



NINEVEH

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Cultural - Educational - Social

NINEVEH

Second and Third Quarters 2002
Volume 25, Numbers 2-3

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From the Editor

The 48^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, International Congress of Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology, took place in Leiden, The Netherlands, on 1-4 July, 2002. The theme was "Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia".

There were many scholars and a few lay people from all over the world. I saw some old friends that I had met in the last RAI, especially Mr. Zack Cherry, who is studying Assyriology in Uppsala, and Mr. Hammurabi Bar Asmar, both from Sweden, and met some new ones. Most impressive was Dr. Matay Beth Arsan from Amsterdam. A very bright and energetic young man who is very active in the Assyrian community in The Netherlands. While visiting Amsterdam, Dr. Beth Arsan took a few of us to *Eufraat*, an Assyrian restaurant, which is listed among the suggested places to eat in Amsterdam in *The Lonely Planet* guide book. It has great food and an even greater atmosphere - the Lentil soup was the best thing I had while in Europe; a must for a any visitor to Amsterdam.

In all, some 79 papers were read on topics having to do with ethnicity, language and linguistics, history, archaeology, and computers in Assyriology. One of the poster presentations was on computer imaging of cuneiform tablets to produce three-dimensional "replicas" of the tablets. This will make these tablets available on-line for all scholars and other interested individuals, and serve to preserve them even if the originals are destroyed or lost.

The main theme, ethnicity, was approached from different points in order to arrive at some kind of a definition. First, it was from the perspective of an archaeologist. Dr. Roaf spoke of "...how pictorial archaeological evidence can provide insights into the representation of ethnicity in the ancient Near East and ... some of the problems in investigating ethnicity in the archaeological record without the help of texts or pictures". The physical remains and artifacts, whether from the period before writing or after, can be used to characterize or categorize the people who lived in the area under investigation; however, arriving at any conclusions about their ethnicity is not possible without the help of written records.

Dr. Strating gave the anthropologist's view. This was very interesting, since Dr. Strating is not an Assyriologist and his presentation was not limited to the ancient Near East. He spoke of the different traits that can be used to identify an ethnic group; an attempt at defining ethnicity. This included cultural traits, common heritage, linguistic affiliation, kinship, etc. He pointed out that depending on how specific one wishes to be or how one wishes to group (or divide?) people, one can use different criteria. This, of course, is exactly what has been done to us. We have been divided into separate "ethnic" groups based on church affiliation (of all things!) into Nestorians, Chaldeans, Syrians/Jacobites, etc.

Dr. Boiye spoke of *Akkadian-Greek double names in Hellenistic Babylonia*. This, of course, brings up the fact that the ancient Near East, especially Mesopotamia, was a very cosmopolitan place with many different ethnolinguistic groups living in close proximity. Ancient Assyria was especially diverse. The situation in the United States was used as an analogy. There are many different ethnolinguistic groups in the United States which, initially, maintain fairly close ties to their culture and



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International Congress of Assyriology and Near Eastern Archaeology

Leiden, 1-4 July 2002

ETHNICITY IN ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

land of origin. However, in time and with increasing rate of intermarriage, the successive generations end up having more in common with each other than with their ancestors - an American identity that is a combination of all the different identities, which, given enough time, may become an *ethnic* identity. The analogy is limited, however. There is no "American" ethnicity, yet, unless, of course, one considers the native ("Indian") Americans. So, the common "American ethnicity" is (or, will be) a composite of all the groups that have come and continue to come to this country; whereas in the case of ancient Assyria, there was a very definite and strong Assyrian ethnic identity. And, although the new-comers contributed to and influenced their new home (like the Aramaic language), they were integrated in the Assyrian society and became Assyrian (process of *Assyrianization*: the cultural, linguistic, and religious integration under an Assyrian ethnic and national consciousness). This makes it very difficult for those who like to put things into neat categories. Not only is the concept of genetic, racial or ethnic purity a nonsensical concept for the modern times, it was so in the ancient Mesopotamia as well!

Dr. Levine spoke of *The idea of "The Chosen People" as an expression of Israelite ethnicity*. This concept of being "chosen" is important not only for ethnic identity, a sense of being special or different from others, but also for maintenance of one's ethnicity. Being chosen makes one not only special, but, also different and distinct, a sense of "us vs. them". So, in the case of the Jews, religion is perhaps the most important characteristic and ethnic marker, since their religion is exclusive.

There were other interesting papers and presentations like Dr. Capomacchio's *Alexander's Orient: a question of ethnicity*, Dr. Backus's *Ethnic recognition in the folk sources*, Dr. Forlani's *Un peuple, plusieurs noms. Le problème des ethniques au Proche-Orient*, Dr. Bernardi's *Methodological approaches to the comprehension of ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia*, and other, less relevant for us but interesting, talks on Sumerians, and others.

Dr. Parpola, from the University of Helsinki, spoke on *National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. He first described the situation in the Neo-Assyrian period; the fact that it was a country where many different ethnolinguistic groups came and, in time, were integrated into the Assyrian society. He then provided examples of Assyria and Assyrians in native and non-native documents from the time of the Assyrian empire and through the post-Christian period. He concluded by telling his colleagues, the Assyriology community, to open their minds and consider the possibility that all the Assyrians did not suddenly cease to exist upon the fall of the Assyrian empire, that the people and culture remained, changing with time, and that modern Assyrians are indeed the descendants of the ancient Assyrians!

Although Dr. Parpola has in the past been very sympathetic to the Assyrian community and has been the only Assyriologist, as far as I know, that has worked to document the continuity of the Assyrian heritage after the fall of the empire (the *Melammu Project*), this was somewhat of a surprise; a "bomb-shell" as de-

(Continued on page 4)

scribed by a colleague.

Assyriologists, in general, are still very critical of and opposed to the idea of even to the possibility of the survival of Assyrians and Assyrian identity after the fall of the empire. It's interesting that they don't care what we call ourselves, as long as it isn't Assyrian! We look forward to the responses to Dr. Parpola's declaration.

Although very interesting, the RAI in Leiden did not provide any answers –Dr. Parpola's presentation being the exception–especially to the most basic question: "what is ethnicity?". Indeed, it demonstrated that it is very difficult (rather impossible!) to come up with a set of objective parameters that everyone will agree with and which can be used to determine a person's ethnicity. Language, cultural traits, heritage, lineage/kinship, land, religion, and many other variables were considered and discussed; however, none of these was found to be sufficient or adequate for determining ethnicity. All of these variables are part of the answer, but the presence or absence of no one of them is diagnostic. This is made even more complicated when one considers the reality of migration and intermarriage. Does a Frenchman stop being French if he does not speak French? Can one still be Russian if one lives in Mongolia? Is a Dutch-speaking, Lutheran woman of Chinese descent still ethnically Chinese? This reminds me of a question I was asked by a seemingly intelligent and serious Assyriologist who asked: "Can you prove you are Assyrian?" I was surprised, but, thought of how I could prove I am Assyrian; so, I asked her how she wanted me to prove it. She gave all the above parameters, for each of which I responded with the obvious inconsistencies. She was not convinced and, since I am not an Assyriologist, felt I clearly could not comprehend what she was saying and was not worth further time or effort.

The answer to the question asked but not answered at the RAI was given by Dr. Fuat Deniz, an Assyrian who teaches at the Örebro University, department of social sciences, in Sweden. He spoke at the Assyrian American National Federation Convention in Detroit, Michigan, part of a lecture series sponsored by the Assyrian Academic Society. Simply put, there are (at least) two ways of defining ethnicity: the first is based on objective criteria (language, religion, land, kinship, etc., as discussed above), the second is based on subjective criteria; what one feels he or she is. This, of course, is the answer; all the "objective" parameters change and evolve, sometimes quite drastically, as the change from Ashurism to Christianity, or from using Akkadian to Aramaic, or from living in Urmi to living in Chicago; but, the subjective sense of being Assyrian is independent of all those variables, can not be measured objectively, and can not be proved or disproved. Indeed, one may speak Russian, live in Japan, be Buddhist, and have a Mongolian grandmother, but be Assyrian!

The proceedings of the RAI will be published (may take several years) in Assyriological journals; the papers presented at the Assyrian American National Federation Convention will be published as a booklet by the Federation or the Assyrian Academic Society.

RAI 49 will be held in London, 7-11 July 2003. The theme is **Nineveh**. This will coincide with the 250th anniversary of the British Museum.

In the announcement, the organizers describe the significance of Nineveh; the long tradition of British archaeological work on

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the site, the "attractive bas-reliefs that adorned the palaces of Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal that have become some of the museum's most familiar exhibits" and the vast numbers of clay tablets. Continuing research has shown the survival of the city past the ancient Mesopotamian empires and into Greek and later literature. And, yet, the logo chosen to symbolize this great city is a scene from a battle where severed heads are being counted by soldiers! Are we back to the eighteenth century, Bible-inspired stereotyping of Assyrians as "blood-thirsty barbarians"?! Perhaps it's time for us to get involved in these "scholarly and objective" meetings and organizations and show our disapproval.

For more information on the RAI 49, write to:

CNMES/LMEI –RAI 49
SOAS, University of London
Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG

England



As most of *Nineveh's* readers have known, one of the reasons Julius stopped producing this magazine was to spend more time with Violet, who had been quite ill for a while. He took care of her at home with great love,



even though his own health was failing. In fact, he underwent surgery, the recovery from which has been made even more difficult because of the enormous physical and emotional stress.

On behalf of the editorial staff of *Nineveh*, the board and members of the Assyrian Foundation, and all the readers, I would like to express our condolences to Julius and his family. We will miss seeing Violet at the Foundation meetings. We also miss you at the Foundation meetings, not to mention *Nineveh's* editorial staff meetings. Please, get well soon; we need your help, advice and guidance.

Robert Karoukian

69th Assyrian-American Convention a Success



AINA- The 69th national convention of the Assyrian American National Federation (AANF) was held in one of the most heavily Assyrian populated cities outside the Middle East, Detroit, Michigan, from August 29th to September 3rd. Assyrians, including Chaldeans and Syriacs, from across the social and political spectrum attended and deliberated amongst growing speculation about the upcoming likely attacks on Iraq. Of greatest concern for all Assyrians remains fair political representation for Assyrians in any future Iraqi governmental reform as well as concern for the safety of Assyrians residing both within the government controlled areas of Iraq as well as the northern UN administered region¹. The AANF was founded in 1933 in response to the massacre of 3000 Assyrians in the village of Simele and its surrounding area in north Iraq, a massacre orchestrated by a year old Iraq and conducted by its army led by a Kurd, Bakir Sidqi, with the help of Arab and Kurdish civilians.

