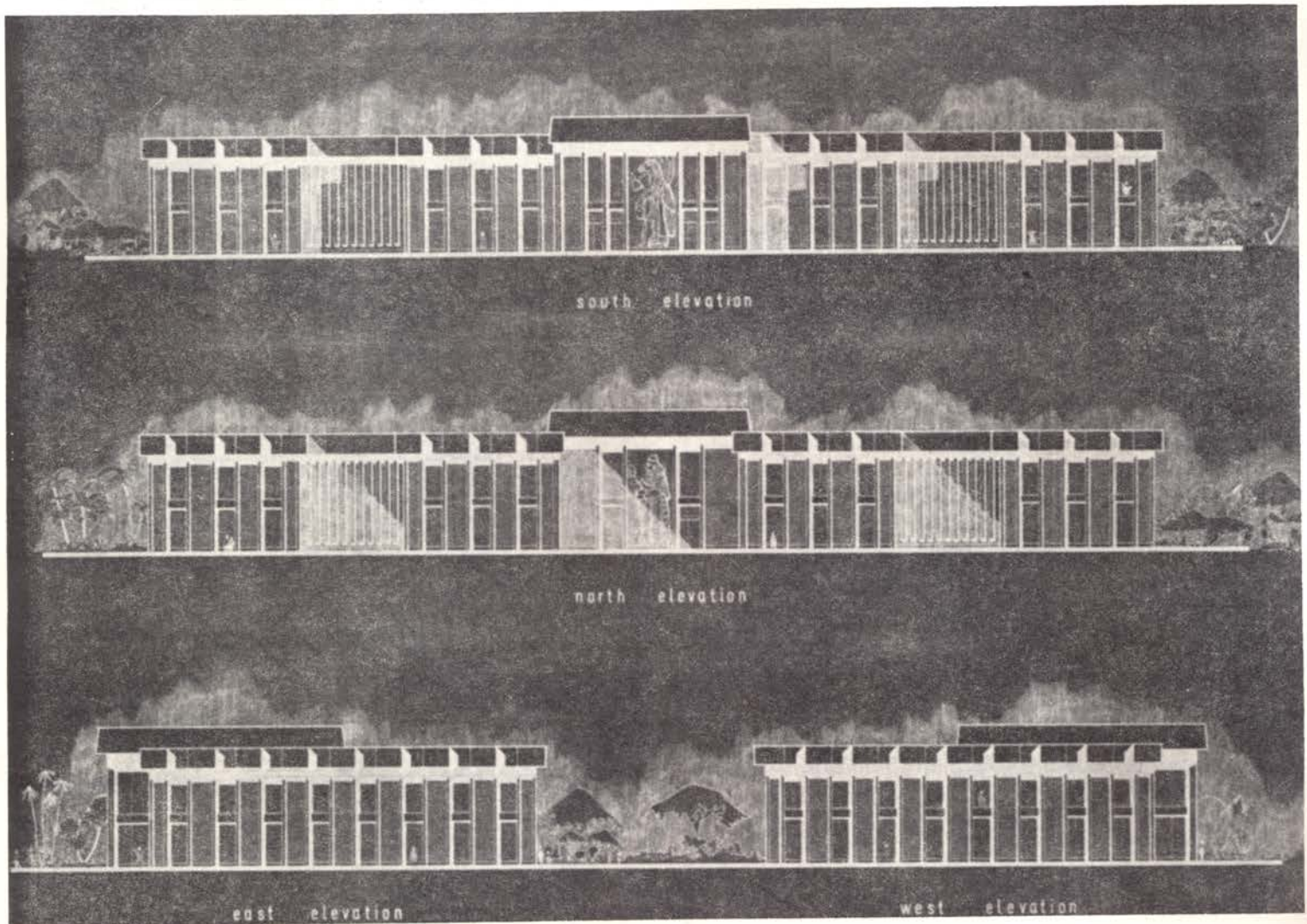
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ASSYRIAN CULTURAL CENTER AT NINEVEH

(A synopsis of an architectural thesis by Joseph Amirkhas)



Assyrians have long felt that Europeans have taken advantage of them by confiscating their ancient treasures and transporting them to Europe's museums. They believe it would be to everyone's advantage if the present and the future discoveries were to be kept in a museum and a cultural center located near the ancient ruins of Nineveh.