On August 31st The Assyrian Coalition of political organizations addressed the Assyrian Convention through brief presentations and a panel discussion. Speakers included Mr. Abgar Maloul of the Assyrian Democratic Organization (ADO), former Illinois State Senator John Nimrod of the Assyrian Universal Alliance (AUA), Mr. Shimon Khamo of the Bet Nahrain Democratic Party (BNDP), and Mr. Eshia Esho of the Assyrian National Organization (ANO). Also addressing the gathering was Mr. Yacoub Kanna, Secretary General of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM), who had traveled from ADM headquarters in northern Iraq. All speakers universally addressed Assyrian concerns regarding inadequate Assyrian political representation in Iraqi opposition meetings. Mr. Kanna added an in depth analysis of the political situation in Iraq and the looming conflict with the international community. Mr. Kanna emphasized the need to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein and placed the blame for Iraq's international isolation squarely on the Iraqi regime.

Concluding the political forum were Dr. Ronald Michael and former Congressman Michael Flanagan of the Assyrian American League (AAL). Dr. Michael summarized the current lobbying efforts by the AAL aimed at raising the Assyrian political profile within Washington D.C. and increasing Assyrian political participation in opposition venues. Congressman Flanagan outlined the AAL's networking activities

within Congress and the State Department and expressed optimism that Assyrian participation in upcoming opposition meetings would be realized in the near future. The forum was also addressed by Mr. Atour Golani, the President of the AANF who expressed the solid support of the AANF. Mr. Saad Marouf, President of the Chaldean Federation of America likewise expressed support of the Chaldean community for what he described as the "impressive" outlook and achievements of the Assyrian Coalition and the

AAL. Mr. Habib Afram of the Syriac Universal Alliance echoed his support and, like Mr. Golani and Mr. Marouf, reaffirmed that the communities of Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syriacs comprise one nation.

Underscoring the increasing importance of Assyrian political participation, Mr. Nate Jenson of the U.S. State Department attended the Convention on September 1st at the invitation of the AAL. Mr. Jenson's newly formed position and responsibilities at the State Department primarily involve Assyrian issues. Reflecting the growing concern over the Assyrian case, Mr. Jenson is sometimes referred to as the "Assyrian Desk Officer" at the State Department.

On the educational front, the Convention hosted a Diaspora symposium, which included four speakers, each speaking on their representative Assyrian community in the Diaspora. The prominent communities addressed were those of the United States, Canada, Sweden, and Australia. Some of the most recent research presented showed that the first settlers of some of these communities, such as that of the U.S., started as early as the 17th century. However, the significant accumulation occurring after WWI, 1981, and 1990 in all four communities suggested the impact of war on the native Assyrian population of the middle east was greater than that of the majority Arab population.

Another well attended symposium was the Assyrian identity conference, which included speakers from very diverse academic fields including sociology, Syriac studies, Assyriology, and anthropology. The papers presented were The Assyrian cultural heritage, from Survival to Revival, by Professor Adil-masih Saadi; Maintenance and Transformation of Ethnic Identity: the Assyrian/Syria case, by Dr. Fuat Deniz; Chal-

(Continued on page 20)



Grandmother's Memories

Victoria Aivazova, M.D.
Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia

It is impossible to turn over the pages of our past without tears and sympathy. The pages that were written with the blood of innocent victims who were deprived of the most valuable earthly possession, their Motherland.

Countless Assyrian men, women and children, exhausted and weakened by hunger and cold, and pursued and persecuted, escaped, leaving everything behind, in the hope of saving their children from annihilation in their homeland.

On the road, countless died of starvation, cold and exposure. The heart-breaking cry of the little children, like sharp daggers, thrust into their mothers' hearts, bleeding from despair and mortal fear. The misfortunes that fell upon the Assyrians in 1914 and the following years took thousands of innocent lives; and those that survived became eternal wanderers, dispersed in different lands as refugees, with broken hearts and bitter memories. Among those refugees was my great-grandfather, Šamaša Invia Bet-Aivaz who left Iran with his wife, Victoria, and their five children: Emmanuel (my grandfather), Mari, Šamira, Fevronia, and Invia. They came to Armavir, Russia, where Invia died from pneumonia. After her husband's death, Victoria left for Tbilisi, where her mother, Sahrre Teimurazova, and two brothers, Baba (the older one) and Hakkim Benjamin lived. Hakkim Benjamin became a well-known doctor in Georgia. But, in 1940, he was exiled to Iran because he was an Iranian citizen. His wife, Lili, who was an Assyrian teacher, and three children, Sargon, Sardic, and Ophelia, followed him shortly thereafter.



Hakkim Benjamin's wife, Lily, with their three children

Sahrre Teimurazova was the sister of Insab Bit-Avraham, mother of Dr. Freidun Bit-Avraham (Aturaya). Sahrre brought Victoria and her children to an old dilapidated house that had holes in the walls. They even had to burn the doors and windows to warm themselves. Thus, in this house and in a state of abject poverty and hunger, my grandmother and her children started their lives in a new country, which became our home.

At thirteen, my grandfather, Emmanuel, started working.

painting houses, to help his mother support their family. Victoria taught Assyrian in Kukia, the area in Tbilisi where there was a concentration of Assyrians. Since she knew Assyrian perfectly, she also worked as a prompter in the Assyrian theater in 1939. The theater was in Gabashvili Street. It was an old building which was changing and being brought to life by the exceptional talent of the Assyrian actors and actresses who, in spite of a very difficult life, would find enough strength and enthusiasm to work to preserve their language and culture in a new country, far from their homeland. Many works were translated from other languages into Assyrian, including *Aršin Mal-alan*, *Mašti Ibad*, *Sevil*, *Ašik-Kerib*, and many others. These beautiful performances in Assyrian served to uplift the spirit of the people in those difficult times and give them confidence.



Members of the Assyrian Theater. Victoria Teimurazova Bit-Aivaz is fourth in the second row

The misfortunes, however, did not stop even in their new home. Many of the performers in the Assyrian theater, as well as other Assyrians were exiled to Almaata, where many died because of the severe conditions. Many other Assyrians lay down their lives during the Great Patriotic War in 1941-1945.

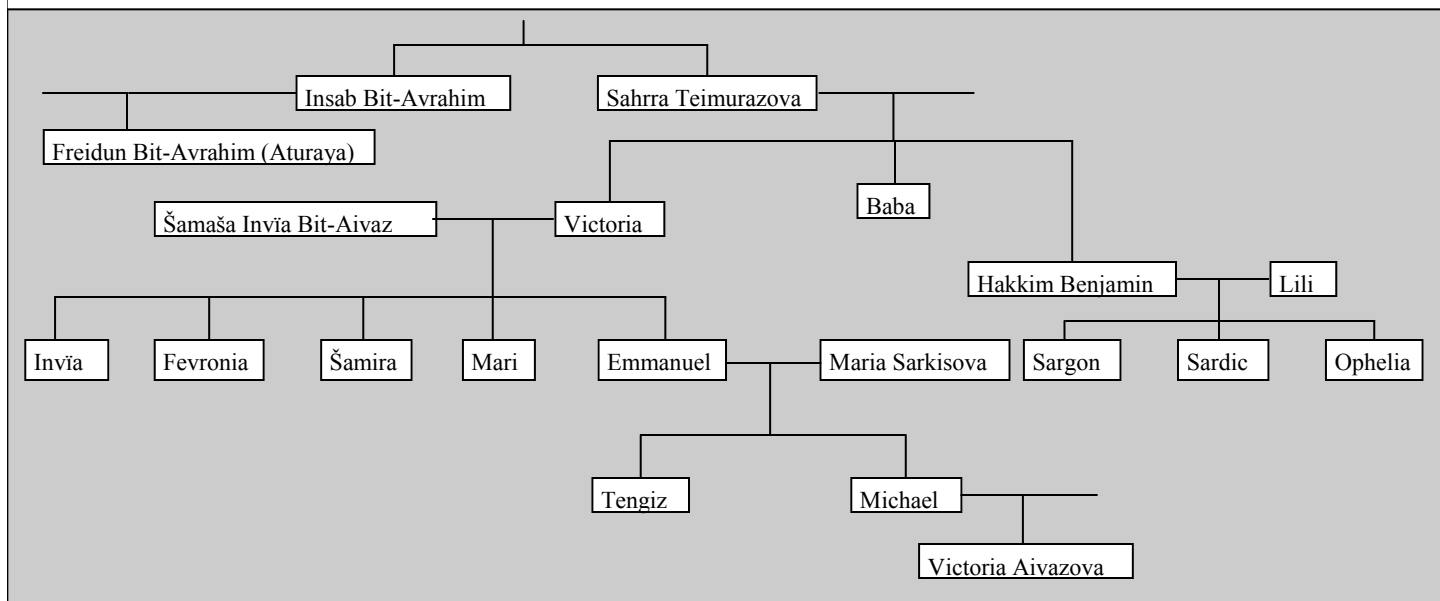
My grandfather, Emmanuel, was killed in this war as well, and left my grandmother, Maria Sarkisova, a widow, with two sons: Michael, my father, who was three months old, and Uncle Tengiz, who was two years old.


Many lives were lost during the war and many families were left without the bread-winners. My grandmother worked at the Opera-house in Tbilisi, in the women's sewing workshop. She worked day and night to provide for her children and bring them up with dignity and respect. She spent many nights standing in line for bread and kerosene and 500 grams of bread. With hard work and God's help she not only provided her children with their basic needs, but with higher education; my father became an engineer and my uncle a veterinarian.

an engineer and my uncle, a veterinarian.

The Assyrian nation has suffered greatly and lost many sons


and daughters to wars and persecutions; may the merciful God
bring an end to these sufferings.





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Democracy Versus Division

Madeleine Davis-Moradkhan
Brunoy, France

"A people who have no leader shall fall; but in the multitude of counsels there is deliverance."

-Proverbs 11:14

For as long as I can remember division has been the most dreaded word and concept among Assyrians, in particular the Assyrian organizations. When an organization is established, the founders and directors expect every Assyrian in the area and throughout the world to accept its authority and submit to its rules and regulations. Opposition is not tolerated and anyone who may disagree with them is considered traitors and divisive, to be stopped by any means possible—arrested, jailed, and even hanged. But, since these are not possible, insults and accusations are thrown right and left.

Moreover, any person or group of people that may seek to form another organization is looked upon by the members of the existing one as traitors. They are accused of treason for "dividing" our nation and thus "helping" and "collaborating with" our enemies; and the word *division* is heard everywhere.