An Assyrian cultural center will help to serve this purpose and will also provide an opportunity for Assyrians as well as foreigners to study this old civilization in a stimulating environment. In addition to studying Assyrian history, people will be able to familiarize themselves with living Assyrians, their language and customs. The center will have a special significance for Assyrians who

will now have the necessary facilities to help them learn their fathers' language. At this present time, there are none of these facilities.

For years, Assyrians have gone on pilgrimages to Nineveh to see the ruins without having the advantage of guides or other sources of relevant information (Library). The center would solve this problem by arranging artifacts, meaningful sequence and providing explanations, descriptions, lectures and general discussions for Assyrians, as well as interested visitors. The Assyrian Cultural Center will be a rallying point and a ray of hope that the language and customs will remain alive for generations to come.

Location of the Site

A 300 acre complex lies on the ancient capital of the Assyrian Empire Nineveh on the right bank of the Tigris opposite the modern city of Mosul. It consists of two great mounds, Qouyunjiq, and that on which today is the reputed tomb of the prophet Jonah (Nabi Yunis). The river has now shifted a short distance to the west so that the mounds are isolated from the present bed, although in ancient times the city abutted on the river. The city is situated on the northwest corner of the plain about 25 by 15 miles in extent, formed by the Tigris and its tributaries, the Khasr on which Nineveh was built, which bounds the plain on the northwest, the Gomal, which forms the northeastern boundary, and the upper Zab on the southeast. The western and south flank is protected by the Tigris itself. The whole plain slopes gently to the Tigris and provides a strong position, being protected by the foothills and Gomal on the northeastern side and on the south and west by the Tigris and the upper Zab. The Khosr, although impassable enough when flooded, forms at other times no barrier to attack. The position of Nineveh, therefore, astride this stream at its confluence with the Tigris, is of great strategic importance. Much of Nineveh today lies in ruins outside the city of Mosul, but there are numerous exciting historical areas and sites that attract people from all over the world to come and see.

The excavation of Nineveh started in the end of the 18th century by Abbe Beauchams, who encouraged some native diggers at Babylon, who frequented the site to obtain mortar, to keep certain antiquities, and obtained some himself. Some of these passed into the possession of C. V. Rich, the British resident at Baghdad, whose report on the antiquities of the country was a direct inspiration to Botta and Layard, the first European excavators. The principal aim of these pioneers at first was to discover the site of Nineveh. They did not sufficiently rely upon Rich's well-grounded judgment that the Assyrian capital must lie under the twin mounds of Quyunjiq and Nabi Yunis.

Botta, with the aid of funds from the French government, turned from Quyunjiq, because of Turkish restraints, to Khorsabad, the ancient Dur-Sharrukin built by Sargon II of Assyria, and claimed that this was Nineveh. Layard thought that Nimrud, the ancient Calah, the Assyrian capital in the 9th century, was the same city, though he retained his beliefs about Quyunjiq.

Since these earliest expeditions in 1841-45 revealed the richness of the land in every kind of antiquity, many sites have been excavated, more have been located, and some are well-known from native diggings. At various intervals Quyunjiq has been worked upon, and the excavations still in progress have only touched a small part of the site of Nineveh. The city existed in prehistoric times, but the most important finds, the palace sculptures and the library tablets, belong to the 7th century B.C. Khorsabad is a small site excavated by Botta where the remains belong exclusively to the 8th century, and are important because they reveal the most complete evidence for architecture of the Assyrian period known. Nimrud was very thoroughly plundered of large objects, but at the time of its excavation little was understood of the subject, and much may yet be unearthed there. The selection of Nineveh as the site for the Assyrian Cultural Center is a natural one. A cultural center in Nineveh will be of great value to Assyrians and to the Nineveh community.

Assyrian Library

The history of Assyrian Library goes back to 1500 B.C., and it would be safe to say that they were the first people to collect material for the purpose of study. Today there are no Assyrian libraries and most of the materials are scattered all over the globe.

The earliest library probably consists of archive collections preserved in temples and palaces. In the course of Sir Austen Layard's excavation at Nineveh in 1850, he came upon tablets of clay covered with cuneiform characters. These varied in size from one inch to twelve inch squares. It is estimated that this library consisted of about 10,000 distinct works and documents. The tablets appear to have been methodically arranged and catalogued, and seems to have been public. Therefore I find it most urgent and necessary to have an Assyrian library in the cultural center.

The Assyrian library will be where all the material and literature about Assyrian history, culture, art, and Assyrian people have been gathered. This library will be a great asset to the Assyrians, as well as those people who are interested in furthering their knowledge of ancient civilizations such as the Assyrians.

The library will have a special collection on

Assyrian history and culture and some general knowledge. There is also going to be additional services, including providing films, phonograph recordings, tapes, and lectures.

All the research and collection of new material will be conducted by professors and students of the Assyrian College.

The cultural center will have an elected board of administrators who will be responsible for managing the center.

The building is set on a concrete platform 4'0" high, surrounded by a 3'0" brick and wrought-iron fence. The entrance of the building faces south looking towards the road. The entrance has a high concrete wall with a tall Assyrian sculpture in relief. The building will be two stories and a basement, which is mainly used for repairs and storage. Looking at the plan, it is a symmetrical building consisting of a central part (lobby) and two wings on each side of it.

On the ground floor there are four different departments—history, art, anthropology, and literature. On the second floor there are two lecture halls and two more reading areas. Separating each wing there are open spaces of green areas and shrubs which are designed to help the micro-climate and provide lighting from both sides of the building.

The history and art departments have an opening to the second floor which is carried on to the skylight.

Sitting in the library looking towards the north, one can view the ancient ruins and historic buildings of Nineveh in contrast to the modern building they occupy.

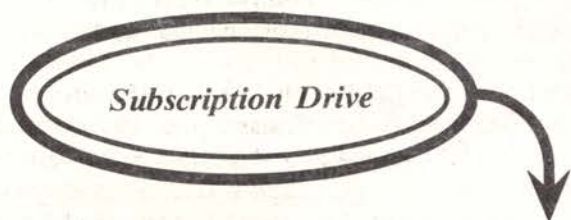
The Assyrian College

The Assyrian College is a two-story brick and concrete building which is symmetrical in plan and is facing east. There is a central part which is the administration and also the library building. On both sides of the library there are two cross-shaped two-story brick buildings that make up the classroom areas, with large open courts in the center of each building. The open courts are very useful areas and will be of great value for the students during their breaks. These areas are provided with all kinds of shrubberies, lawns, flowers, and conveniently located benches. Open courts will bring additional light and fresh air into the classroom buildings. Looking at the plan of this college, one will notice that a great effort has been made to provide maximum natural lighting available to every classroom and office. The college has been designed in such a way that green areas and courts will be visible and close to every classroom in order to create a micro-climate.

Assyrian Museum

The museum is a 160'0" by 160'0" square-shaped building sitting on a 2'0" concrete platform, surrounded by a 3'0" brick and wrought-iron fence. The entrance of the museum faces south looking towards the road and has a great pre-cast concrete sculpture of Assyrian kings in a hunting scene on its south wall. There is another entrance on the east side to make the traffic from or to the library easier. Again, there is a sculpture decorating the eastern side of the building.

Museum functions will be controlled by the Board of Directors in charge of the cultural center. All films, lectures, and other cultural activities connected to the museum will be conducted in the nearby library. The museum will have a group of guides who will assist people inside the museum and organize group tours to nearby ruins of Nineveh.



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The Assyrian City of NIMRUD

by Howard A. Hawkes
Institute of Archaeology, London

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SITE

The site of the Assyrian city of Nimrud (ancient Kalhu) lies on the eastern bank of the Tigris some 40 km south of Mosul and approximately 10 km above the confluence of the Greater Zab River with the Tigris. At the height of the Assyrian Empire in the 8th and 9th centuries BC the Tigris flowed along the western wall of the citadel mound, though through time it has gradually moved to its present bed about one km away to the west. The surrounding countryside outside the floodplain of the river, where small-scale irrigation is possible, is rolling pasture land which has always supported a considerable population. On the north-east it is bounded by the outlying foothills of the Zagros mountains, whose peaks are clearly visible on a bright day. The first visual impression of the visitor to Nimrud is of the abrupt rise of the "tell," dominated by its ziggurat, from the surrounding plain. Situated at the south-west corner of the city the tell measures 305 metres long by 203 metres wide, and stands 20 metres high. The lower city area extends from the edge of the tell away to the east and north, surrounded by the fortified city walls of about four miles in circumference (the walls of Nineveh, near Mosul, are 12 miles around and enclose 1,800 acres), the whole site occupying a 1.5 square mile area.