The pages of Assyrian newspapers and magazines are darkened with many humiliating insults and accusations. Even the families of the opponents are not spared. Many old friendships are broken and turn into enmity and bitterness because of diversities of thought, ideas and goals in Assyrian activities.

Opposition is formed mainly by two types of people: there are those who feel that their point of view is disregarded by the directors of the existing organization and want to form a new and more democratic one in order to consider and implement their own ideas, or those who do not understand democracy and do not wish to respect the rules set by or the majority opinions of the directors and members of the existing organization, and decide to form their own group out of spite and rivalry. As a con-



ܡܠܟܐ (Pūlāgā = *division*) by Issa Benyamin

sequence many social and cultural activities are duplicated. Often there are clashes between the newly formed and the existing organizations; and, members of one may deliberately undermine the activities of the rival group. Some organizations, seeking to affirm their superiority in public opinion, send "spies" to become members of the rival group in order to create disorder and confusion in its activities, so as to discredit that group in the eyes of the public. Such childish and uncivil behavior, especially during elections, disgusts many Assyrians who turn away and wish to have nothing to do with Assyrian organizations or activities.

Since, in the past, our nation has often been a victim of our enemies' "divide and rule" policy, division has been feared by all Assyrians and has been seen as the only cause of our downfall. Even artists, such as Mr. Issa Benyamin, have created works of art on the theme of "Division". In one of his works, Mr. Benyamin expresses the popular idea by depicting the word ܡܠܟܐ (Pūlāgā = *Division*) as sharp knives and swords that can cut the flesh and kill our nation. The

whole tableau represents a hideous form that suggests death and destruction. On the other hand, unity (ܚܝܝܐܗܐ Hūyādā) has been seen and preached as the only road to salvation. Unfortunately, unity has not been achieved because every organization considers itself as the only "legitimate" one, expecting others to submit to it.

The truth is that this ugly and rather comical situation of our people and organizations, briefly described above, stems from our "upbringing". We were born and raised in countries run by despotic and authoritarian governments and have learned this behavior since our childhood. Everyone of us has become a tyrant, feeling ourselves superior to others, not willing to accept and respect rules set up by others, even if those rules were decided democratically; while expecting others to accept and fol-

low our rules that we have set undemocratically and without taking into consideration other people's point of view! We are not willing to negotiate, to compromise, finding it too humiliating to be the first in reaching out and asking for peace and pardon. This has become our way of life, and part of our flesh and blood.

But now that many, perhaps most, Assyrians are in Diaspora, living in democratic countries, our outlook and attitudes, or at least those of the new generation of Assyrians, are changing. In a democracy, all parties from the extreme left to the extreme right are tolerated. Everyone has a say and every opinion can be expressed. As a consequence, there is no room for "rebellion" or "treason". Sometimes it happens that some parties split, but this is not considered a catastrophe. Many countries have adopted the French democratic system and constitution as a model. And we, the Assyrians, are learning a lot from them, too. Not only are we becoming more tolerant of one another, we may even begin to think of division as something useful. Slogans such as "divide and rule" can be interpreted differently. It all depends on what we are dividing. If, for example, we are dividing a big cake among our people so that everyone can have a piece, the result is delicious! And, if we are dividing a big problem to be able to better and more efficiently solve it piece by piece, then it is undoubtedly very good and useful.

Indeed, it all depends on how we look at things. We all know that our nation faces many problems. There are problems of Assyrians living in the Middle East, problems of Assyrian refugees, problems of the jobless, problems of Assyrian children and youth faced with dominating cultures in Diaspora, problems of preserving our language and culture, just to mention a few. Now, the question is this: Can one single organization solve all these problems? Obviously, the answer is: No.

Why? The reason is that even if all Assyrians agreed to form one single organization (like a government), that organization would not be able to implement its laws and regulations since we don't and can't have a police force to enforce those laws. What can we do to those who do not follow or obey those rules? Can we fine or arrest them? Of course, not. Our organizations are formed out of friendship and goodwill. No wonder that only groups of friends and those who agree with one another go to the same organization.

As a consequence, it is only too natural to have many organizations. On the one hand, our problems can not be solved by one organization. On the other, it is because people have different backgrounds, tastes, attitudes and habits that may not necessarily be compatible. Perhaps, instead of talking of organizations, it would be better to talk about "clubs". Then the founders and directors would not expect everyone to join their club. Each Assyrian would be free to choose the club where s/he feels more comfortable. We may picture the clubs as dividing the Assyrian problems among themselves, each club attacking one piece according to the abilities and talents of its members. Thus neither rivalry nor duplication of efforts would result. We may also see the Assyrian culture and tradition as a big cake that these clubs will divide among themselves so that their members

may benefit from it and taste all the sweetness that our rich culture can offer to its people.

Now that we have looked at division in an entirely new light, let's take a step further. Why not think of multiplication rather than division? We can do so if we think that an existing organization has multiplied itself and has given birth to other new organizations. This happens when some members that have, thanks to the existence of this old organization, gained some experience, come up with new and fresh ideas. And then, in order to implement their new ideas and projects, they feel the need to form a new and different organization. Instead of considering them as enemies and traitors, and treating them with contempt, and trying to undermine their projects, thus killing the new buds in their infancy; the members and directors of the old organization may feel proud of the offspring of their own efforts, encourage the new ideas and projects, help and even collaborate with them.

"...it is only too natural to have many organizations... Why not think of multiplication rather than division? We can do so if we think that an existing organization has multiplied itself and has given birth to other new organizations. ..."

Some may argue that new ideas and projects should be implemented within the existing organization. Why go and form a new one? The answer is that not all new projects can be implemented within the existing framework. Sometimes, in order to implement a new idea, so many changes have

to be brought about to the existing structure, that the whole structure may collapse. Remember that *"No one pours new wine into used wineskins, because the wine will burst the skin, and both the wine and the skins will be ruined. Instead, new wine must be poured into fresh wineskins."* (Mark 2:22).

Many new ideas need a new structure and framework. Moreover, the new activities resulting from these ideas may be directed to an entirely different set of people than those forming the membership of the existing organization. Obviously, in such cases, a new organization would be needed.

Some years ago I became a member of a certain Assyrian organization. The members were all very friendly with one another and organized regular indoor and outdoor activities (parties, picnics, etc.). We all enjoyed ourselves and the organization was working well. Then, we decided to expand and invited some other friends to join us. At the next elections, we even voted for the new members so as to integrate them more. Little did we know what they had in mind. As soon as they came into "power", they set out new goals and projects. And, in order to implement them, they changed the constitution of our organization, invited new and strange people to join in, organized very large, cold and formal meetings. Gone were the old and friendly meetings, and gone were most of the old members. Some of us still participated at the new meetings because of patriotic obligations; but, we didn't enjoy ourselves, and many bitter feelings set in. Wouldn't it have been better for the newcomers to form their own organization leaving our small one intact?

Now, it may seem that in this multiplicity of organizations, disorder and chaos will reign. Not necessarily, if three attitudes are taken by all organizations, namely: tolerance, sharing, and collaboration, the most important one being tolerance. Indeed, this is what we Assyrians, having a despotic background, lack

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

the most. We cannot tolerate those who think and act differently from us. We may start to learn tolerance in democratic countries, where opposition parties submit to the laws of the ruling party, and the ruling party tolerates the activities of the opposition. When we have learned to be tolerant, then poisonous rivalry among organizations will automatically stop, because there will be no one to be elected above the others as the best. All become equals, accepted and forgiven.

Next comes sharing. Organizations need to share ideas and to let their members express their personal views on the organization's activities and achievements. This is very constructive and will help the organization to improve, make progress and blossom. Ideas and views expressed with such objectives will not be seen as poisonous criticism; rather they will be most welcome. Remember the old saying: *"He who holds back the truth causes trouble, but he who criticizes openly works for peace."* (Proverbs 10:10)

"He who winks with his eyes deceitfully causes sorrow; but he who reproves openly makes peace". (Proverbs 10:10)

The last attribute is collaboration. Organizations will need to collaborate and help each other in order to solve the many problems facing our people. If we can hope that one day each Assyrian organization will be busy solving one part of our problems, then, since many of our problems are closely connected and inter-related, all the organizations will be obliged to collaborate in order to achieve their objectives.

In conclusion, we have seen that by changing our attitudes and outlook, division may not be considered as dreadful as it always has been. We may think of it as dividing a big problem into smaller parts and solving piece by piece. Since the Assyrian problem is so big that no organization will be capable of solving it single handedly, then we should welcome the formation and existence of many organizations, whose objective will be to solve a different part of the big problem.

Moreover, it may seem useful to think of multiplication rather than division. Then, the formation of new organizations will be seen as the formation of new branches on an old tree. A tree is healthy when it gives out many new branches. Then, instead of considering the new organizations as rivals who will put *our own* organization out of "business", we will cherish them as our own offspring. We will try to tolerate them even if they appear very different, we will share with them our ideas and experiences, and finally, we will help them and collaborate with them.

Indeed, this is the only way to achieve unity, not by prohibiting and suppressing "Division", but by allowing and encouraging "Multiplication". In a democratic system all types of opinions are expressed and taken into account. Unity does not mean that all should think, feel, look, and act alike. On the contrary, unity is an assembly of diversities. Thus, unity is impossible without a democratic attitude. Unless we are tolerant of one another, we will never unite.



Letters from You:

Dear Editor:

I would like to express my gratitude to the Assyrian Foundation of America for facilitating my study and research in Assyriology by granting me, last year and this year, the Foundation's scholarship. The Assyrian Foundation stands out among Assyrian organizations as the one that shoulders the scholarly research and higher education among the Assyrians. Thank you for your encouragement and support.

I would also like to express thanks to all those who, thru their generous contributions to the Assyrian Foundation's education fund, have made these scholarships and grants possible. Thank you very much indeed.

Very truly yours,
Zack Cherry
Sweden

Dear Editor:

I wanted to thank the Assyrian Foundation of America for allowing me to discuss the Lamasu Monument project before your general body meeting in June. I first spoke to your organization nearly twenty years ago when we began work on the Ashurbanipal Monument. Your members were very supportive and it will be a privilege to add their names to the growing list of sponsors for the project.

I sat next to Narsai David during the dinner and overheard him say the salmon was rather good. He wasn't getting paid for his opinion so I thought it had great significance.

Please convey my appreciation to the executive committee and members and think of me the next time you guys plan a meal.

Sincerely,

Fred Parhad ,
Mexico



Dear Mr. Shabbas and the members of the Assyrian Foundation of America:

I hope you are all well.

I am writing to inform you that my father received the money (\$11,000) you had sent to help the Assyrian community here in Jordan. The Bank fee was \$17, and I will take \$1000 to be used for the Assyrian school. The remainder will be used to help our people. As you know, the conditions are very difficult.

We are very grateful for the generous support of your organization for the past few years. We will not forget the work of the Assyrian Foundation in support of the Assyrian families in Jordan.

Thank you, again, and best wishes to all the members and supporters of the Assyrian Foundation of America.

Best regards,
Ninos Patros Enwia
Jordan



Sayfo

11-08-2002

Amsterdam



Sara Aziz, Netherlands

The Netherlands Assyrian community commemorates Assyrian Martyrs

The Assyrian community of Enschede, Netherlands organized a two day event commemorating the Assyrian martyrs day, held during early August. The events, organized by the Assyrian Democratic Organization (A.D.O./Holland) were especially unique relative to others around the world in the fact that they included public outdoor demonstrations to better inform the world of the ongoing suffering of the Assyrian people.

On August the 9th 2002/6752, a public seminar was held at the Assyrian Mesopotamian Association of Enschede to educate participants on the Genocide of 1915. The lecturer, Mr. Shlemun Yonan, highlighted recent studies showing that had the genocide when over half a million Assyrians were massacred not taken place, the Assyrian region of the middle east would today have over 22 million Assyrian Christians.



Excerpts from Thea Halo's book *'Not even My Name'*, which documents the tragic genocide experience of the author's family were read to the crowds.

Introductory speeches were given by members of the Assyrians Democratic Organization, Shukri Aziz and Shabo Celik in Dutch and Assyrian. This was followed by a lecture given by Dr. Gabriela Younan, an expert and renowned author on the Assyrian Genocide, Sayfo. Other speakers included Mr. Ayad Mossad, chairman of the Middle-East Christians Union and Mr. Sabri Atman, a scholar on the Assyrian Genocide in Assyrian as well in the Turkish language. The program also featured choir performances as well as children's poem recitals.

The memorable event was organized by the Enschede community youth who worked relentlessly to make the Assyrian martyrs day events a success. The organizers hope that other

The second event was held on August 11th, 6752 on the Amsterdam Dam where hundreds of Assyrians gathered to demonstrate against the injustices experienced by Assyrians in the past and present. The same principles called out by the demonstrators are what many Assyrians have given their lives for in the middle east.

The demonstration commenced by laying a wreath in memory of the fallen heroes and was followed by a moment of silence.



Assyrian communities around the world take note of the public nature of the events and model their commemoration similarly instead of maintaining it behind closed doors for Assyrian participants only.

For more information, visit:



www.bethnahrin.nl



"... had the genocide when over half a million Assyrians were massacred not taken place, the Assyrian region of the middle east would today have over 22 million Assyrian Christians."



A Letter to Aššurbanipal

Aprim Shapera
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Dear Grandfather:

A long time ago, you engraved your messages on stones with chisels. You recorded man's greatest explorations in history; you sent your scribes to the most distant corners of your empire in order to collect and copy the clay tablets on which your forefathers, the Sumerians, Akkadians, and Babylonians, recorded all the world knowledge; their history, epics and legends, and other aspects of their heritage. Because of your great accomplishment, the establishment of the first library of its kind in human history, the heritage of our ancestors has reached us and all other nations, which continue to be impressed by your accomplishments. Indeed, they form the basis for our 'modern civilization'. Oh grandfather, we are so proud of our ancient heritage and civilization; and, although its political manifestation ceased long ago, it is still flourishing in our hearts, lifting our spirits, and flowing in our veins.

Yesterday, your actions and writings were the greatest in human philosophy, spirituality, and intellect. Today, we, your children, are trying to walk in your footsteps, as we possess the same aspirations, intellect and determination, in spite of the difficult circumstances we live in. And, although we have no empire or royal palaces or great kings or massive armies, not even a tiny state in which to practice our national rights, we have what is even more important than all of these: your spirit, Aššur, and our Assyrian name. Despite our material impoverishment, we are full of confidence and zeal to see that your name lives on forever. Although we are a small nation, and some are unaware of, or deny, our existence, through our will and determination, we will survive and immortalize your name.

I am writing this letter to you even though you are believed to be in a world of many centuries passed. Some may see this message as a fantasy, because they don't understand that you continue to live; you are alive within every one of us, and manifest in our actions. They fail to realize that you are in every speech and every letter we write to express our thoughts and feelings. You are us in the past and we are you in the present.

Grandfather, do not despair or be saddened by those among your descendents who, today, deny your name. Your spirit is no longer alive within them; it has been forcibly replaced by a foul self-hatred, through centuries of persecution and suffering. They have reached a point where they are no longer ashamed of betraying your name and the ancient culture to the despotic invaders that have seized our land. Indeed, a body without a soul is nothing but flesh; a corpse that decays with time. Such persons will, consequently, be food for the scavenging dictatorial

regimes and we will witness their disgraceful fate. They are a shameful page in our nation's history and it is hard to believe that they are of your blood and spirit.

Dear grandfather, though our nation is in turmoil and enduring great hardship, I assure you that we still cherish your name in our hearts, and your spirit lives in our minds and actions. Proudly, I say to you that I am not your only descendent, even though I may be the only one writing. There are thousands more struggling to maintain their heritage and to pass it to the future generations and to honor your name. Although we don't have the great armies and the various institutions with many learned advisors that were part of your government, today we have such Assyrian organizations as the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ZOWAA) that, in spite of limited resources and difficult conditions, is struggling with great determination to rebuild what the enemies have destroyed. Thousands of your children attend Assyrian schools in their homeland, studying your language with excitement, and have an astonishing brightness in their eyes, reflecting our nation's bright future. We also have the Assyrian Democratic Movement (Mtakasta), which is firmly and quietly working to maintain your legacy in our homeland and to consolidate your children's national existence there.

You can see your children scattered around the world, living in far away lands, and still cherishing your name and proudly identifying themselves as Assyrians. We may have lost our homeland, forgotten some of our traditions, and many of our young people may no longer speak Assyrian; but, your spirit is still within us, expressed in our daily struggle. We have political parties in the Diaspora that strive to honor your name. We have an inveterate federal organization, the Assyrian American National Federation, in the United States, which, annually brings together thousands of your children in your name, to praise your achievements and glorify your grandeur. Indeed, we will never forget you; your name legacy is with us where ever we may be.

There are numerous examples of your spirit and its magical power working among your children. One example is *Ħuyodo*, the Assyrian magazine that, despite limited resources and many problems and difficulties encountered by its staff, continues to be published with astonishing determination. For nearly a quarter-century, it has been published in five languages, and in a country called Sweden, far away from our homeland, Atur. What makes the staff of *Ħuyodo* so noble is the fact that they are blessed by your spirit through your immortal son, Na'um Faiyiq, who baptized them in your holy name. Such children are a source of pride and joy in your world as well as in ours.



Aprim Shapera glorifying Aššur in Nimrod, the ancient Assyrian capital, April 1978

Let me now tell you of an invention that has become a blessing for us. It is called the 'internet' and it was hard to even imagine a few years ago. This magical tool is being used to spread your spirit and your children together even if they are in distant lands. And, as you had grand palaces and libraries and places of higher learning, we now have: www.atour.com, www.zindamagazine.com, www.bethsuryoyo.com, www.nineveh.com, www.bethnahrain.net, and many more. Another amazing and powerful new tool is *Assyria Vision* of Bet-Nahrain Democratic Organization, a twenty-four hours-a-day, seven days-a-week, television programming, and, more recently, Assyrian SAT, which broadcast and glorify your name to Assyrians and non-Assyrians around the world. All these 'Assyrian Troops' are energized by your spirit and reflect your glory through their programs to bring your descendents together whether they live in the homeland or in far away lands. These new powerful tools are able to bring together your scattered children and help them meet and communicate in the cyber space. Our cyber-palace serves as the temporary substitute for your grand palaces, until we return to our homeland and rebuild those ancient palaces and libraries.

Although all living beings die, as you died those many centuries ago, the spirit continues to live, just as your immortal spirit lives among us. Today, our nation is weak and tired due to all those years of suffering and hardship. The sacrifices made by the hundreds of thousands of your children were not for personal gain or glory; they were to keep your legacy alive and your spirit active in our lives in order to unite us. The Assyrian spirit can not be imprisoned, tortured, or killed; not even by the most savage of tyrants. Such spiritual unity will never age, knows no limitations or boundaries of time or space, and needs no passports or visas to cross borders. It is present and active in all places and all times in the homeland and in Diaspora.

Although, in the ancient times, our language was the medium of communication between different people from different lands, I now have to write you in a foreign tongue in order to be understood by the majority of your children. However, I know you understand me since our communication does not depend on spoken words; it is in our thoughts.

It's hard to say farewell; though there is nothing that can separate us, not even death. You'll always be with us, whether in this life or the next, since you are in our soul and energize our hearts and minds. Our belief in your name will be strengthened even more when we regain ownership of our homeland. This has always been our greatest hope, and we will never hesitate, tire, or despair in our struggle to regain our legitimate rights, even it takes thousands of years.

So long, grandfather, and till the next message, love and greetings from your loving children.

Your faithful grandson,
Aprim Shapera



Notes on George S. Reed

Solomon (Sawa) Solomon

George Reed has been referred to as a missionary, a Captain, a Squadron Leader in the R.A.F., and as an intelligence officer. So, who is this Reed?

We know that in September 1905 he joined the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission in Urmi. He was made secretary and treasurer of the mission with a salary of £25 per year. While in Urmi, he studied theology under the Rev. O. H. Parry, hoping to become ordained sometime in the future. When Parry left for home in 1907, the Rev. W. A. Wigram took over his duties as head of the Mission and as Reed's tutor, and when Wigram moved his headquarters to Van, Reed started to spend time there also. During his stay in Timar, Reed became personally acquainted with the Assyrians who lived there. He detailed two of his trips to the many villages of Timar in the Mission *Quarterly*.

George Reed was in Qudjanis in 1909 when Patriarch Mar Binyamin Shimun consecrated Mar Elia Aboona as bishop of the Assyrians of Van with his seat in Sara. Reed was also with the Rev. W. H. Browne when he died of accidental poisoning in 1910. Later in the year he returned to England for a period of rest. He returned in 1911 to resume his duties with the Mission, which was by now located near Amadia in present-day Iraq, the Van Station having closed. By now, however, he was no longer thinking in terms of being ordained for the ministry. In all, Reed spent two terms of service with the Mission for a total of ten years, and it was during this time that he became an authority on the people of South-eastern Turkey.