Assyrian Nimrud was established by King Shalmaneser I (1274-1245 BC) in the Middle Assyrian period on the site of an older Third Millennium BC town, between the other major Assyrian urban centres of Assur to the south and Nineveh to the north. In the 13th century BC Assur was no longer geographically suitable as an administrative and military capital, so political emphasis was transferred to the cities of the north, while religious pre-eminence remained at Assur. It was at the beginning of the 9th century BC that Nimrud became the capital city of Assyria.

The present citadel mound was laid out by King Assurnasirpal II (884-859 BC), whose main building projects included the massive North-West Palace, called by him the "Juniper Palace," which was completely constructed by the sixth year of his reign in 878 BC. Assurnasirpal also began construction of the ziggurat on the north-west corner of the mound with its adjacent temples of Ishtar-belit-mati and Ninurta, and the famous quay wall along the western perimeter where the Tigris defined the limits of the mound. Also associated with Assurnasirpal II is the preliminary

construction of the Nabu Temple complex (called "Ezida" by the Assyrians), which is the second largest building area on the akropolis measuring 85 metres by 80 metres.

The following monarch, Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC), extended the building programmes of his father. Work continued on the construction of the ziggurat and various modifications were added to the Nabu Temple, as well as beginning a new palace (the Central Palace), the latter being only partially excavated. The outstanding building complex associated with Shalmaneser III is not on the citadel mound, but a short distance away along the south-eastern corner line of the city walls. Constructed in 844 BC the structure was named Fort Shalmaneser by the excavators as it had been called the *ekal masharti* (arsenal) by the Assyrians. This was a huge independent complex of buildings (35 om by 25 om, 18 acres), including a set of royal apartments, ceremonial rooms, broad courtyards, and numerous sections of storerooms, all surrounded by a massive defensive wall with guard towers and gateways. It was here that Assyrian military expeditions equipped themselves with weapons from their depositories, trained for war, and, ultimately, stored the booty and tribute that was acquired on their campaigns to the Mediterranean coast, Northern Syria, and Urartu.

It is probable that the layout of the city and citadel mound at Nimrud was completed during the early years of Shalmaneser III. Where actual structures had not been started the ground had been levelled and platforms laid. The majority of succeeding Assyrian kings made additions to existing buildings, as the nature of the building material, mud brick, required constant attention, and in some cases older sites were levelled again and new foundations laid. Some of the contributions of the more well-known Assyrian rulers follow.

Adad-Nirari III (810-783 BC), built his own palace on the western edge of the mound as well as significantly adding to the Nabu Temple and Fort Shalmaneser.

Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BC) records building a palace of exceptional size and beauty. Though the actual structure has not been identified it has been suggested that it may be part of the partially excavated Central Palace, originally begun by Shalmaneser III, but completed and decorated by Tiglath-Pileser III.

Sargon II (722-705 BC) is known to have used the North-West Palace as a storehouse. However, the citadel building primarily associated with this king is the Burnt Palace, which was still in use during this period. It was Sargon who constructed the new royal city at Khorsabad, much of which was laid out along the same plan as Nimrud. Sargon's son and successor Sennacherib (704-681 BC) did not remain at Khorsabad, but built himself a grand palace complex on the citadel mound of Nineveh, which they became the centre of Assyrian political life.

Esarhaddon (680-699 BC) in the course of adding Egypt to the Assyrian Empire returned to Nimrud in his later years and began construction of a palace at the south-western corner of the tell, and, though apparently unfinished, it included a new southerly approach through a pair of monumental gateways. In addition, Esarhaddon is known to have made massive repairs to Fort Shalmaneser.

Assurbanipal (668-626 BC) is better known for his palace at Nineveh. Indications are, however, that he made minor repairs to the Temple of Nabu and other various buildings at Nimrud.

Assur-etil-ilani (625-623 BC) also made extensive repairs to the Nabu Temple and to the fortifications of the city, as was the case for the last Assyrian king to occupy Nimrud, Sin-shar-ishkun (622-612 BC).