During the Great War, he joined the Military Intelligence Department of the headquarters of the British Army in Mesopotamia with the rank of Captain. He served for the duration of the war and was decorated. However, his duties did not take him away from the Assyrian people. Reed indeed met the refugees on their way to Baqubah. Being the only British officer in the area who could speak the language of the Assyrians, he was taken onto the staff of General H. H. Austin, the commandant of the camp. He became a liaison officer between the British authorities and the Assyrians. In his capacity he was consulted on all matters related to the Assyrians from 1920 until 1933.

Reed joined the Royal Air Force in 1922 and left as a Squadron Leader in 1933 to join the diplomatic service in Palestine. He was immediately recalled to Baghdad, however, to deal with the crisis caused by the mass resignation of the Assyrian Levy officers and men. Reed, working with Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun, was able to induce the officers to postpone their resignations and to return to their posts after (false) promises were made by the British authorities in Iraq.

Reed was recalled again to Baghdad a year later to help the British deal with the crisis of 1933. But this time nothing could be done, and Assyrian hopes and dreams were shattered following their massacre.

George Reed returned to Palestine and stayed there until 1948, during which time he was made a Commander of the British Empire for his services to the Crown. At the end of the British mandate he returned to England. There he lived an uneventful life. He lived to ripe old age of 87, dying on March 12, 1968 in Canterbury. To the end he remained an ardent supporter of the Jerusalem and East Mission, and the Anglican Church in the Middle East.

The Habbaniya Campaign, May 1941

Solomon (Sawa) Solomon
Lebanon, Tennessee

Introduction:

The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 provided that in time of war the British should have all possible facilities in Iraq including the use of railways, ports, and airfields for the passage of troops. With the collapse of France in 1940 and the arrival of Axis Armistice Commission in Syria, British prestige sank very low in Iraq. In March of 1941 a pro-German politician became prime minister. Within weeks the pro-British regent fled the country. At this juncture the British believed that prompt action was necessary if they were not to be excluded from oil fields of Iraq, lose access to oil fields of Persia and face an axis advance on Egypt from the east. On April 16, British troops landed in Basra; on April 30, Iraqi troops were in the vicinity of Habbaniya.

Balance of Forces:

Habbaniya was the headquarters of the Royal Air Force in Iraq; begun in 1934, it was occupied from 1937. Within its seven-mile circumference, there were all the usual buildings of a major air base, but it had no fortifications beyond a fence designed only to keep out marauding Bedouins. It had 1300 R.A.F. personnel, 100 recently flown in British ground troops, 800 Assyrian levies, 18 armored cars, and two old artillery pieces. These were augmented by 70 old aircraft that were ready for combat by Air-Vice-Marshal H.G. Smart, the commanding air officer. Added to this were recently arrived bombers from Egypt to Shaiba, and the aircraft on the carrier Hermes off Basra.

The Iraqis had an army of 46,000 men, backed by 12,000 police. Their air force had 64 serviceable aircraft. Later on, the Germans sent 21 fighters and bombers with their pilots, the Italians contributed 12 planes. A quantity of small arms and gold were shipped to Iraq via Syria. Iraqi army strength at Habbaniya during the siege was 9,000 men and 50 pieces of artillery.

The Battle:

In Habbaniya the British organized for the coming battle. The air power was grouped in 4 squadrons and placed under the command of group captain W.A. Saville. Colonel Roberts arrived from Shaiba and took command of all ground forces. On April 30, London ordered Smart to secure his position in Habbaniya. This was the signal he was waiting for. At 4:45 am, on May 2nd, aircraft took off from the air field and struck Iraqi positions on the plateau; this happened shortly after bombers

from Shaiba had attacked. In reply, the Iraqis opened fire on the planes, and artillery began shelling the camp. Iraqi air force attacked but failed to inflict much damage. R.A.F. attacks continued, a second wave from Shaiba attacked in the afternoon; by the end of the day, 5 planes were lost, 20 were damaged; a total of 193 sorties were flown. On May 3rd, Habbaniya and Shaiba planes continued attacks near the base, other planes attacked Rashid Air Base near Baghdad. That night Colonel Roberts sent the Levies in night attack on Iraqi positions; these Levy night attacks were to continue for the duration of the siege. On the 4th, the Iraqis began shelling the base; then, the British aircraft arrived and started bombing Iraqi gun positions. Also, planes were sent to Mosul looking for German planes, and the British started night art attacks which slowed down supply convoys from Baghdad. On the night of 5/6 May, The Iraqi army pulled out. The plateau was abandoned. The British ground forces gave pursuit in the morning. There was some hard fighting done near Sin El Dhiban. On the afternoon of May 6th, Iraqi motorized infantry launched a counter attack from Falluja; however, before these troops arrived at the British positions, 40 R.A.F. planes destroyed the Iraqi column. The battle around the base was over and it was felt by the British that the next step was to overthrow Rashid Ali, the pro-German Prime Minister, and to restore the pro-British Regent Abdullah. That job was left for a combined force from Trans Jordan and Habbaniya Garrison. The Trans Jordan force was nicknamed Hab Force and it consisted of armored cars from the Frontier Force, the Arab Legion, a company of the Essex Regiment and a few aircraft. That force gathered in H-3; on May 5th, it had taken Rutba; thirteen days later, it had arrived in Habbaniya.

On May 16, there was a nasty surprise; German aircraft attacked Habbaniya causing much damage to the aircraft depot, and from there on there was daily contact with the Germans. They launched a second attack on Habbaniya on May 20. The British answer was to attack the German base at Mosul, a number of enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground. Also it was learned that Major Axel Von Blomberg, the son of Field Marshal Von Blomberg, was killed.

On the ground, advancing British troops, now strengthened by reinforcements from Basra, reached Falluja. Forces were deployed to the north, northeast and south. Telephone wires to Baghdad were cut. On May 19th, the first battle of Falluja was fought. The town and the bridge were taken by late afternoon. On May 22nd, the Iraqis mounted a major counter attack with armor and infantry. There were casualties on both sides. The Iraqis retook Falluja, but a combined attack by air and ground managed to push the Iraqis back. There were tense moments. On May 28th, a two-pronged attack was launched on Baghdad. A small force attacked from the north without the benefit of air cover and it was blocked by the Iraqis. The main attack came

from Falluja and enjoyed full air support. Forces reached the outskirts of Baghdad on May 30th. Two days earlier, Rashid Ali had left Baghdad. On May 31st, the British signed an armistice with the Mayor of Baghdad; next day the Regent Abdullah entered the city. The campaign was over. It had cost the British 200 casualties.



Prince Henry (in sun shades), Duke of Gloucester (1900-1974), inspecting a Levy Guard of Honor during his visit to Habbaniya during the war. At this time he held the rank of Lieutenant-General. The present Queen Elizabeth II promoted him in 1955 to the rank of Field Marshal. He was the younger brother of King George VI.



A group of Assyrian Levies training with Bren medium machine guns, Lewis guns, and Tommy sub machine guns. The Lewis guns (far right) saw much action in the hands of the Levies fighting in Northern Iraq during the twenties.

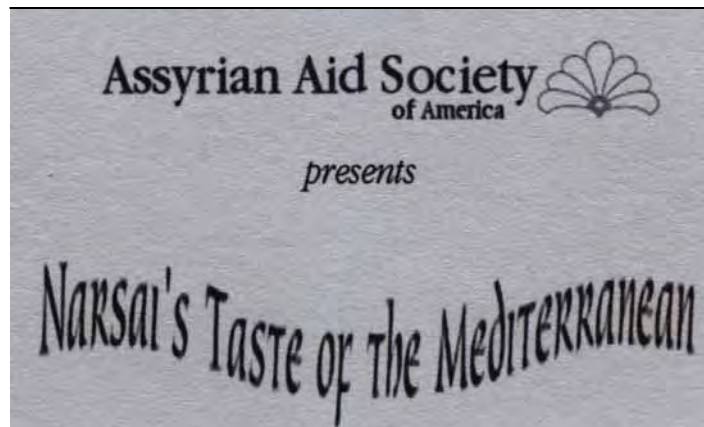
Analysis:

One of the main reasons for the British victory was Germany's failure to act quicker. The first German aircraft did not enter combat until May 13th, by then the British had broken the siege of Habbaniya.

Another reason was the failure of the Iraqi army to open hostilities with an all-out attack on Habbaniya. The presence of the Levies in the base could have been the reason; over the years the Assyrian Levies had developed a reputation for courage and discipline that was second to none. Also, it seems that there was contact between the Regent Abdullah and Iraqi army commanders on the scene.

The trump card for the British was air power. The British control of the air, to a great extent, contributed to their victory during the campaign. Air power had strategic, tactical, and psychological implications.

Winston Churchill's writing in his book "The Great Alliance", which is the third volume in his monumental work "The Second World War", says: *The spirited difference of Habbaniya...was a prime factor in our success. The German had of course at their disposal an airborne force which would have given them at this time Syria, Iraq, and Persia, with their precious oil fields.*



The blueprints for a new university student dormitory and cultural center in Erbil are ready. All that is needed now is \$100,000 or so to make the architect's drawings reality.

The Assyrian Aid Society-America (AAS-A) Executive Committee has long wanted to stage an elegant charity dinner to raise funds for some special project and showcase the cuisine and chefs of the greater Near East region.

The Erbil dorm and cultural center project, an impressive two-story design which will accommodate approximately 100 resident students, provided the ideal opportunity.

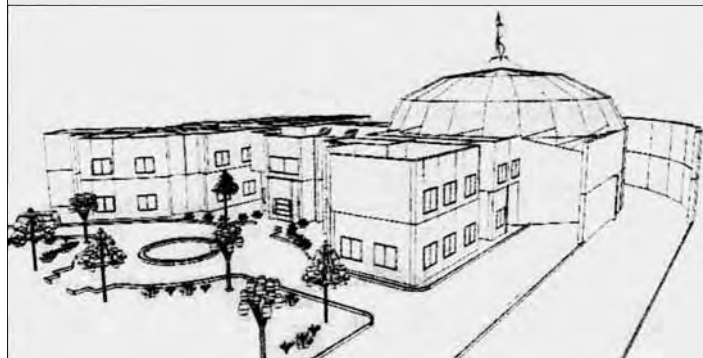
The five course dinner on November 15 at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in San Francisco will feature the talents of Egypt-born Michael Mina (*AQUA*, San Francisco and Las Vegas), Italian Piero Selvaggio (*Valentino*, Santa Monica and Las Vegas), Israel Aharohi of Tel Aviv (he has been called the "Julia Child of Israel") and more to be named later.

A champagne reception, dinner, music and dance performances, and a live auction will highlight this remarkable evening.

And while we're at it, we will all be building the very future of North Iraq.

For more information:

Narsai's Taste of the Mediterranean



Assyrian Aid Society of America
350 Berkeley Park Boulevard
Berkeley, California 94707
510-527-9997
www.assyrianaid.org

Literature Search:

Title: The Development and Meaning of the Epic of Gilgamesh: An Interpretive Essay.

Author: Tzvi Abusch

Source: Journal of the American Oriental Society 121.4 (2001)

Excerpt: "This essay traces the history of the several major versions (Old Babylonian, eleven-tablet, and twelve-tablet) of the Akkadian *Epic of Gilgamesh* and examines the development of meaning from one version to the next. The focus is on the underlying conflict or conflicts that define and impart power to the work, that is, the conflict between the extraordinary and the normal. We will notice that in the *Epic* there is a constant conflict between the heroic values that the warrior-hero Gilgamesh represents and those other existential values that defined Mesopotamian culture and that appear in the *Epic* in the form of Gilgamesh's several non-heroic identities: in the Old Babylonian version, the conflict is that of hero versus man; in the eleven-tablet version that of hero versus king; and in the twelve-tablet version that of hero versus god.

"The Epic of Gilgamesh combines the power and tragedy of the *Iliad* with the wanderings and marvels of the *Odyssey*. It is a work of adventure, but it is no less a meditation of some fundamental issues of human existence. The *Epic* explores many issues; it surely provides a Mesopotamian formulation of human predicaments and options. Most of all, the work grapples with issues of an existential nature. It talks about the powerful human drive to achieve, the value of friendship, the experience of loss, the inevitability of death.

"The story draws together the many strands that make up the identity of Gilgamesh: man, hero, king, god. Gilgamesh must learn to live. He must find ways to express his tremendous personal energy but still act in a manner that accords with the limits and responsibilities imposed upon him by his society and universe. But the work emphasizes the theme of death and explores the realization that in spite of even the greatest achievements and powers, a human is nonetheless powerless against death. This in the final analysis, Gilgamesh must also come to terms with his own nature and learn to die, for he is both a man and a god, and as both he will experience loss and will die.

"In the present essay, I shall discuss the changing emphases of three major versions of the Akkadian *Epic of Gilgamesh*. About 1700 B.C., a Babylonian author created a unified *Epic* about the hero Gilgamesh. The new epic bears witness to a wholesale revision of Gilgamesh material to form a connected story composed around the principal themes of kingship, fame, and the fear of death. This Old Babylonian account of Gilgamesh is the earliest, perhaps also the most immediately felt and compelling, version of the Akkadian *Epic*. Subsequent to the Old Babylonian period, the *Epic* circulated throughout the ancient Near East. Not surprisingly, the work underwent many changes and developments, and a number of new versions took form in Akkadian as well as in other languages. The Babylonian version(s) changed and developed during the course of the second and early first millennium. While a number of new recensions and version took form, the Standard Babylonian eleven- and twelve-tablet versions represent without doubt the two most important post-Old Babylonian Akkadian versions that we possess. Ac-

cordingly, in this essay we will examine the Old Babylonian, the eleven-tablet, and the twelve-tablet versions."

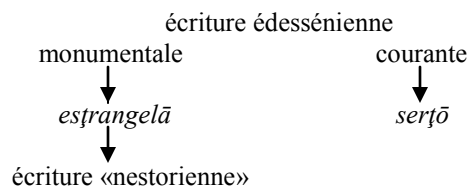
Title: DE L'ÉCRITURE ÉDESSENIENNE À L'ESTRANGELĀ ET AU SERṬŌ

Author: Françoise Briquel Chatonnet

Source: Semitica 50, 2000

Excerpt: "Following upon an article of J. Healey, this study emphasizes the continuity between the Edesseean script of every day life, attested in Middle Euphrates parchments of the 3rd century as well as partly on mosaics, and the *serṭō* script attested in manuscripts from the 8th century onwards. Some intermediate examples can be found in colophons of 6th century manuscripts. This shows that the *serṭō* script originated in the region where the Edesseean script was in common use, in Upper Mesopotamia and along the Middle Euphrates, whereas in Mesopotamia, the common script was of oriental aramaic style and the Edesseean script was only known under its *estragelā* form. The *serṭō* script was originally a regional script and only became secondarily a confessional one.

"On peut donc à présent reconstruire le schéma d'évolution de l'écriture ainsi:



Title: Assyrian Provincial Governors in Syria

Author: Jill Ruby

Source: Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies; 2000

Excerpt: "For approximately seventy-five years (c. 830-745 B.C.), between the reigns of Shalmaneser III and Tiglath-pileser III, Assyrian sovereigns ceded a great deal of power and authority to officials high in the military-administrative hierarchy, resulting in a weakening of centralized authority and control. During this period, a number of officials active in the western territories of the Assyrian empire are named in the royal inscriptions of the kings they served and some even produced their own inscriptions detailing their achievements. A few texts that shed light on the activities of such officials, notably Daiān-Aššur, Nergal-ēriš, Šamši-ilu, and Bēl-Ḫarran-bēlī-ušur, are considered here. These texts relay not only information about historical events, but also provide clues concerning the internal politics of the Assyrian state. The available evidence for the period suggests that while there was trouble at the center of the Assyrian state and Assyria's grip on the west was loosening, officials such as those listed above continued to be active in areas outside of the Assyrian heartland. In most cases these officials maintained nominal loyalty to Assyria even while it appears that they were sometimes acting independently of royal authority. It may be that the semi-independence of such officials was beneficial both to the officials and to Assyria: the officials may have garnered legitimacy for themselves by invoking the might of Assyria, while an "Assyrian" presence was maintained in peripheral areas during periods of weakened central authority in the Assyrian state."

Book Reviews



Title: Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia

Author: Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat

Publisher: Greenwood Press. Pp. xxi + 346. \$45.

Reviewer: Mark Chavalas

Source: Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Vol. 60, no. 4

Excerpt: "...The book's positive points, however, are not merely its descriptive statements, but its readable and comprehensive overview of daily-life aspects of Mesopotamian civilization. Because of the massive amount of archaeological and textual discoveries over the past forty years, Nemet-Nejat's study is a needed synthesis of daily life in ancient Mesopotamia, bringing up to date the earlier works of G. Contenau (*Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria* [London 1954], and H. W. F. Saggs (*Everyday Life in Babylonia and Assyria* [London 1965]. Daniel Snell's recent *Life in the Ancient Near East, 3100-332 B.C.E.* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1997) intersects this work at many points but concentrates more on social life and includes other areas of the Near East. Nemet-Nejat's work focuses on the period from the advent of writing at Uruk (ca. 3100 B.C.) to the Hellenistic period (ca. 300 B.C.). Like the others, this book is for students and educated lay people.... Nemet-Nejat's work offers a greater variety of information.... Including an excellent historical overview that puts Mesopotamian daily life in context for the reader. The book is rationally organized into eight main parts: writing, the sciences, city life, private life, recreation, religion, government, and the economy. The reader will also be exposed to studies on medicine, education, technology, mathematics, women's roles, fashions, toys, music, farming, warfare, and a host of other topics.

"...Not only are there numerous excerpts of texts dispersed throughout the text, but the reader is also referred to thirteen pages of detailed citations that provide the full context of these sources in fairly accessible English translations....A very detailed four-page time line will help the reader discern the political context of certain improvements in culture and technology....There are over fifty black-and-white figures....There is also a very useful twelve-page glossary covering terms from "agglutinative" to "trepanation," as well as a three-page bibliography of general works and translations.

"Nemet-Nejat should be congratulated for her attempts to make ancient Mesopotamian civilization accessible to the public, an effort that has been accomplished without an excessive reliance on biblical parallels that appeal to religious sensibilities. Thus, her work will contribute to the establishment of the idea of Mesopotamia's cultural autonomy and its importance to the study of world history."

Title: Empire and elites after the Muslim conquest: the transformation of Northern Mesopotamia.

Author: Chase F. Robinson

Publisher: Cambridge University Press **Reviewer:** L. A. Asser

Source: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Vol. 65, part 2, 2002

Excerpt: "Robinson's book is concerned with post-conquest and Umayyad Northern Mesopotamia, i.e. the Jazīra, with particular reference to the emergence of the city of Mosul as an Islamic city, both in physical and social terms. The author discusses the growth of this town, particularly in the Marwanid

period, through the use of literary sources, the most prominent of which is the *Ta'rikh al-Mawṣil* by Yazid b. Muḥammad al-Azdī (d. ca. 945). Although parts of this annalistic history are lost, al-Azdī was a native Mosuli and seems to have preserved many local accounts from his period. The author also relies, with great effect, on the Christian sources from the period, again with much of the material being local or regional. He shows that it is possible to write pre-Abbasid history in a useful form through the use of these literary sources and interpretation of the accounts they preserve.

"The first chapter of the book discusses the problem of the absence of authentic documentary sources on the Arab conquest of the region and proposes a method in which the extant material can be interpreted.... The second chapter describes political affairs in post-conquest Jazīra, where it seems that during the Sufyanid period the caliphs were primarily interested in the tribal politics of the Arabs of the area. The author argues that it was only in the Marwanid period that the caliphs decided that the Jazīra could be a source of revenue and it is then that they turned their attention to organizing its administration and taxation, finally developing it into a real administrative province. In chapter three the growth of Mosul from a garrison town to a city is discussed.... In chapter four, the author discusses the Christian élites in the hinterland of Mosul, showing how the *Shahārija*, wealthy landowners similar to the *dihqāns* in other parts of Iraq and Persia, who collected taxes from their villages, persisted into the ninth century. This shows that there was little social dislocation in this region as a result of Arab conquests.... Chapters six and seven return to the city of Mosul and examine the social changes and the new élites created as a result of the urban growth of the city.

"....For a history of post-conquest Jazīra and Mosul to the ninth century, this book is a definitive work especially on the social history of the region."

Title: Syrian Christians under Islam: the first thousand years.