After the final sack of Nimrud by the combined forces of the Medes and Babylonians in 612 BC refugees returned to the site to try and repair some of the buildings, though the glory of the past was not to return. For three centuries after the final destruction Nimrud was only sparsely occupied by Achaemenid settlers, followed by a small Hellenistic village of the late 2nd century BC.



THE ASSYRIAN ORIGIN

by G. M. Dooman

(from *Who Are These Assyrians*)

The origin of the Assyrians as a nation is hidden in the mists of the past, but when they first appear on the stage of history about three thousand years before Christ we find them already a strong city kingdom organised around the first capital, Ashure, located on the left bank of the Tigris, in upper Mesopotamia, the modern Iraq.

The Assyrians are of Semitic race, and took their name from the name of their God Assure, or as some historians assert, from their first capitol. However, although forming a very powerful vassal of the Babylonian Empire, the Assyrians played a passive part in the affairs of western Asia until the decline of Babylon in the middle of the 18th to be exact, about 1740 years before Christ, when Assyria went its own way as an independent kingdom. From that time on until the destruction of Nineveh, in 606 B.C., the Assyrian Empire remained with varying degrees of fortune, the

supreme power in the Orient.

During this thousand years Assyria remained above all else a military state with a strong will and a deliberate policy. She expanded in all directions, welding together states into one more or less compacted well-organised empire, on an entirely different basis from that of both its predecessors, the Babylonian and the Egyptian Empires.

From 1740 B.C. until 1300 B.C. Assyria was a mere kingdom, a rival of Babylon, reserving her power for future possibilities, defensive as well as offensive.

Beginning with Shalmaneser I about 1300 B.C. the city kingdom began to expand into an empire, conquering and consolidating smaller states around it. Campaign after campaign was conducted by Shalmaneser against the declining empire of the Hittites, where several Assyrian military colonies were settled. The Armenians and the Kurdish Tribes in the North and North East were also attacked by Shalmaneser. Nor did Syria escape the effect of this triumphant reign. Shalmaneser's successor turned his attention to Babylon, which he added to his dominions, thus making Assyria the mistress of the Oriental world.

Under Tiglat-Pileser I the frontier of Assyria was further extended westward as far as the Mediterranean Sea, and the mighty Egypt presented the Assyrian conqueror with a present—a crocodile. With the accession of Tiglat-Pileser III to the throne in 745 B.C. Babylon was made an Assyrian province, and his further conquests carried the Assyrian arms farther than those of his predecessors. To the East, the shores of the Caspian Sea were reached; in the West, his conquests penetrated Asia Minor and covered the entire Eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea until they reached Egypt; to the South the frontier was the Persian Gulf. Such was the work of Tiglat-Pileser III, the greatest of Assyrian monarchs.

The four greatest Monarchs who followed him were Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal, who was the last great Monarch of Assyria. The Empire, even during his lifetime, had begun to decline and to disintegrate. Fourteen years after his death in 626 B.C. the Assyrian Empire was no longer in existence, and the proud and arrogant Nineveh became a heap of smoldering ashes; Assyria as a political entity disappeared from the face of the earth.

After the fall of the empire and the destruction of Nineveh, Assyria became a small kingdom under the Roman mandate. This little Assyrian kingdom under King Oogar at Adessa endured until 336 A.D. In the middle of the fourth century the Romans and the Persians were once again at war, and it was during this campaign that the Assyrians were dispersed throughout Asia Minor; some went to Syria, some remained under the Persian rule, and others took refuge in the mountains of Kurdistan. In these mountains they lived and enjoyed home rule until 1915.



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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

by Julius N. Shabbas

- Nimrud (Calah) presented many aspects of civilization and history. For example, a white block of limestone was found in the debris during excavations with a royal figure engraved upon it. The stone had been a cenotaph of the Assyrian King, Shamshi-Adad, a ruler in the ninth century B.C. In addition to the signs of the crescent and the planet Venus, the King wears on his breast a special emblem attached to a ribbon. It is a large and beautiful cross, a symbol dated nearly a thousand years before the birth of Christ.
- Human occupation in Iraq is traced to Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age, a stage of development at which man still subsisted through hunting and food-gathering, before he began to live in settled communities and control his food supply by the domestication and herding of animals and the growing of cereals. Presence of man in Iraq may be put at between 100,000-150,000 years ago.
- Ancient settlements in prehistoric Assyria¹

Karim Shahr Site (east of Kirkuk)

The village was occupied for a short time only in the region of 7000 to 6000 B.C. The fact that at this two-acre site a few agricultural tools were found indicates definite change from food-gathering to food-producing. It could not be regarded as a neolithic village since it marks an early stage in transition.

Jarmo Site (east of Kirkuk)

The village was occupied at about 5000 to 6000 B.C. It is a neolithic village. Its remains indicate a permanent village, and the fact that eight floor levels were found indicates habitation through at least eight generations.

Mulaffa' Site (situated between Mosul & Arbil)

This is a neolithic and fully established site. It is more primitive than Jarmo in the remains of its material culture and perhaps a little earlier.

Gird Ali Agha Site (situated north of Arbil)

It is later than Jarmo but still shows no evidence of links with the first of the well-defined cultural stage, that of Hassuna.

Hassuna Culture

(Named from a site west of the Tigris River not far south of Mosul.)

The earliest type of settlement in the mainstream of cultural development in prehistoric Iraq. In addition to the site which gave the culture its name, settlements forming part of the same early stage have been found at Matarrah (south of Kirkuk), Nineveh, Arpachiyah, and elsewhere. The Hassuna people were the first cultivators of Mesopotamian soil.

Halaf Culture

Named after the site of Tell Halaf on the Habur (in northwest Mesopotamia). The Halaf people were not invaders displacing an earlier cultural group. This culture arose in Assyria.

Ubaid Culture

The Ubaidi people were invaders into Assyria from the south. Their occupation at Arpachiyah may have lasted 4 or 5 centuries.

- Important differences exist between the civilization of Assyria and that of Babylon, notwithstanding the fact (a) that earlier indigenous and Sumerian cultures underlay the civilization of both countries, (b) that both Assyrians and Babylonians were of Semitic stock and spoke very closely related forms of Semitic language, and (c) that in the sphere of law and religion the Assyrians borrowed largely from the Babylonians. With reference to (c), specifically religion, I quote the judgment of Professor Sidney Smith, a leading authority on the history of Assyria, where in his book *EARLY HISTORY OF ASSYRIA* he says:

'The lack of individuality then in the Assyrians was no more remarkable than that of the Romans who similarly accepted a religion not their own. It is more profitable to turn to the very few distinctive features of their religious practice, and only two seem to be established for the period under consideration (i.e., middle of the second millennium B.C.). One consists in the position of the national god, Ashur. . . . The other lies in the prominence of the gods of war, or of the warlike characteristics of well-known gods. . . . It is extremely difficult on the evidence now available to form a just

¹In the next issue of *Nineveh* we will present detailed information on the sites and cultures.

estimate of Assyrian religion, and of the particular activities it called forth; but the expressions of many modern writers, which would lead to the opinion that that land has nothing of interest to reveal to the student of human development, are very wide of the mark. The taste of the Assyrians was, moreover, catholic. They were not bound to observe any of the broad differences that were recognized in Babylonia. The Gilgamesh epic, of which the only Babylonian edition, which dates from about 2100-1900 B.C., was found at Erech, was never mentioned apparently by the priests of Babylon: the Assyrians studied it. The strange poem, 'Let me praise the lord of wisdom,' which propounds the same problem as the book of Job, though it states the matter in a different way, was acceptable to them. To this catholicity no small debt was owed by the ancient world; and to it we owe our knowledge of these works, which deserve a more searching analysis than they have yet received for their importance in the history of the development of the human spirit to be appreciated. If a broad taste for the best available is a mark of culture, then the Assyrians were a cultured people; their crass superstitions, their readiness to adopt religious and semi-religious beliefs, and their devotion to the collection of all religious literature must not be allowed to obscure their merit."

Broadly speaking, Babylonian religion, built on the foundation laid by the Sumerians, was a magico-religious system based on the fear of evil spirits, and other incalculable elements in the social environment.

The Assyrians of today inherited from the Assyrians of the old their readiness to adopt religious beliefs, and likewise demonstrated their devotion not only to the collection of religious literature and extensive writing on religious subjects, but in propagating such beliefs through their missionary enterprise immediately following Christ's crucifixion, and continuing their arduous task through many centuries thereafter. Christian beliefs and actions were imbedded in the souls of the Assyrians long prior to the advent of the Christian era.



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WHAT'S HAPPENING

Hartford, Conn.: The A.U.A. has recently released the following census of Assyrian communities in the world.

Iraq	1,000,000	Syria	500,000
U.S.A.	180,000	Lebanon	170,000
USSR	125,000	Iran	90,000
Turkey	75,000	Australia	15,000
Sweden	10,000	West Germany ..	8,000
England	6,000	South America ..	5,500
Persian Gulf	5,000	France	5,000
Kuwait	5,000	Canada	4,000
Switzerland	2,000	Greece	2,000
Italy	1,000	Other countries	300,000
		2,508,500	

Assyrian includes: Jacobite, Chaldean, Church of East, Protestant

London, England: The Assyrian Society of Great Britain held a special General Meeting

on February 11, 1979. A new committee was elected. The new officers are:

Sargis Shallau Chairman
Benjamin Warda Vice Chairman
Youseph Murad General Secretary
Samuel Joseph Treasurer

We congratulate the new officers and wish them a successful administration.

Chicago, Ill: Dr. Robert Paulissian and his group have recently completed the reprinting of Mar Toma Audo's great Assyrian dictionary entitled "Simta D'leshana Suraya". Details on this great work will be published in our next issue.

Obituaries Mrs. Khatoon Benjamin passed away on April 12, 1979 in San Francisco, California. She is survived by her three daughters; Asmer, Asyat and Sultan and sixteen grandsons/daughters. Our sincere condolences to her family.

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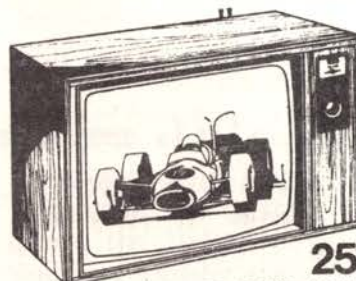
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Allen Abraham imagined himself crouching stone-faced, grabbing his opponent by the waste, flinging him to the mat, and then jumping up as the referee signaled a pin. Give the kid a medal.

Abraham's dream shattered later in the San Jose State gym.

The year was 1958, and the curly-haired kid, a freshman at SF State, made his debut in the Pacific Coast AAU Wrestling Open. Excited, Abraham forgot to inquire about his opponent — a top-ranked amateur and member of the U.S. Olympic Wrestling Team.

"As I look back I don't think anybody told me I was going to wrestle Frank Rosenmeyer," Abraham said.

"After the whole thing was done, I got a standing ovation." Abraham accentuated each word. "But I couldn't understand what the heck everyone was clappin' about 'cause I got beat . . . I don't remember . . . well, it must have been 20 — 1. I said, 'Geez, he tore me up and everybody's clappin'."

"I didn't realize that he had pinned everyone else."

Three years later, Abraham did the pinning as he placed second in the same San Jose tournament. But somehow that's just not as impressive as his coaching accomplishments at SF State.

He doesn't like to share them because people might start to expect more, he said, than the seven league titles he's led his Gator wrestling team to in 15 years, or the two Far Western Conference Coach of the Year honors Abraham's won in the last five seasons — including the one bestowed on him a few weeks ago.

☆☆☆

"I took it to mean many things," Abraham said of his award. "We had good men and they must have acted like they wanted to wrestle. And the people (FWC officials) must have recognized that we had only three seniors (Baron Wong, Scott Osterholt and Chet Dixon).

"The guys had a lot of things going for them. We had good assistants, trainers, facilities and equipment. And we had one of the toughest schedules in the league.

"I've felt some criticism towards me because I want us to wrestle the Division I schools. There were no weak teams (on the Gators' exhibition slate)."

Indeed not. On Jan. 12, the Gators, a Division II squad, competed against mighty Oregon State — the third-ranked Division I team in the nation. "We scored eight points on them," Abraham said, his eyes widening for emphasis.

Eight days later the Gators wrestled to a 33 — 20 loss to Cal Berkeley — an impressive showing for a small-time college team.

Just as impressive are Abraham's

(The San Francisco State University newspaper, Zengers's Golden Gator published in its issue dated Tuesday, March 13, 1979 the following article about the talented Assyrian sportsman and wrestling coach Allen Abraham.)

Former wrestling star coaches team to 7 titles



Photo by Steve Saint Germain

Gator wrestling coach Allen Abraham, once a fine athlete himself, addresses his men in the gym after a recent practice.

athletic merits. Although not competing in sports his first three years at Turlock High due to a kidney ailment, the muscular heavyweight was named all-conference in his senior year, the fall of 1957. He was also the third best grappler in his weight class (177-190 pounds) in Northern California.

But it almost didn't come about.

"Education was important to my Parents," Abraham said, who is of Assyrian descent. "They said everybody can use their body, but not everybody can use their brain. My father wanted me to become a doctor. He thought that was the best thing a person could do for themselves.

"But he didn't realize that the groundwork was never laid. My father was never educated."

Threatening to quit school, Abraham, who had previously passed the time by working on old cars, was allowed by his doctor to compete in football and wrestling.

There was also school work and chores on his parents' farm — but it was worth it.

"Athletics was important," said Abraham of his home town. "It was socially acceptable. My friends were playing, so I wanted to play, too."

Moving on to SF State, Abraham became captain of the football and wrestling squads and won all-conference honors in both sports.

An agile and powerful athlete in his time, Abraham credits many for his success. They include Ed Jolley, his wrestling coach at Turlock High; Joe Verducci, Gator football coach from 1950-64; and present grid mentor Vic Rowen, for whom Abraham coached for 10 years. While working on his Ed.D. at Columbia University, Abraham was counseled by another grappling specialist, John Toner.

Abraham said, "They're all great coaches."

So, apparently, is he.

continued on page 16

ASSYRIAN FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES

General Membership Meeting

General membership meetings of the Assyrian Foundation of America are held on the second Saturday of each month at the Cultural Center, 7:00 (P.M.) Members and guests are invited.

Picnic

The Foundation will hold a picnic on June 24, 1979. Announcements giving details will be mailed to all Assyrians in the Bay Area.

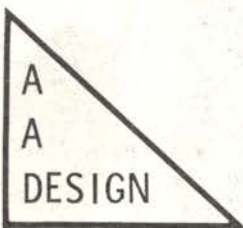
Documentaries

Mr. Sankhiro Khofri, chairman/Social committee presented the following documentaries to members and guests of the Assyrian Foundation at the Cultural Center during the last two months:

- 1) Yosemite National Park
- 2) Mar Youkhana's visit to the Assyrian communities.

Kha Bnissan

Assyrian Foundation celebrated the Assyrian New Year on March 24, 1979 with a dinner-dance party at its Cultural Center in Berkeley. Congratulations to Sankhiro Khofri, chair/man/Social committee and to all wonderful helpers for a job well done.



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New Members

We are glad to report a new addition to our membership: Mr. & Mrs. Fredrick & Elfi Ashouri. Fredrick is the son of Mr. Babajan Ashouri, the well known and admired Assyrian writer. We are glad to have them in our organization.

Contributions

The Assyrian Foundation gratefully acknowledges the receipt of the following contributions:

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continued from page 13

"When I came here two years ago, I had the basics down good," said senior middleweight Chet Dixon, who wrestled two seasons at Bakersfield State. "He taught me variations of moves and, because I was conservative (in attacking), he opened me up.

• "He taught me things like arm drags, and body throws, things I wouldn't have done in my first two years. I gathered more confidence."

The story is that Abraham is a tireless worker and so considerate as to never turn down a troubled face.

"I don't know of anyone who gives more time to students," said James Southam, Associate Professor of business information and computing systems, who helps Abraham compile wrestling statistics.

If Abraham is strained by his workload, it doesn't show in his demeanor during a match.

Rising only to help an injured wrestler, Abraham is silent while his team competes. Hands cupped together over his mouth and elbows on his knees, he observes.

"A lot of coaches scream and yell at their kids, but he figures that's counter-productive," said Dixon, who is of sharp contrast to Abraham during a match, pacing up and down the gym, waving his arms and

voicing encouragement to his teammates.

"He's low-key. If you get a guy too nervous, he'll tense up in his match.

"A lot of the mental preparation is left to us. He explains to us what he wants, and he figures that we're in college and know why we're out there."



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