Editor: David Thomas

Publisher: Brill, Leiden, 2001, **Reviewer:** H. T. Norris

Source: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies Vol. 65, part2, 2002

Excerpt: "One noteworthy feature of the current international crisis, where the relationship between 'Christians' and 'Muslims' is discussed, daily and incessantly in the media, is the lack of any interest whatsoever in the situation as it affects the long-established and often ancient Christian communities in the Middle East region. Only when shooting and shelling around the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem, or in Beit Jala happens to become the focus of media attention does the very existence of these communities seem to matter to those who dream, plan and doodle in the search for some kind of 'New World Order'.

"Greater Syria is one geographical region where the two faiths have engaged over many centuries in dialogue and controversy. The former and, to a degree, the latter, were particularly important and fruitful during the early centuries of Islam and during the days of the latter's expansion, geographical, scholastic and theological. It is precisely these issues which are clarified in this book, a selection of papers from the Third Woodbrooke-Mingana Symposium on Arab Christianity and Islam (September 1998) on the theme of 'Arab Christianity in *Bilād al-shām* (Greater Syria) in the pre-Ottoman Period'. The content focuses on aspects of Syrian Christian life and thought.

During the first millennium of Islamic rule. The series of Symposiums was held in Woodbrooke College, Selly Oak, Birmingham, a most appropriate venue, since the Iraqi priest Dr. Alphonse Mingana (1878-1937), who had brought to Woodbrooke College an important collection of Syrian and Arabic Christian manuscripts, had temporarily lived there. His collection is referred to on p. 191 in a chapter by Lucy-Anne Hunt on leaves from an illustrated Syriac lectionary of the seventh/thirteenth century (pp. 185-202, including 12 figures).

"The helpful introduction by the editor, David Thomas, gives an overall comment upon the content of the volume, serves to make a comprehensive assessment of what each contribution offers to the themes and goals of the Symposium, and indicates those which are most relevant to specialists in Oriental Christianity in the Fertile Crescent, and to Islamists. The Foreword, by Mor Gregorios Yuhanna Ibrahim, Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Aleppo, makes an impassioned plea on behalf of Middle Eastern Christians.

"The eight essays within the volume can be divided into those which concentrate upon the structure, divisions and missions of the Oriental Christian churches of Syria during the Abbasid age and those which are immediately concerned with the problems which Islam, as a religion and a community of believers, presented to those **Christians** who, for centuries, had been established, widely accepted and were the fount of so much of the finest thought and culture which the Syrians had contributed over many centuries...."

Title: Bagdad nach dem Sturz des Kalifats: die Geschichte einer Provinz unter ilhānischer Herrschaft (656-735/1258-1335).

Author: Hend Gille-Elewy

Publisher: Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2000.

Reviewer: Peter Jackson

Source: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Vol. 65, Part 2, 2002.

Excerpt: "Originally prepared as a Cologne thesis in 1998, this is the first published attempt in a European language to assess the fate of Iraq under Mongol rule. After a short introductory chapter outlining problems and sources, ch. ii surveys the years preceding Hülegü's attack in 1258, the circumstances of the conquest and its immediate aftermath. Chapter iii, by far the largest single section of the book, examines the personalities and policies of those who governed the province on behalf of the Ilkhans, notably the celebrated historian 'Alā' al-Dīn Juwaynī (657/1259-681/1283). Social and economic conditions, including currency, taxation and agriculture, are dealt with in ch. iv, while ch.v is concerned with urban life and matters such as religious currents and the status of Jews and Christians under a regime which was pagan, at least until the adoption of Islam by the Ilkhan Ghazan in 694/1295.

"The result is a competent and useful study which throws a good deal of light on the character both of the Mongol regime and of its Persian servitors..... Two major phases in the province's history are identified: one in which the Baghdad government was relatively autonomous; and the other, in which the region was much more closely under the supervision of the Ilkhans' central administration and the local authorities were eclipsed..... I noticed few factual errors:...Simeon Rabban-ata was not a Jewish physician (p. 188, n. 80) but a Nesorian Christian one..."

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1. **The Flickering Light of Asia**, by Joel E. Warda; Second edition, 1990, Chicago
2. **ܐܕܡܬܐ ܕܠܥܡܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ (The Grammar of Vernacular (East) Assyrian)**, in Assyrian, by Mar Touma Oudo; Re-printed 1984, Chicago.

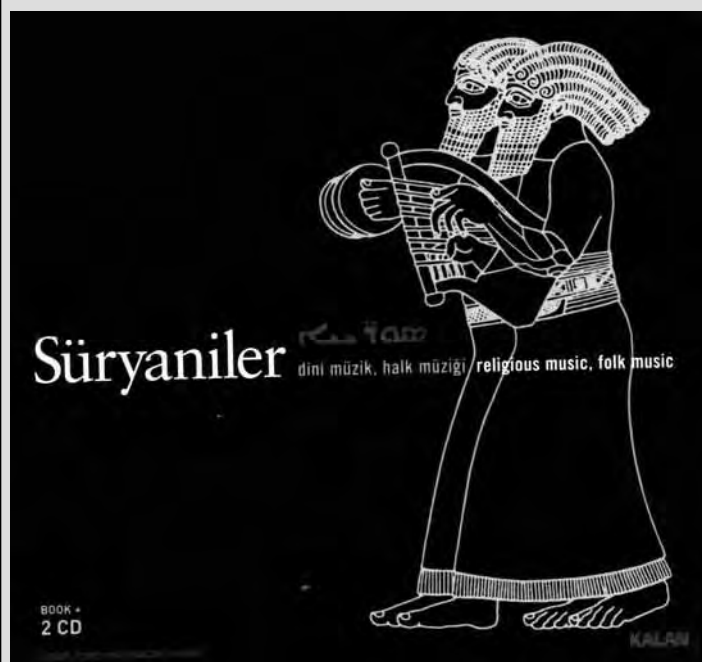


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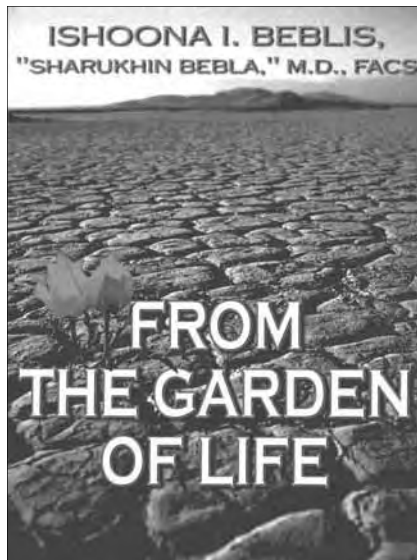
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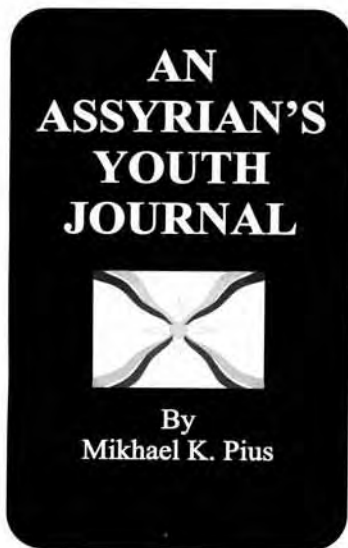
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This book is a bold documentation of self-crisis by an Assyrian young man from Iraq during the 1940s and early 1950s. What is admirable about the young man is the fact that he never loses sight of his boyhood's dual dream throughout his ordeal –the dream to come to America and the dream to become a pu



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The author describes the book as being like a tapestry into which the story of a family or a nation is woven. The people focus is on the Nona family, Assyrians living in Iraq. The period covered is from 1915 to 1933.

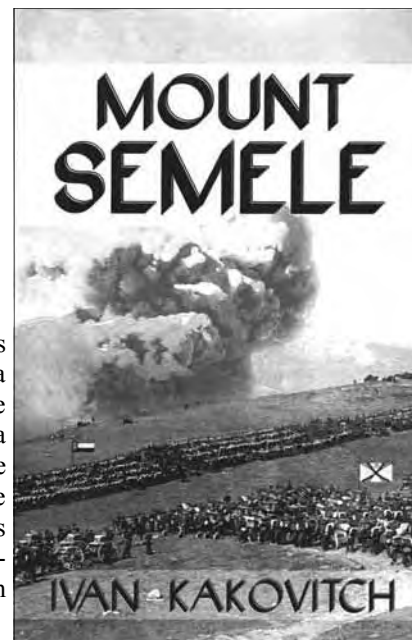
It traces the Nona family through its joys and tragedies. We watch a young boy and the horse given him after a family massacre; how their paths cross and then overlap as the boy grows into a leader and inspires his people.

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(Continued from page 5)

deans and the National Designation, by Mr. Habib Hanoona.



The presentations provided a clear conclusion that the Assyrian nation, including all its religious sects (Chaldean, Church of the East, Syriac orthodox, and others), has a common history, language and culture that is indigenous to its land of northern Mesopotamia and therefore is entitled to self-determination, a right which, as Dr. Fuat Deniz stated, is expressed in the UN's declaration on the right of indigenous people: "*All indigenous nations and peoples have the right to self-determination, by virtue of which they have the right to whatever degree of autonomy or self-government they choose. This includes the right to freely determine their political status, freely pursue their own economic, social, religious and cultural development, and determine their membership and/or citizenship, without external interference*"

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In Memoriam:

Violet Genevieve Shabbas

By: Semiramis Shabbas



Violet Genevieve Shabbas, daughter of Harold and Zena Hortop, and wife of Julius N. Shabbas, passed away on May 1, 2002, in Vallejo, California, of congestive heart failure at age 84. She was laid to rest on May 6 in El Cerrito, with Pastor Gary Bell of Benicia Lutheran Church, and Archdeacon Nenos Michael of the Assyrian Church of the East, officiating.

A native of Northfield, Minnesota, after graduating from Northfield High School, she attended Saint Olaf College in Northfield, graduating with a double major in sociology and biology. She then went on to attend graduate school at Wayne University in Detroit, concentrating in social group work. Following graduate school, Violet worked as a professional Girl Scout, and did inner-city social group work. She eventually moved to San Francisco and continued her work with the Girl Scouts. This is where she met and married her husband, Julius. They were married for nearly 47 years.

Shortly after Semiramis was born in San Francisco, they moved to Baghdad, Iraq for nearly three years, which is where Raman and Dumarina were born. In February 1959, they returned to the United States and settled in Berkeley, California for 27 years, and eventually retired to Benicia.

She was an active member of the Lutheran churches in Berkeley and Benicia, and the Assyrian Foundation of America. She was also kept busy with the sponsorship of Julius's relatives who wished to immigrate to the United States.

Violet traveled extensively around the world, including Canada, the former Soviet Union, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Central America, and every state of the United States.

Violet is survived by her husband Julius of Benicia, California, daughter Semiramis Shabbas of Oakland, California, son Raman Shabbas of The Netherlands, and daughter Dumarina Shabbas of Benicia. She is also survived by an aunt, and a number of cousins, nieces, and a nephew.

The family wish to express their gratitude to all the relatives and friends who attended the funeral service, as well as those who expressed their condolences with flowers, cards, letters, phone calls, and charitable contributions.

Ephraim G. Bakus

By: Mikhael K. Pius



Ephraim (Aprim) Gabriel Bakus died at Brandel Manor in Turlock, California on March 29, 2002, at 87.

Ephraim, along with thousands of other Assyrian families came to Iraq from Iran as war refugees in 1918 when he was three years old. He graduated from American Mission (A.E.C.) School in Baghdad and worked in Hinaidi and Habbaniya

for the British Royal Air Force, and for the British Air-

ways Corporation in various capacities.

He immigrated to this country in 1948 and started working as a clerk for the American Medical Association in Chicago. Later he joined the Air Force Military Air Transport Command as radio operator and was assigned to the 54th Troop Carrier Squadron at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska, flying on C54 transport planes.

While stationed in Anchorage, Alaska, he received his flying wings, Good Conduct Ribbon, a medal and seven letters of Appreciation and congratulations and other awards from the U.S. Navy and Air Force Commanders.

At the end of his four-year enlistment, Ephraim returned to Chicago where he studied electronics under the G.I. Bill of Rights; he was honorably discharged with the rank of staff sergeant.

After six years in Chicago, he moved to Turlock in 1958 and was married the next year. He began Bakus Realty, which he ran until his retirement in 1987.

Ephraim served as commander of the local American Legion Post #88 in 1968 and 1969. He was a member of many local and national professional associations and an active member of Mar Addai Assyrian Church of the East and the Assyrian American Civic Club, where he served as secretary, trustee, and auditor. He was also the *Assyrian Star* reporter in Turlock for ten years.

During the years, Ephraim survived eight heart attacks, but tried to stay as active as possible. But he gave up playing tennis, golf and shooting pool.

Funeral services were conducted by Rev. Jameel Warda at Mar Addai Assyrian Church of the East. He was honored with a military burial at Turlock Memorial Park on April 5 by his local American Legion Post #88, followed by religious rites.

He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Ann, and three children: Robert, Susan and Karen, all of Turlock, brothers and sisters and many nieces and nephews in the United States, in England and in Mesopotamia.

Charles W. Warda



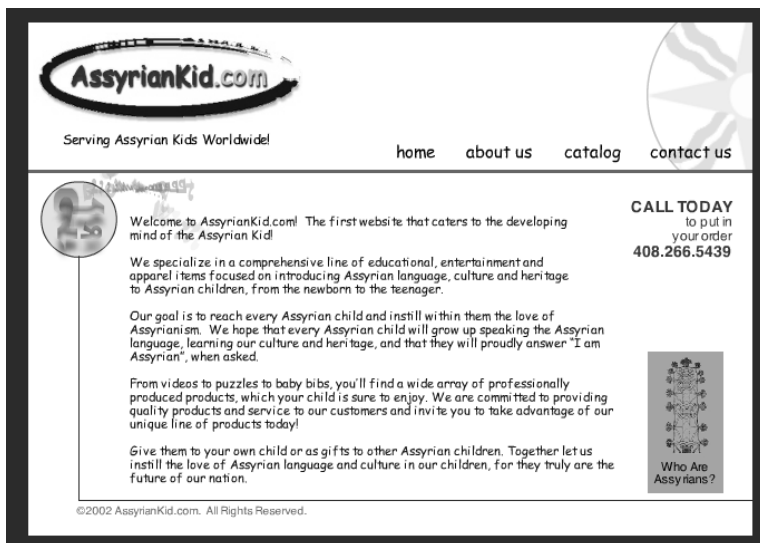
Charles W. Warda of Newington died peacefully Saturday (Aug. 3, 2002) at New Britain General Hospital.

Born in Chamakiee, Iran, he came to the United States at the age of 10. Charles was a longtime resident of New Britain, moving to Newington in 1961. He was employed at Fafnir Bearing Co. for 31 years, where he patented an invention for a ball-bearing locking device. He retired in 1980. Charles was a member of the Assyrian Club in New Britain

and the Purdue Alumni Association.

A devoted and loving husband, he is survived by his wife, Barbara and two children, Charles Clark of Hartford and Sarah Esther of New London and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held at South Congregational-First Baptist Church and he was buried in Fairview Cemetery.



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"I wish there was a game to teach my child Assyrian history."

"I wish there was an Assyrian alphabet puzzle."

"I wish there was an Assyrian activity book for children."

"I wish there was a place where I could buy this kind of stuff.... I wish, I wish, I wish!"

Well two young Assyrian Moms stopped wishing and did something about it!

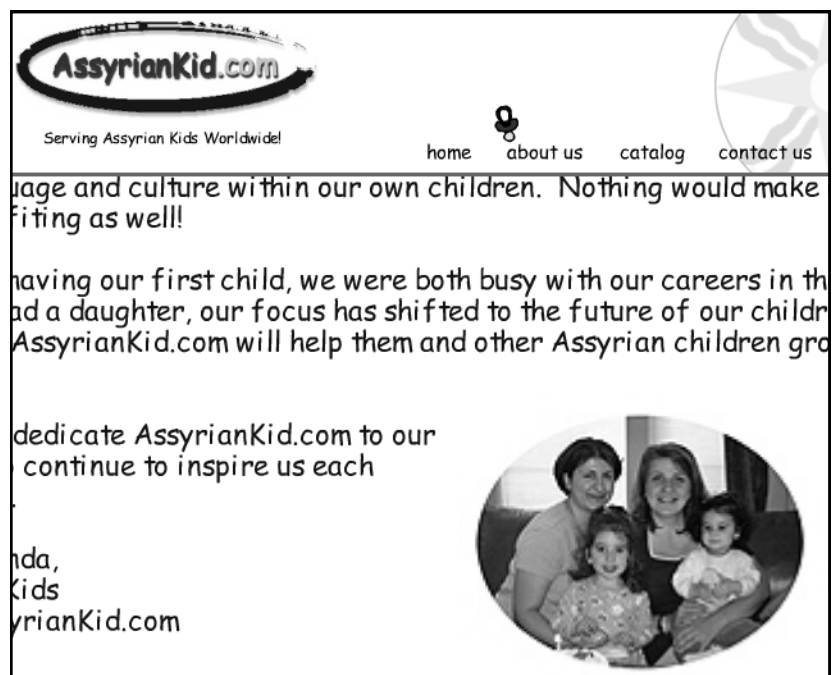
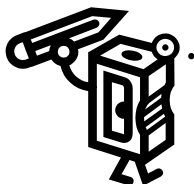
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Prior to each having their first child, both women were both busy with their careers in the corporate world and their home life. Now each having had a daughter, their focus has shifted to the future of their children and their self-identity as they grow up. "We hope to utilize these products to instill Assyrian language and values within our own children. Nothing would make us more proud than to see other Assyrian children benefiting as well!", say Belona and Yolanda. Congratulations to these ladies in launching this innovative and much needed website. We at Ninveh Magazine wish them much luck and encourage our readers to visit assyriankid.com today.

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حَبَد : دَہلیزِ حَتْمِ - قَد ۰۰۵

နိဗ္ဗာန်ရရှိသောအခါ၊ ဂရုဉာဏ်

حَبِيبٌ : نِسْمٌ مِمَّنْ مَعَكُمْ كَقَوْمٍ - هَؤُلَاءِ

١٥٠٠ ————— ١٥٠٠
 ١٥٠٠ ————— ١٥٠٠

[illegible]

١٠٠٠ ————— ١٠٠٠
 ١٠٠٠ ————— ١٠٠٠

سُجَّ مَ حَذَّبَ لَزَّ لَزَجَ
لَبَّ حَذَّبَ مَلَّ مَلَجَ

[illegible]

اَمَّا كَلِمَاتُكَ فَكَثِيرٌ
 وَلَوْ أَنَّ رُكُوعَنَا بِرُكُوعِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ

[illegible]

၁၀။ နေ့စဉ် နေ့စဉ် နေ့စဉ်
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۱- مَدَّ شَ حَذَّ ۲- كَزَ ۳- حَبَّ ۴-
 ۵- لَزَّ ۶- لَزَّ ۷- ۸- ۹- ۱۰-

اَمَّا اَنْتَ فَاَنْتَ لَمْ تَكُنْ مَعَهُ
 مَعَهُ لَمْ تَكُنْ مَعَهُ

ערזן לטען יענעם חוק מעצורען הייליג
 מיט אלעז מיט אפזיגן.
 טאג און, אלעא פלייט מיט און לידא
 דיסטריקט ד Santa Clara. לידא מיט
 Pete Mchuge מעזען לט אלע דאזיגן
 יענעם אלעמען אלע דאזיגן, מענעם
 דאזיגן מענעם אלע דאזיגן.
 מענעם, מיטען דייליג יענעם מענעם
 לט אלע דאזיגן יענעם אלעמען אלע דאזיגן
 יענעם מיטען "דעמאקראטיע" מיטען חוק
 מענעם מענעם אלע דאזיגן דאזיגן
 מיט אלע, מיט אלע, מיט אלע לידא.
 מענעם דעמאקראטיע, מענעם אלע דאזיגן
 יענעם מיטען יענעם יענעם
 Dennis Kennedy מיטען לידא דאזיגן
 דאזיגן אלע דאזיגן אלע דאזיגן
 מענעם, הייליג אלעמען אלע דאזיגן
 מענעם מיטען אלעמען אלע דאזיגן
 יענעם אלע דאזיגן 6752.

טאגאלע.
 מיטען דאזיגן מיטען, אלעמען דאזיגן
 מיטען דאזיגן דאזיגן אלעמען, מענעם
 מיטען אלעמען דאזיגן אלעמען מיטען
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 דאזיגן", מיטען Pete Mchuge מיטען דאזיגן
 Board of Supervisors מיטען מיטען
 דייליג יענעם מיטען מיטען דאזיגן
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אלעמען אלעמען
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 אלעמען דאזיגן 6752

[illegible]

مَدَحَاتَا (مَدَحَاتَا) دَفَعَلَا
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3838 סנהא , תשס"ה , 25 , הג'ק"ק 3:2



6752 **دەكەم 25، مەنتە 3÷2 - دەكەم ۱۹۸۵**



ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶକ - ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶକ - ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶକ