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Mountains of Nuhadra (Dohuk) p.6

Cultural - Educational - Social

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Articles submitted for publication will be selected by the editorial staff on the basis of their relative merit to Assyrian literature, history, and current events.

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ܢܝܢܘܒܝܗ

From the President.....	3
From the Editor.....	3
Travel Through Assyria.....	6
The Monastery of Mor Gabriel School.....	10
Assyrian in German State parliament race.....	14
Assyrians of the USA.....	15
The Causes and Extent of Assimilation.....	16
Babylon in Hollywood.....	19
The Assyrian Levies.....	20
Meet Prof. Paul Barsom.....	22
The Perch Family.....	24
Modest Start Preceded Moorad's Rise.....	26
An appeal from the AFA.....	29
Literature Search.....	30
Subscriptions and Donations.....	34
Bob Kingsbury Remembered.....	37
In Memoriam.....	38

ܕܝܢܝܢܘܒܝܗ

45.....	ܕܝܢܝܢܘܒܝܗ ܕܝܢܝܢܘܒܝܗ
46.....	ܕܝܢܝܢܘܒܝܗ ܕܝܢܝܢܘܒܝܗ
47.....	ܕܝܢܝܢܘܒܝܗ ܕܝܢܝܢܘܒܝܗ
49.....	ܕܝܢܝܢܘܒܝܗ ܕܝܢܝܢܘܒܝܗ
51.....	ܕܝܢܝܢܘܒܝܗ ܕܝܢܝܢܘܒܝܗ



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From the President:

The Assyrian Foundation of America's election was held on December 3rd 2009 and new officers were elected by the members to run the Foundation's affairs in 2010. It is very pleasing for me personally as for all the members to witness for the first time in Assyrian Foundation's history since its establishment in 1964, board of directors led by a very bright and qualified Assyrian woman, Ms. Jackie Yelda, along with seven other officers, four of which are well educated and sophisticated women. We congratulate the new board members and wish them a very successful and productive term. They deserve our gratitude for taking the responsibility of elevating the Assyrian Foundation of America to the next level. Also, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the previous board serving the AFA for the last three terms. Many great things were accomplished in the past three years by the previous board; however, the most important and crucial objectives we are very proud to have achieved are: 1. Maintained and held the AFA together as one family through some very painful and sensitive times our Assyrian community in the Bay Area endured. The main goal was to shield the AFA from any harm and division caused by irresponsible and reckless actions of some clerics in the greater Bay Area. I believe we were very successful and if you attend one of our functions, you will witness the fruits of our accomplishment in the attitude, love, and respect the AFA member hold for each other regardless of their



religious or political affiliation. 2. For many years the AFA has supported and aided thousands of needy Assyrians and refugees who have been forced to leave the homeland under threats of killings and kidnappings. In the past three years, the AFA has sent over ninety thousand dollars to Syria, Jordan, Armenia, and Iraq.

Also, the AFA awarded tens of thousands of dollars to Assyrian students involved in Assyrian studies at graduate level, and helped in preparing them to represent our nation in major conferences and universities. 3. After many years of searching, the AFA building committee, headed by Mr. Daniel DeKalaita, was successful in making the AFA the proud owner of a multi-unit building in the city of Pacifica. The AFA is grateful to Mr. DeKalaita and his committee for their tireless efforts to successfully accomplish the building project. These are few of the many accomplishments achieved in the past three years by the previous board of directors. I'm confident in the capabilities and experience possessed by the new board of directors to achieve even more. It has been my honor to serve as the president for this great Foundation for the past three years. I was very fortunate to have had tremendous help and guidance from many seasoned and experienced members, especially Dr. Joel Elias; he has been a friend and a mentor during my presidency. Finally, I would like to thank all the members for their confidence and trust.

May God Protect the Assyrian Nation. *Fredy Tamraz*

From the Editor:

Many years ago, when the Assyrian Foundation of America's (AFA) scholarship program was started, it was (and could only be) a symbolic gesture of support and encouragement for our students. This was because our funds were limited, and had to be divided between our cultural/educational program and our welfare/refugee program.

Then, about ten years ago, the AFA, along with a number of other Assyrian organizations, received a generous bequest from Mr. Benjamin Adam, to be used for cultural/educational projects. This allowed us to increase our education budget significantly –up to \$30,000 per year!

Prior to this gift, we had been rethinking our selection process for the scholarships: type of students, level of study, field of study, etc. It was clear that the most efficient and effective use of our limited funds would be to pick a few students, who were in fields where we are un/under-represented and which are of great importance to us as a people (for example, Assyrian studies –language, history, culture, art, politics, religion, etc– encompassing all periods and regions; international law/relations; human rights, etc.). Also, we decided to select students who were at the graduate level in their studies, since this showed great dedication –and sacrifice, as these students had cho-

sen to pursue a course of study which would mean many years of school, following which the prospect of finding a job, never mind a lucrative one, is not great! We felt that this way we could provide a more significant, although still very small, support for those students.

The Benjamin Adam gift came just in time to allow us to put our plan to practice .

We selected a number of students who were involved, at the graduate level, in fields which are of interest to us. Our scholarships helped (in a small way) these students with their educational expenses, including the costs of traveling to international meetings where they gave presentations and made sure that our perspectives and interests were included in the discussions (See Dr. Donabed's bibliography for a sample of what these students are doing).

Of course, we've also used our educational budget to help needy students in the Near East and the Caucasus, and other regions where small amounts can provide the entirety of a student's annual educational needs. And, we've helped Assyrian authors, by purchasing a large number of their books (which we send as *thank you gifts* to our supporters). The educational budget has also been used to pay for the classes provided to our refugee children, especially in ^Camman, Jordan, and to help with the

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

construction and operation of schools, especially in the Near East.

We see our educational expenses as wise investments in our future. And, we already see great returns measured not in dollars, but, in scholarly articles, presentations in international meetings and panels, establishment of modern Assyrian studies programs in prestigious institutions, and collaborations with individuals and organizations that only a few years ago did not recognize us as a people.

A momentum has started, as we hear of new Assyrian students getting involved in Assyrian studies, and we have to make sure it continues and gains speed, by encouraging and helping these students.

We feel that not only the AFA, but, all those who have contributed to our educational program, should feel a great sense of gratification and accomplishment in having made a contribution (no matter how small) toward Dr. Donabed's PhD degree, one of our scholarship recipients!

Congratulations Dr. Donabed! **بَـدَـهَ دَـنَـاـبَـدَ فُـدَـلَـهَ!**

Dr. Donabed's Selected Bibliography

-(Forthcoming) w/ Hannibal Travis, *The Minorities of Iraq: History, Politics, and Human Rights* (Cambria Press)

-(Forthcoming) "Syriac Language and Literature to 400 CE" and "Colonialism in the Modern Middle East" in ABC-CLIO *World History Encyclopedia*, Alfred Andrea general editor, (2009)

-w/ Shamiran Mako, "Ethno-Cultural and Religious Identity of Syrian Orthodox Christians," *Chronos*, number 9, (Beirut: University of Balamand, Spring 2009)

-w/ Hannibal Travis, Foreword of Aboona, Hirmis, *Assyrians, Kurds, and Ottomans: Intercommunal Relations on the Periphery of the Ottoman Empire*, (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2008)

-"The Assyrian Heroic Epic of Qatine Gabbara: A Modern Poem in the Ancient Bardic Tradition," *Folklore 118*, (Taylor & Francis, December 2007)

-w/ Ninos Donabed, *The Assyrians of Eastern Massachusetts* (Arcadia Publishing, 2006)

-*Remnants of Heroes: The Assyrian Experience: The Continuity of the Assyrian Heritage from Kharpoot to New England*, (Chicago, Assyrian Academic Society Press, 2003)

Affiliations and Academic Organizations

- Board Member of the Modern Assyrian Research Archive (MARA), Department of Middle Eastern Studies (Chair -Prof. Geoffrey Khan), University of Cambridge
- Canadian Society for Syriac Studies –contributing member
- Middle East Studies Association (MESA)–contributing member
- Phi Alpha Theta, History Honor Society –member
- Theta Alpha Kappa, National Honor Society for Religious Studies/Theology – member
- American Historical Association – member
- Society of Biblical Literature– member

Recent Lectures and Conferences

-Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting 2009, November, Boston, MA: Panel Organizer: *Ottoman Minority Diasporas in New England: Community Formation and Evolution*; Presenter: "Evolving Identity: Religion and the Secularization of Assyrians in Massachusetts in the Early 20th Century"

-Symposium Syriacum September 2008 Grenada, Spain: *Historical, Political, and Religious Transformation in Iraq* (accepted paper)

-Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting 2007, November, Montréal, Quebec: *Ethno-Cultural and Religious Identity of Syrian Orthodox Christians*

-North American Syriac Studies Symposium V, University of Toronto, Canada, June 2007: *Transparent Assyria: Ethno-Cultural or Religious Reasons for Devastation*

in Iraq 1961-1990?

-Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting 2006, November, Boston, MA, Panel Organizer: *An Intellectual Outlet: Assyrian Literary and Cultural Reactions to Major 20th Century Events*, and, *Expressions of Liberty in Conflict Regions: The Assyrians in an Age of Transition*; Presenter: "The Assyrian Heroic Epic of Qatīne Gabbara through Bard and Poet: Evolution, Structure, and Influence"

-Boston Public Library, September 2005, *Recovering Immigration History: Personal Photographs and Naturalization Records of the Massachusetts Assyrians*

-Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations Graduate Students' Association Ninth Annual Symposium, March 31, 2005, *A Perspective on Life in North Iraq*

-Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations Graduate Students'



Association Eighth Annual Symposium, March 2004, *Current Conditions of the Assyrians in Tur Abdin, South-eastern Turkey*

-MESA Annual Meeting 2004 November 20, 2004 San Francisco, California *Rabban Hormizd Monastery*

-The Canadian Society for Syriac Studies Annual Symposium IV Saturday November 13, 2004: *The Monastery of Rabban Hormizd: A Scholarly and Scribal Centre*

-50th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale: (accepted paper) "Fauna and Flora in the Ancient Near East": 2 - 6 August 2004: *The continuity of Assyrian animal names from Akkadian-Assyrian dialects to Modern Assyrian: The symbolic importance, its variation and harmony*

MESA Annual Conference 2003 November 6-9, 2003 Anchorage, Alaska: *The Assyrian Legacy of Kharpūt Transplanted in New England: The Ideology of Ashur Yousuf and Others on Assyrian Nationalism*

-Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations Graduate Students' Association Seventh Annual Symposium, March 27, 2003; *The Assyrian Culture and Heritage of North Iraq and Northern Mesopotamia*

Current Projects

-Benjamin's English - East Assyrian Dictionary Project

-The Ancient Inscriptions of Tur Abdin, Turkey

I am happy to announce that on December 10, 2009, Sargon George Donabed successfully defended his PhD thesis entitled:

Iraq and the Assyrian Unimagining: Illuminating Scaled Suffering and a Hierarchy of Genocide from Semele to Anfal.

Although at the University of Toronto the result of the oral examination is either pass or fail, Sargon clearly obtained his doctorate with grand distinction.

The thesis sheds much light on the Christians of modern Iraq, who alas still endure "Scaled Suffering" to this day.

Dr. Sargon Donabed is now an Assistant Professor at Roger Williams University, Department of History.

Congratulations Professor Dr. Donabed!

Amir Harrak

**Professor of Aramaic and Syriac
University of Toronto, Canada**

A Year To Celebrate for the Odah's



On May 26th, we traveled to San Diego to join in celebrating our son's graduation from San Diego State University. He earned two degrees. Majoring in Business Marketing and Minor in English (Specialized in Shakespeare).

Our happiness did not end there, we head back to the Bay Area to attend our youngest daughter "Sabrina" who graduated from Salesian High School on June 9th, and now attending UC Berkeley (Women of Engineering).

She not only graduated with 4.5GPA but received 4 honorary awards in which one was "Bank of America" award in 1st place in Math, along with 3 more awards. She also received the following 2 special ones:

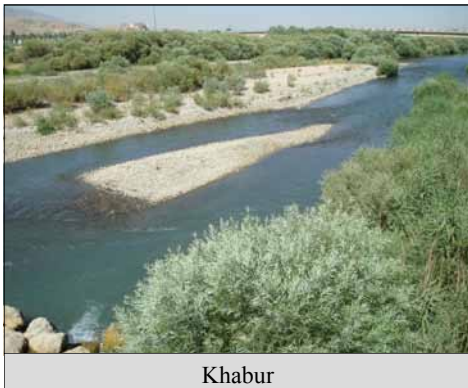
National Society Honor Award

College Board AP Scholar with honors. (It states that earning it was a great accomplishment, it signifies that she is part of a unique group of students worldwide who have successfully completed a rigorous series of college-level courses throughout her high school studies).

Travel through Assyria; An Observation

Gabriel Bar Gabriel , Ṭurʿabdīn

Over the course of two months I travelled to many



Khabur

places in the Middle East to compile the opinions and ideas of the Assyrians of the region, particularly the Assyrians of Iraq. In Turkey, I visited the cities of Istanbul, Diyarbakir, Mardin, and the

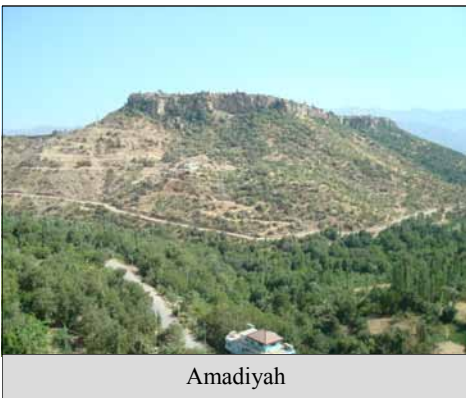
region of Turʿabdīn. In Syria, I visited the cities of Qamishli, Aleppo, Damascus and Maʿlula. In Jordan, I visited the cities of Amman, Madaba, and the historical sites of Petra and the place where John the Baptist baptized Jesus.

My longest visit was in Iraq which occurred on two different occasions. On my first visit I went to Zakho, Dohuk (Nuhadra), Erbil, Ankawa, Kirkuk, Mosul, Bartella and to some other villages in the Nineveh Plain. On my second visit I went to Zakho, Dohuk, Amadiyah, the surrounding vil-



Child in Tur ʿAbdeen

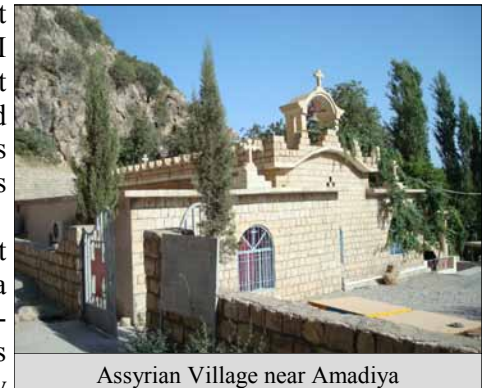
lages and from there back to Erbil. From Erbil I travelled back to Turkey through the Khabur border gate. In almost all of the places I visited throughout the trip I stayed in the homes of people that I had never met before. I simply knocked on their doors, asked for shelter and they welcomed me in their houses. As this is very common in Middle Eastern cultures I was their guest and never felt foreign. I had the opportunity to talk to many different people ranging from the very ordinary people on the street to high ranking politicians who represent people at different administrative positions. My goal was to research



Amadiyah

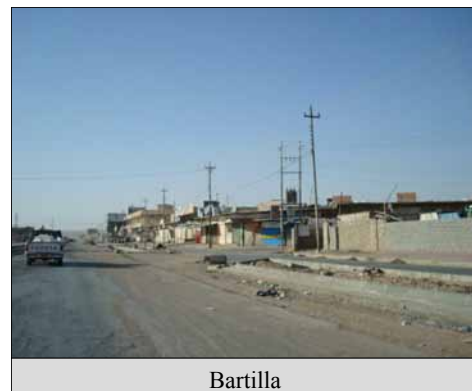
and document the lives of the Assyrians living in the region. Throughout these encounters I tried to document the thoughts and opinions of as many people as possible.

Although not very powerful, a central government in Iraq was established shortly after the US-led invasion in 2003. However, it cannot be said that this central government controls and maintains stability in all of Iraq. It is very obvious from the people I met that even though the government claims to recognize the rights of minorities in the country, reality couldn't be farther from the truth. The truth is the rights of minorities



Assyrian Village near Amadiya

are not recognized and the minorities must endure many hardships daily. They are often persecuted by the majorities and sometimes even murdered. Apart from the Americans there are three main internal



Bartilla

groups that control different regions in Iraq. The first group, the Shiites, control the south. They are divided into several tribes and ideological groups; with some favouring close ties with Iran and others favouring autonomy. The second group, the Sunnis, are in central Iraq. The third group are the Kurds in the north. The Kurds are also separated into two main groups, the Barzani and the Talabani tribal political parties.

The Assyrian minority living among the Kurds mostly reside in the region under the control of the Barzani clan. Modern day Iraq was the centre of the Assyrian em-



Streets of Bartilla



101 year-old Monk in AlQosh

pire thousands of years ago which today is represented by a small Christian population in the region. From before the rule of Saddam Hussein and up until the first Gulf War in 1991 it was estimated that more than 1.8 million Assyrians were living in all corners of the country. This began to change after the first Gulf war. Many Assyrians in the south fled oppression from the Shiites and later immigrated

to western countries via Turkey, Syria, and especially Jordan. These refugees were forced to sell much of their land and homes for next to nothing to save their lives. The Assyrians in the north were forced to abandon their lands, much to the benefit of the Kurds, who took over these properties. Up until the American-led invasion in 2003, it is believed that there lived 800 thousand Assyrian all over Iraq. Now, however, the number is between 250-300 thousand people.

The most troubling result of my research was that many of the Assyrians that I met were ready to leave the lands they lived on for thousands of years given the opportunity. Almost all of those I interviewed wished to leave Iraq because they believed that, as soon as the US forces leave, their life will be even more unbearable. As oppressed minorities, many fear they will be killed. The people I met say they do not trust anyone, including the Americans, in the region.

Assyrians in Iraq have gathered in two different regions. Some Assyrian nationalists live in the Nineveh Plain as



Assyrian Headquarters in Ankawa

their ancestors did thousands of years ago. This region is not under Kurdish control and falls under the jurisdiction of the central government. They believe in independence and they are under oath to stay and preserve

their ancestors' land. They have even formed their own security services to try to protect their communities. Those however, who live in the cities and the villages among the Kurds say that although the Kurds treat them well, they are don't believe this treatment will continue. Many of the Assyrians that I met who are living among the Kurds believe that as soon as the Americans leave, they will lose their limited rights and they will be assimilated.

None of the people I met throughout my travels believed that Iraq will have a bright future. According to US presi-



Newly built village

dent Barack Obama's vice president, Joe Biden, Iraq must be divided into three parts to allow the Americans to leave. He recommended three regions each occupied by the Shiites, Sunnis, and

the Kurds. If Iraq is divided into 3 parts there will be no safe haven for the Christian population of the country. As a result Christians will look to escape the oppression and seek refuge in the West, leaving lands that they have occupied for thousands of years. Assyrians believe that if Iraq is to be divided, it should not be divided into three parts, but into four parts. Beside the Shiites, Sunnis and the Kurds, a region should be established for the indigenous peoples of the area, the Assyrians, which may also include the Yezidis and the Turkmans. Many Assyrians belong to the Catholic Church; however, the Catholic world is content to sit back and not do very much to help them. Because of their Christian faith, Assyrians are viewed by non-Christians in Iraq as being collaborators with the Americans and are persecuted constantly.

The Assyrians in the Kurdish Region of Northern Iraq

The situation of the Assyrians under Kurdish rule in Northern Iraq and



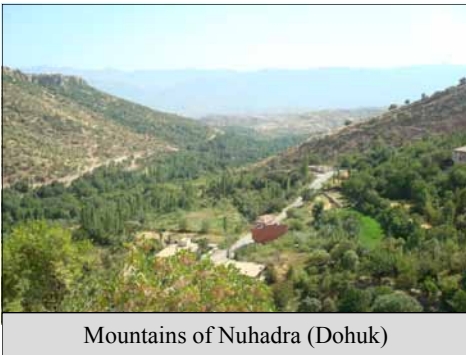
Assyrian office in Ankawa



New houses



Archbishopric, Kirkuk



Mountains of Nuhadra (Dohuk)

Aghajan is one of the few Christians with a high ranking position in the Kurdish administration.

Internally Displaced Persons

Sargis Aghajan is respected and admired among the Christians of Iraq. He has founded about 150 villages along the Tigris River near the southern border of Turkey and the eastern border of Syria. He has resettled about 30,000 Assyrian families from Baghdad and Mosul in these villages. The new settlers, being used to city life, find it a bit difficult to get used to village life, but it is im-



Nineveh Plain

the surrounding villages that I toured seem to be better than those living outside Kurdish-controlled areas. The problems they encounter with their K u r d i s h neighbours are very few and they see themselves (out of fear?) as part of Kurdistan. That is to say they accept Northern Iraq as Kurdistan. Many Assyrians in the north believe that their problems will be understood and solved by a man named Sargis Aghajan. Mr. Aghajan, a Christian himself, is the Minister of Economy and Finance in the Kurdistan Regional Government. Very few Christians in the rest of Iraq are allowed to play a significant role in the political process of the country.

portant that they have permanent and secure housing. The villages I saw have running water, electricity, churches, schools and roads. The houses are handed to the new Assyrian settlers equipped with everything and are ready for immediate occupation. The goal of Sargis Aghajan for the next few years is to build another 100 new villages and to resettle about 100,000 more Assyrians in the area. This work under the administration of Sargis Aghajan includes food and financial support for the villagers. Furthermore, he provides financial support for many Assyrians who live in cities under difficult conditions and he helps them with housing.

Social life and the Social Structure

During my visit I was able to see that life in these newly established villages seemed much improved compared to the living conditions the Assyrians had before. In most of the villages, there is water, electricity, and roads. Education is offered in the schools as well as in the churches. The quality of health and education is a problem throughout the region. As the future of the country is uncertain it brings along with it economic uncertainty as well. The economic uncertainty adversely affects everything and everyone.

The Assyrian churches in the Kurdish administrative area are strong and well off. These churches have been supported in the last five years by Sargis Aghajan. They have received great financial support as well as property grants. As a result, the church and the ecclesiastic administration are much wealthier than the people and, additionally, seem ignorant or indifferent about the problems of their people. This greatly disturbs the people. When this is asked of Sargis Aghajan he seems to be aware of this situation in the church. However, he seems to not be bothered by this situation, as he believes it is not so hopeless and that it will right itself by the new generations.

The villagers in the Nineveh Plain live in worse conditions in comparison with the Assyrians who live in and around Dohuk and Zakho. This is especially true because the Shiites and Sunnis force them to live in very difficult conditions. Some of the clergy who met with the Americans are being threatened with their lives. From time to



Kirkuk



Oil pipe, Kirkuk

time the Assyrian in the area receive death threats, threats to kill them if they do not leave the area. As a result, the Assyrians in the Nineveh Plain are more nationalist and religious. For those Assyrians who come from Northern Iraq and the central Iraq, although Christianity is important, it is not a major factor; because they have been exposed to Saddam's rule of secular Arabization.

Those in the Nineveh Plain receive very little support from the central government and unfortunately they don't receive any of the funds that are meant for the benefit of all Iraqi citizens. According to a vast majority of Assyrians I met, their hardships can be blamed on the leader of Zow'a, Representative Yonadan Kanna. Mr. Kanna is an Assyrian member of Iraqi parliament who represents the Assyrians at the central government. He has been part of the Iraqi central parliament under the political party of a Shiite group. Although Assyrians represent more than 3% of the Iraqi population they do not receive the amount that is equivalent to 3% of the central budget. It is because of this that the Assyrians blame the United States for acting irresponsibly toward Iraqi minority groups. Furthermore, the biggest mistake that the Americans made was that they placed Shiite and Sunni soldiers in charge of the Assyrian regions. Assyrians in the Nineveh Plains claim that if they receive their (3%) share of the Iraqi budget from the central government, they will not need any additional outside (military/police) support to protect their community.

Due to continued death threats, Assyrians living in the regions surrounding Mosul and Baghdad continue to flee west to Syria and Jordan. In Syria, they live under most difficult conditions and are likely to be housed in the vicinity of Jaramana in Damascus. The situation of those in Amman, Jordan, is better and many have found their way westward to Europe and the US. The aim of Sargis Aghajan is to keep the Assyrians of Iraq from fleeing their ancestral lands and so he builds new villages and new settlements to win back those who have already left.

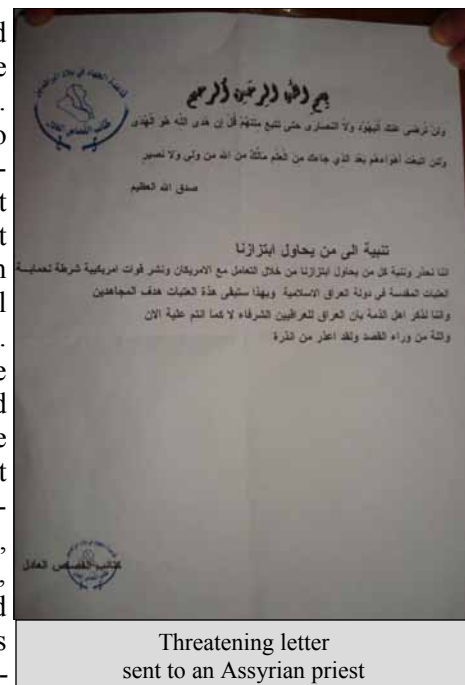
Autonomy

The wish of the Assyrians I met is to be autonomous and supported by the Iraqi central government. They seek understanding with the local Kurdish administration, the Shiite groups, and the Sunni groups. According to the people I met, there are three important policy makers that oppose Assyrian autonomy. These are the UN, the US State Department, and the Vatican. The given reason for these three establishments' opposition to the autonomy plan is that, given the uncertainty of Iraq's future, they fear that the Assyrians will face worse persecution and possible massacre, if they are given autonomy. Many people I met with who are living in countries surrounding Iraq also support the Assyrian wish of the autonomy and believe it is a fact that Iraq will be divided eventually.

Since 1991 western countries have opened their doors to Iraqi Assyrians and have allowed the Kurds to control

Northern Iraq, and the Sunnis, the Nineveh region. This is thought to be an intended policy and implies that the West did not want the Christian Assyrians in the oil rich regions of Iraq. Assyrians believe they are best suited to control these areas to the benefit of all Iraqis, including the Shiites, Sunni, Kurds, Turkman and Yezidi. Assyrians do not seek independence; rather

they seek autonomy, in an area to include Turkman and Yezidis, within the jurisdiction of the Iraqi central government. Along with the Kurds, Sunnis, and the Shiites they would prefer to have one of the four possible autonomous regions under Iraqi central government's control. It is obvious that Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds cannot live amongst each other in peace; so the Assyrians, who are the oldest



Threatening letter
sent to an Assyrian priest



Assyrian priests in Bartilla who had received
the threatening letters

indigenous people of the country can act as mediators.

One small autonomous pebble might help settle the stones in the region; and it may prevent the great civilizations of the region from extinction. Most of the people I met believe that the US should support the Christian people of Iraq so that they can remain in their homeland. Because they believe that the waves of onslaught upon them were caused by the West, which has always betrayed them.

Monastery of Mor Gabriel School During the Past Century

Gabriel Bar Gabriel
Turʿabdīn

1. THE MONASTERY

The Monastery of Mor Gabriel, which was founded by Mor Shmuel (d. 409) and Mor Shemun (d. 433), despite many difficulties, has continued to function as a place of worship and learning for 1612 years. Today it remains not only one of the most important religious and educational centers for the Syriac-speaking community, but it is the oldest functioning Christian monastery in the world.

Since its founding in 397 AD, the monastery has been home to thousands of individuals who have dedicated their lives to Christ. In the last century, especially as a result of oppression, persecution and (forced) migration during WWI, which weakened the community around the monastery, it managed to continue into the twenty-first century through the sacrificial efforts of a number of monks.

Mor Gabriel monastery is situated in the heart of Tur^cabdin plateau, the rolling, hilly country in southeast Turkey. Its name means “*The Mountain of the Servants of God*.” Located between Midyat and Azekh, two important towns in Tur^cabdin, it remains one of the most important regions for our people. In former days the monastery, which was surrounded by Syriac-speaking villages, was an important religious center, where many monks lived and studied.



In addition to its importance as a locus for the monastic community, the monastery of Mor Gabriel, over the years, has also trained thousands of clergy in the tradition of the Syrian/c Orthodox Church.

According to the census of 1835, hundreds of thousands of Christians of the Syriac tradition lived in the region of Turʿabdin. Due to the oppression and emigrations of the

20th century this population is now reduced to less than 3000 individuals in all. Before the events of 1915, inclusive of monks and seminarians, forty people lived in the monastery. The Diocese of Mor Gabriel monastery in those days was shepherded by bishop Athanasius Afrem Said (d. 1915) and between 1913-15 by bishop Philoxenos Abdulahad (d. 1915) of the Diocese of Mor Awgin who resided and passed away there. In 1915, along with thousands of the monastery were left for some years untended

In 1919, our people returned to the monastery. Fr. Gabriel Kittino (d.1973), from the village of °Ayn Wardo, served here for seventeen years. Next the monastery was headed by Fr. Yawsef (d.1938) from the village of Arbo followed by Fr. Yuhanon Uso (d.1942), from the village of Karabash of the Diyarbakir district. After them the responsibility for the monastery fell to Fr. Malke Sefer Kerkinni for twelve years. He died in 1954 at the age of 106. He was succeeded between 1954 – 56 by Fr. Shemun





Arzioglu (d. 1956).

In 1955 the Bishop of Tur^cabdin, Mor Iwanis Afrem Bilgic (d. 1984) and Fr. Shabo Gunes (d. 1962), from Midin, reopened the monastery school. Fr. Shabo undertook responsibility for the monastery school after 1958. Fr. Yeshu Čiček (d. 2005- former Archbishop of Central Europe) succeeded him and was abbot of the monastery between 1962-73.

2. THE SCHOOL

From 1950 until today, for a period of fifty-nine years, the school curriculum has been based on four fundamental principles. Following these ideals, the seminary has trained many individuals who have served the community, both locally and in the Diaspora. The tenets that the monastery seminarians know by heart and to which are expected to stay loyal are defined as follow:

2.1. Kindness, Spirituality and Love of the Church:

a) The spirituality inspired by the Church Fathers. b) The Christian teaching within the scope of the main rules and principles of the monastery and Syriac education. c) The love for humanity and for nature, a love that is practiced in the life style of the monastery of Mor Gabriel, as taught by the founders of the monastery and by Mor Gabriel, for whom the monastery was named. d) The humane traits that are part of the philosophy of Syriac Christianity and the vision of life through this frame. e) To bring up faithful and fruitful individuals for the Syriac-speaking community, and for the human community in general.

2.2. The Principles of the Monastery:

a) The Bible and other holy writings enlighten the monastery seminary. b) To preserve the legacy of the monastery, of its founders and of the thousands of monks who have placed great efforts in the monastery. c) To preserve the legacy of the seminary of the monastery and to maintain it.

2.3. The Discipline of the Monastery:

a) The main discipline of the monastery is to respect and love everyone in the monastery. b) For the seminarians that come from different places to act in accordance with the teaching of the Bible and to accept this as the main life style. c) In addition, to accept the general rules of the monastery and the school of the monastery.

2.4. The Knowledge and the Goal:

a) To bring up educated, conscientious, disciplined, and cultured spiritual individuals/leaders for our world, for our nation, and especially for our local community. b) To provide the basic education for the monastery graduates to seek and obtain higher education in other institutions.

3. THE YEARS 1955-2007

In 1955, Mor Iwanis Afrem Bilgic, the Bishop of Tur^cabdin and The Very Rev. Fr. Shabo Gunes from Midin, the Abbot of the monastery, reopened the monastery school.

The principal work of the monastery and the school of the monastery, from 1962 to 1974, was done by the Very Rev Fr. Abbot Yeshu Čiček. There was an increase in number of seminarians during the time of Abbot Yeshu Čiček, and these seminarians graduating from the monastery school have served the community as monks or teachers in other monasteries.

The monastery and the monastery school had their golden period under the abbotship of Very Rev. Fr. Samuel Aktaş (Since 1985, Mor Timotheos Samuel Aktaş, Archbishop of Tur^cabdin and Abbot of the Monastery of Mor Gabriel). He returned from the United States, after finishing his studies there in 1974, and undertook the leadership of the monastery in the same year. The Very Rev. Fr. Samuel Aktaş started the work by appointing Isa Gülten (who has been a teacher in the monastery since 1962) as the director of the seminary. Isa Gülten, who was educated in Lebanon and England between the years 1970 and 1974, has used his experience in the educational system in those countries, to direct the monastery seminary effectively.

The cooperative work by Mor Timotheos Samuel Aktaş, Archbishop of Tur^cabdin and Abbot of the Monastery of Mor Gabriel, and Isa Gülten, the Monastery School Director, continued until Isa Gülten retired in 1995 from his



position as the director to become the General Director of the monastery. Isa Gülden continues to serve as the General Director of the monastery to the present.

His duties at the monastery school were undertaken by Fr. Saliba Ozmen (now Archbishop of Mardin) between the years of 1995-1998. He appointed as teacher, journalist Semun Tastekin, who was one of the most successful graduates of the monastery.



In 1998 after Fr. Saliba Ozmen left the monastery to continue his higher education in England, he entrusted the school administration to Isa Dogdu who is a graduate of Heythrop College, University of London. He also studied in the Master of Syriac Studies program at University of Oxford. Isa Dogdu is still the director of the school. He also writes and prepares the news of Tur'abdin for the ICO Magazine which was formerly published as "*Kolo D'Tur'abdin*".

We must not forget the tens of monks and teachers who have offered great service to the monastery school from 1950 to the present day. The most important of these are Fr. Eliyo Oztas (Diocese of The Netherlands), Fr. Tuma Aksoy, Fr. Yusuf Cetin (now Archbishop of Istanbul), Fr. Evgin Kaplan (now Archbishop of the Westren USA), Fr. Malke Urek (now Archbishop of Adiyaman), Fr. Saliba Ozmen (now Archbishop of Mardin), Fr. Augin Aydin (now Archbishop of The Netherlands) and Fr. Gabriel Cati. The teachers: Malfono Yusuf Begtas, Malfono Kuryakus Ergün, Malfono Simon Tastekin, Malfono Isa Dogdu, Malfono Sükri Aktas and the present secretary of the bishop, Yuhanun Gülden.

3.1. Education at the school.

From 1950 to 1978, 10 students were admitted to the monastery School each year. These students were drawn from the successful graduates of the Syriac-speaking villages in Tur'abdin. Every year a delegation of monks toured all the villages in Tur'abdin and selected boys between 12 and 15 years old who had received basic religious education, and who were in good health. For a period of three years these students received education in theology, philosophy and the Syriac language from the monks and teachers, and lived an austere life at Mor Gabriel. Many of the students thus trained have become clergy (bishops, monks, priests, deacons) or Syriac teachers in the villages.

In 1978, despite limited means, the monastery administration, under the leadership of Fr. Samuel Aktaş (Archbishop of Tur'abdin) and Malfono Isa Gülden, revised the curriculum of the school thoroughly. They started admission of students who successfully finished primary education in the villages but had no means of acquiring secondary education due to distance from the location of secondary schools. These students were provided with an opportunity to board at the monastery while they attended secondary school. This system is still running successfully.

About thirty students who are registered at the government school in Midyat, drive 25 km every weekday to the town in transport provided by the monastery. During the school day, the students take lunch and have a place to study and relax at the diocesan buildings of the Church of Mort Shmuni located in Midyat.

The students are accompanied in the school bus by a teacher on duty and by two nuns who cook for the students. They return home in the same way every day in the evening.

The 30 students who attend the state schools, when they return from Midyat, retire to the classrooms and work under the supervision of three teachers.

3.2. Life of the students in the monastery school:

The school of the Monastery of Mor Gabriel which would admit only the successful students between 1978 to 1988, after 1988 started to give chance also to those less successful students. This is due to decreasing number of candidates resulting from the high rate of emigration of Assyrians from the area. This has resulted in the monastery students being less successful in the state school recently. However, even if the monastery students do not perform at the desired level in the state school from time to time, the discipline and the high level of culture that the monastery teaches them has continued as always. Studying in the state schools does not stop the students from living a monastic life. Thus they have never missed the morning, midday and evening prayers even on school days. The religious duties and the monastery responsibilities are never ignored. Every Saturday the students are offered classes in religious studies and in Syriac, Arabic and English languages. Also every Saturday evening a talk is given by a guest Syriac scholar as part of the educational program of the monastery school. The aim of these classes is to increase the cultural awareness and knowledge base of the students.

The corner stone of the monastery and the monastery school are the 13 nuns of the Monastery of Mor Gabriel. Simply, nothing would run without them. These nuns are mothers and sisters of everyone in the monastery. The love they have for these students is immense. The nuns fulfill all the responsibilities, from cooking to laundry; they care for these students happily.

When the schools start the three-month summer holiday,

the monastery school sends the students to their families for 40 days . During the remaining time, the students are offered daily religious education and classes in Syriac, Arabic and English.

During the three-month summer holiday, the monastery school offers courses in Syriac language and religious studies to 10 students from families living abroad. These students receive religious education and Syriac classes every day. The students, apart from their class work, undertake a number of duties to assist the bishop, monks and nuns in receiving the large number of visitors (thousands of local and foreign visitors and Assyrians from Europe) who come to the monastery each summer. The monastery welcomes some 50-60 thousand visitors every year. During the summer, on average, 1500 people spend one night or more in the monastery. During their stay, the students are also involved in the care of the visitors, assisting the other staff members of the monastery.

3.3. The outside factors that effect the monastery school:

With its limited means, the monastery administration never deprives the students from any possibility. There are three factors that affect the school recently. These are:

After 1989, the terror that has been experienced in the region along with all the problems that it has brought with it, especially the insecurity and anxiety about the future, has forced our people to leave the area. The insecurity and instability has caused great socio-economic harm to the community. Finally, the monastery students who attend state schools, like other citizens, are negatively affected by the problems that are experienced by the Turkish educational system.

3.4. The Success of the school

Despite the financial, social and physical difficulties; the Monastery of Mor Gabriel School, since 1950, has managed to produce 8 bishops, 8 monks, 21 priests, tens of Syriac teachers of language and religion and 22 university graduates. There are among these students theologians, teachers, physicians, engineers, politicians, lawyers and students who are offered prestigious grants, like the Fulbright Scholarship. The monastery school has managed to send students to some of the world's best universities like Oxford, Princeton and London. Some of the school's graduates, who come from rural areas, have managed to obtain positions in political parties and their administration in different countries, from the United States' Senate to the Turkish Assembly.

3.5. The Future of the school

Tur'abdin and the monastery struggled for survival between the years 1915-1950. Again, between the years 1989-1995, it struggled to maintain its presence. The monastery administration, on the one hand stood against the problems in the region, and on the other, it tried to overcome the difficulties which were causing the emigration of our people from the region, leaving the remaining community even smaller and less secure. In the 1990's, when the life of a human being in the region was not worth a bullet, despite all the physical and social pressure, to bravely and with honor help the monastery stay open and to continue its activities and to help the students accomplish their studies were not challenges that every leader could overcome. This could only be accomplished with the help of God through the prayers of thousands of saints buried in the monastery. This was made possible also through the endless faith of the bishop, monks, nuns, leaders, teachers and students have in God.

From the Epic of Gilgamesh:

"...but man's life is short, at any moment it can be snapped, like a reed in a canebrake. The handsome young man, the lovely young woman –in their prime, death comes and drags them away. Though no one has seen death's face or heard death's voice, suddenly, savagely, death destroys us, all of us, old or young. And yet we build houses, make contracts, brothers divide their inheritance, conflicts occur –as though this human life lasted forever. The river rises, flows over its banks and carries us all away, like mayflies floating downstream: they stare at the sun, then all at once there is nothing.

"The sleeper and the dead, how alike they are! Yet the sleeper wakes up and opens his eyes, while no one returns from death. And who can know when the last of his days will



come? When the gods assemble, they decide your fate, they establish both life and death for you, but the time of death they do not reveal."

"Gilgamesh, where are you roaming? You will never find eternal life that you seek. When the gods created mankind, they also created death, and they held back eternal life for themselves alone. Humans are born, they live, then they die, this is the order that gods have decreed. But until the end comes, enjoy your life, spend it in happiness, not despair. Savor your food, make each of your days a delight, bathe and anoint yourself, wear bright clothes that are sparkling clean, let music and dancing fill your house, love the child who holds you by the hand, and give your wife pleasure in your embrace. That is the best way for a man to live."

Assyrian-German Activist Nominated for German State Parliament

Nuri Ayaz was born in Enhil, TurAbdin, Turkey in 1971. At age 5, the Ayaz family emigrated to Germany and have been living in Paderborn ever since. Mr. Ayaz is married to Schamiram Bagandi whom he credits to much of his success. Schamiran and Nuri have 2 children: Kinora (9) and Ninos(2) . In 1994, Mr. Ayaz joined the Social Democratic party of Germany (SPD), the oldest political party in the country.

Since 1996, Mr. Ayaz has been balancing a career in the IT industry while maintaining exemplary community development with Assyrians and non-Assyrians in the area. In 2004, he was elected to the board of the local branch in Bad Lipp-springe and founded the branch newspaper. In 2005, he joined he board of the local chapter of SPD Paderborn.

On 20 November 2009 Nuri Ayaz was selected with votes from 91% of the delegates of the SPD local associations as a candidate for the state parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia (the largest province of Germany, having 18 million inhabitants.

The election will take place in May 2010. Until then, the campaign is running in NRW.

My Moto:

"Some people want something to happen, others make them happen"



Below are some of his priorities in political work.

- I stand for a strong community, for solidarity and social commitment.
- I stand for a policy dialogue with the people and not behind closed doors among politicians only.
- My focus is on education , in particular education training and integration policies. We must invest more in education equality
- We need to develop better immigrant integration programs, involving the countries, communities and migrant associations.



Nuri Ayaz with his wife Schamiram Bagandi

Assyrians in the USA

By Sargon Maraha, Sweden

Two years ago I went on a trip to California, the United States, *the land of possibilities*, together with two of my siblings. Our destinations were: San Francisco, Los Angeles and Modesto. Since I had never been fond of the United States and the American culture, my expectations for the trip were not very high. I went on the trip for one purpose only, and that was to get an insight into the Assyrians living in the United States and their conditions, compared to the Assyrians living in Sweden, the land I come from. My questions were: to what degree have the Assyrians in the United States been assimilated; and, are there many Assyrians there that still appreciate and practice their culture? These two questions dominated my trip.

The United States is a very large and diverse country, and as a tourist you feel a little bit spoiled. You can visit museums, eat delicious food and experience cultures from every corner of the world. Personally, I was happy just to visit the famous Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Being used to the flap bridge in Södertälje, I was overwhelmed by the bridges in San Francisco. We managed even to visit the *Ashurbanipal* statue in San Francisco's Civic Center, next to the Asian Museum of Art and the main public library. It is a very powerful statue that measures about 4 meters from head to toe. That day, in front of that giant statue, I felt very proud of my people in America since we do not have anything similar in Sweden.

During my stay I met many interesting people; each of them, in their own way, enriched my experience. I was also had the opportunity to meet and spend some time with young Assyrian. Before the trip, I had many prejudices against the Assyrian youth in the USA. Among them, I thought that the majority call themselves Americans, that few have a good command of the mother-tongue and that most of them love the *MTV* culture. In other words, a gross generalization.

In reality, my understanding of the Assyrian youth in the United States was not quite as I expected. But, I did see situations that are taboo here in Sweden. One family that I visited had two daughters my age (25); both daughters had American boyfriends. This happens even in Sweden, but to a lesser extent. Also, in Sweden, even if the parents accept it, the community does not always accept it. Other young Assyrians that I met, could only speak English, and others were totally Americanized with no sense of their Assyrian heritage.

Of course, we all have a choice of whom to marry, speak the langue that is most natural to us and, in principle, do whatever we want. But the question remains whether, as individuals, Assyrians can afford to be selfish, given the

fact that we are so scattered and divided today? As far as assimilation of Assyrians in the United States, I think the great geographic distances between our communities and individuals are a strong contributing factor. The more distant you find yourself from your own culture and language, the easier you will be assimilated. This problem becomes especially noticeable in the USA for the Assyrians in the sense that Americans are, as a people, very nationalistic and anxious about claiming their culture and identity.

The city of Modesto has about 200,000 citizens, 20,000 of these are Assyrians. In Chicago, with a population of about three million, there are about 100,000 Assyrians. Though I am aware that many of these Assyrians could not care less about their culture, it still feels safe to have many Assyrians gathered in one place. As far I can see, this vicinity will, if not prevent the assimilation process that the Assyrians are going through in America, at least delay it. We must also remember, however, that Assyrians have been in this country for twice as long as Assyrians in Sweden. In view of the circumstances, we cannot be too judgmental about the lifestyle, behaviour, and belief-system of the Assyrians in the United States.

I left the United States with mixed feelings. On the one hand I got the opportunity to witness and take part in Assyrian activism in the USA; and, on the other hand, I was concerned about the dominance of the American culture in the Assyrians' daily life. Considering my experiences in the United States and interaction with Assyrians there, I feel it is yet too early to count out the Assyrian-Americans as a powerful force in our peoples' struggle for existence in the world.



The Causes and Extent of Assimilation among Assyrians in the Village of Kanda, Georgia

By: Daniel (Danick) Lachin

Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia



The old and young generation of the village.

Assimilation is a devastating end-point for Assyrians. It is a consequence of repeated forced migrations resulting in fragmented and isolated communities, which, in time, are absorbed in the dominant population. Our collective indifference only speeds this process and makes our survival as a people more difficult.

The main purpose of this paper is to introduce, in simple terms, the process of assimilation that is on-going in

Dzveli Kanda (or, Kanda) an Assyrian village in the Republic of Georgia, where one can more easily trace the process of assimilation than in the large cities.

Some notes on the history of the settlement. During the events surrounding the First World War, large numbers of Assyrian refugees came to Georgia. However, there were earlier migrations, going back to, at least, the beginning of the 19th century.

In the Russo-Iranian war of 1826-1828, Iran suffered an even more humiliating defeat at the hand of the Russians than in the war of 1813, where Iran had to submit to the Treaty of Gulistan, abandoning its claim to Georgia. In 1828, Iran signed the Treaty of Turkmanchai in which the River Aras was finally accepted as the northern boundary of Persian Azarbaijan, close to Urmia, where a large and compact Assyrian population had lived for millennia. The documents associated with the Treaty of 1828 provide some of the earliest historical data about the Assyrian Diaspora in Tsarist Russia, where one hundred families from Urmia were relocated to Russia. These same sources show that most of these Assyrians were settled in Armenia and Georgia, during 1829-1830. The Assyrian settlement in the Kartly region, present-day province of Mtskheta, in the village known as Kanda, (half an hour drive from Tbi-

lisi) probably dates from the same period. The village cemetery provides historical documentation of the earliest settlement; its tombstones with Assyrian inscriptions can help trace the history of the settlement as well as the individuals who were part of the first wave of migrants.

Kanda was settled mainly by Assyrian immigrants, who came to the area during the period of development of capitalist market economy. They came to study, to work in order to better the circumstances of their families in Iran, and those who came as refugees during the events of the First World War.

In some sources, Kanda is said to have been a German village originally. According to this tradition, German migrants, from Vjuntenberg, came to Transcaucasia, settling in Georgia, beginning in 1817. The reason for this migration is as follows. The Bavarian pastor, Herr Cletter, interpreted the Holy Scripture, predicting that the world would end in 1838, and the new 1000-year reign of Christ would begin near Mount Ararat. He founded the field of study concerning the return of Christ, and the followers were called Chiliasts (derived from the Greek word "Chilios" = thousand). Alexander I, emperor of Russia, looked favorably on this group (countrymen of his mother) and granted them special privileges, settling them in Tbilisi and its provinces, including Luxemburg (now Gardabani), Asurethi and other areas near Tbilisi. The new immigrants felt that here they were close enough to Ararat, and built houses, churches, and planted vineyards



From left to right: Grisha, the author, and Benjamin

and farms. In 1941, after the surprise German attack on Soviet Union, all Germans living in that country, including inhabitants of Kanda, were rounded up and deported to Kazakhstan.

For many years, the Assyrian settlers in Kanda made a living by farming, using traditional methods. However, the small family farms could not provide for all the needs of the family; and, as a result, many failed forcing the farmers to move to neighboring towns for work, mostly as seasonal workers.

The Assyrians of Kanda were no exception. In early 1900's, like most farmers, they worked part-time as laborers, and practiced mixed farming and raising livestock for subsistence. They sold any surplus produce in neighboring cities to buy necessities.

Those villagers who worked in various trades are self-employed now. Some became trained craftsmen and moved to the colony that was established in Tbilisi, either on their own or with the help of friends and relatives who were already there. Today, very few individuals are en-



Rouza Isaeva

gaged in agriculture.

Orthodox Christians now comprise the majority of formerly Nestorian (Assyrian Church of the East) communities in Kanda.

During the Soviet period, the majority of rural population, including those living in Kanda, worked in collective agricultural units, so-called “*Sovkhozes*” and “*Kolkhozes*”. There was also the food processing industry, which processed and distributed the agricultural products throughout the centrally planned Soviet system. When the Soviet Union dissolved, the *sovkhozes* and *Kolkhozes* were abolished and their properties embezzled.

In the last two decades, due to radical economic reforms that were instituted after Georgia gained its independence, some villagers moved to Russia, mainly to Moscow, and started their own businesses. Nevertheless, Kanda still remains a large Assyrian community in Georgia.

Although the early settlement and history of the Assyrian community in Kanda is known, not much is written about assimilation in this region, a topic that requires research.

The degree to which the Assyrians of Kanda have adopted and been absorbed into Georgian culture and society is quite high. Several factors need to be considered in studying the process of assimilation.

Religion and religious beliefs and values are probably the most important of these factors. Being pious Christians, Assyrians share with their Georgian neighbors the same moral codes on all sorts of socio-cultural issues, embodied in their common religion. This facilitates mutual understanding and inter-ethnic cohesion. As there are no religious differences to prevent them from joining in communal prayer with the Georgians, the two groups frequently join in religious celebrations, especially on special



Every house has its own oven (*Tanuyra*), where the daily bread is baked. As in the old country, it is a deep pit sunk in the ground, with fire at the bottom. The dough is stuck on the sides for baking bread and other food stuffs are cooked in or on *Tanuyra*; for example, paschal pie.



In Kanda, there are artesian wells which supply the villagers with much needed drinking and cooking water. Today, powerful diesel pumps are used to draw irrigation water.

holidays.

Intermarriage is the most important factor, as it promotes integration as well as assimilation. All the villagers we spoke with said that intermarriage between Assyrians and Georgians from neighboring villages is becoming more common. In the early days, intermarriage between Assyrians and Georgians was uncommon, as socio-cultural boundaries between the two peoples were maintained. In general, the selection of spouse and marriage was more of an agreement between two families. Although young people may have met and fallen in love, hoping to marry; the final decision and arrangements were up to their parents. This traditional system was function-

ally consistent with the patrilineal extended household, which was more common in the past. Since 1955-60, intermarriage has had the effect of reducing the socio-cultural barriers between the two peoples, thereby facilitating future intermarriage. While Assyrian parents prefer that their children marry Assyrian, they no longer object as strongly when they marry Georgians, and the frequency of such marriages has increased. As we learned, there is no difference in the number of Assyrian men and women who marry outside their ethnic group.

The other factor, which cannot be overlooked, is race. Georgians are European in appearance. They tend to have light to medium complexion and medium to tall stature. Light brunette and blond hair and green eyes are common. These physical features are very attractive to Assyrians, we think, and have played no little role in promoting intermarriage between these two peoples.

Today, Assyrians learn their native language at home, and Assyrian is used only as the spoken language among community members. For public communication, the city dwellers use mainly Russian, except in Dzveli Kanda, where they are educated in Georgian and speak Georgian. Since no lessons in Assyrian have been included in the curriculum of local schools, the language is under serious threat from the process of assimilation. The elderly and middle-aged still maintain their linguistic identity; however, the younger generation in Dzveli Kanda largely prefers to communicate in Georgian. Many of the descendants of the original Assyrian immigrants now speak Georgian much more fluently than the language of their forefathers. Local Assyrian activists appeal to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the local school administration for the introduction of Assyrian in local schools, but without success.

Nevertheless, the Assyrians of Kanda have not undergone full assimilation, and continue to maintain their cultural roots and practice their ancient religious and cultural traditions.

“Languages are humankind’s principal tools for interacting and for expressing ideas, emotions, knowledge, memories and values. Languages are also primary vehicles of cultural expressions and intangible cultural heritage, essential to the identity of individuals and groups. Safeguarding endangered languages is thus a crucial task in maintaining cultural diversity worldwide,” UNESCO says in its report.

UNESCO runs safeguarding projects for languages in various countries, but no such programs are active in Turkey, where the official treatment of minority languages and cultures is subject to controversy due to politics, nationalism and separatism. One widely used minority language, Kurdish, recently received a boost when a state television station launched a channel broadcasting exclusively in Kurmanji Kurdish, giving hope to speakers of other widely used minority languages in Turkey such as Arabic and Syriac. But the future does not look so bright for less commonly used languages such as Zazaki.

Released last week, UNESCO’s Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger is based on the work of over 30 linguists and

intends to “raise awareness about language endangerment and the need to safeguard the world’s linguistic diversity.”

Turkey languages facing danger

- **Unsafe:** Abkhaz, Adyge, Zazaki, Kabard-Cherkes
- **Definitely endangered:** Abaza, Homshetsma, Laz, Pontus Greek, Romani, Suret, Western Armenian
- **Severely endangered:** Assyrian, Gagavuz, Ladino
- **Critically endangered:** Hértevin
- **Extinct:** Cappadocian Greek, Mlahso, Ubykh.

But the death of a language also has other implications. A language contains the memories and experiences, everything that explains and encapsulates a way of life; it's sad for the entire world.



Tamara Benjamin, San Francisco

Babylon in Hollywood



With the recent opening of the Babylon Ruins in Babylon, Iraq, it's difficult for those of us who haven't seen it to wrap our mind around what it must look like. Let alone the feelings or emotions it must conjure knowing that our ancestors are responsible for its existence. Sure there are many times someone describes something so vividly we can imagine it, but a structure of its stature is difficult. The *New York Times* published an article of the landmark's opening and the controversy surrounding the ruins to be used as a hotel and a public space (*Babylon Ruins Reopen in Iraq, to Controversy* May 2, 2009). The article had only one photo so there was a lot left to the imagination as to what it currently looks like.

No matter what becomes of the ruins, understanding its greatness is amazing, and almost unfathomable, specifically how it was planned and built in an era long before computers. For many of us, the reality of returning to visit is unrealistic or even years out. However, for those who may want to get an idea of the grandness or feelings it would create, should visit the Hollywood and Highland center located in the heart of Hollywood, California. The photos speak for themselves but attempt to give readers

the idea of its vastness. If Los Angeles is a destination in your future, this is a must see.

As you exit off the 101 freeway and drive down Highland Avenue, there's a curve in the road that creates a blind spot, but as soon as the billboard moves and you connect with what lies ahead, there's a moment of awe. Like a child opening a gift on Christmas, giddiness, excitement and surprise. The exterior is like the protective walls of a castle, what lies within is a mystery. But you don't have to come with your soldiers in tow to get behind these walls, all you need is a validation at the parking garage and you're in. You see the center is an open mall that caters to lots of shopping and most notably is the home of the Kodak theater, which hosts the infamous Oscar Awards. It has a beautiful fountain in the middle - great to run through during the hot months. The tree of life and enormous elephants stare down at you as if they are guarding your every move.

The architects, *Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects*, unfortunately were not available for comment as to what inspired the structure or why it was chosen. Their website also did not provide any detailed information.

The Assyrian Levies;

A Record of Gallantry

Solomon S. Solomon

It was the policy of the British to raise military units in all the parts of their empire. Some formations were small, but others, like the Indian Army, were huge. The subject of this article is a small army that the Royal Air Force raised in Iraq in 1922 for the purpose of protecting their air bases through out mandated Iraq. That force was call the Iraq Levies; it should have been called the Assyrian Levies, because it was recruited among Christian Assyrians, a tribal confederation that had its modern origin in southeastern Turkey until the advent of the Great War, when the Turkish Army chased these tribes across the border into Russian-occupied northwest Persia. Here, Tzarist Russians formed three battalions among the Assyrians who fought under Russian officers against Ottoman Army in the border area. Many of these Assyrians received the St. George Cross for bravery.

After the Bolshevik Revolution, the Tzarist Army of the Caucasus disintegrated and the Assyrians were forced to retreat towards the British base of Hamadan, in central Persia. Here, British officers trained a brigade among the Assyrians for the express purpose of reclaiming northwest Persia from the Turks. However, the Great War was to be settled on the western front and, in time, the Ottoman troops were to return home.

The British, not wanting to supply fifty thousand Assyrians from the stores of their army in Mesopotamia, marched the entire Assyrian nation to refugee camps in Iraq in time to use Assyrian battalions to quell the Great Arab Rebellion of 1920, in Iraq.

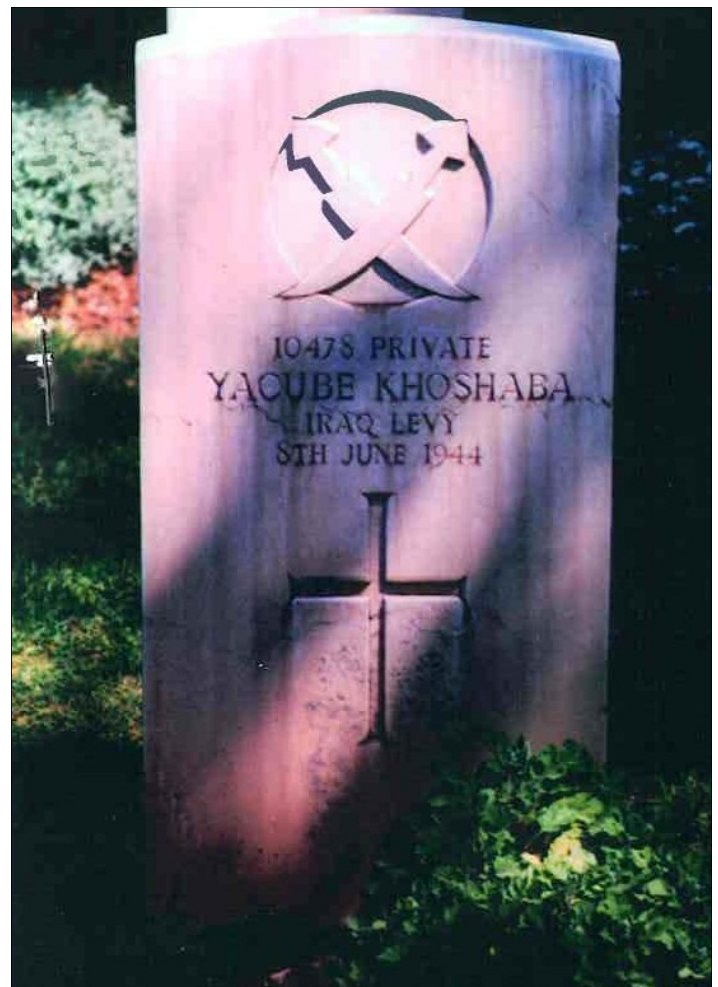
In 1922, Sir Hugh Trenchard, the father of the Royal Air Force, proposed that the British responsibility in Iraq could be fulfilled more economically by the use of air

power, but that air bases needed ground troops for protection; so, several Assyrian Levy battalions were raised for this purpose. During the 1920s, British air power, supported by levy ground troops, were able to pacify northern Iraq. In 1923, levy troops, operating under Col. H. T. Dobbin, were able to defeat Kurdish forces assisted by Turks in Rowanduz and were awarded the General Service Medal with Bar Kurdistan. Again, in 1932, the Assyrians were able to quell a Kurdish uprising by Sheikh Ahmad of Barazan, in the area of Diana-Erbil-Aqra, and were awarded General Service Medal (1918-1962) with Bar Northern Kurdistan. Following the creation of the Iraq Active Service Medal in 1926, many Assyrians received this medal from the government of Iraq for operations in Kurdistan, as did many British officers.

In 1928, the levy force was reduced in size and moved to



Assyrian Levy soldiers blasting away with their Vickers heavy machine-guns in Habbaniya, in 1942



Grave of an Assyrian Levy soldier, in a British military cemetery, north of Tehran, Iran.

Hanaidi RAF Base, near Baghdad. In 1936, the British built a new base in Habbaniya, west of Baghdad. This base was to play an important part in World War II.

In May 1941, Iraqi forces loyal to the pro-axis prime minister, attacked Habbaniya, but were repulsed by British aircraft and Assyrian levies. They were chased down the road all the way to Baghdad. Here, the British increased the size of the levies to over six thousand men who were used to guard British installations in the Middle East. In 1943, the Iraq levies were renamed the Royal Air Force Levies - Iraq. The Assyrians received the 1939 - 1945 Star, Italy Star, and War Medal. A number were decorated for

gallantry. In 1947, it was decided to award levy personnel who had completed eighteen years "Qualifying Service", the RAF Long Service and Good Conduct Medal with clasp "Royal Air Force Levies - Iraq". Altogether, 114 medals were awarded to officers. A further 188 medals were awarded to enlisted personnel.

Amid pomp and ceremony, the levy force was disbanded on May 2, 1955 in Habbaniya, in the presence of King Faisal II of Iraq and the British ambassador. Also present was Air Vice Marshal Brookes, the last air officer commanding in Iraq.



assyrian heritage

custom-designed tees crafted with our pride

www.assyrianheritage.com



The concept behind *Assyrian Heritage Tees* sparked when Christine had the realization there was a dire need for cool tees representing the pride over two million Assyrians across the globe share. The vision behind the first collection was to channel such deep pride in the culture, history, triumphs as well as the desire to create awareness of today's unrecognized plight back in our homeland through distinctive graphics on super-quality tees.

The collection launched in 2007 after several years of experimenting with screen-print techniques, searching for new trendy washes, and creating prints in tune with the current fashion trends. The garments were then chosen for their super-soft touch, bold colors, and fitted

silhouettes. They were then screenprinted with distressed prints incorporating Assyrian icons, the national flag, and Assyrian typography. Each garment exudes the utmost care and passion for detail, craftsmanship, and an individualistic look.

Assyrian Heritage continues to push boundaries with mixing the ancient with the new for an exciting look unseen by other brands. Representing the Assyrian spirit has generated effervescence and buzz across many borders. With its commitment to translate a dynamic heritage graphically and its motivation to offer only the best quality garments, Assyrian Heritage delivers a hand-crafted approach to express majestic Assyrian pride.



Meet Professor Paul Barsom

An interview by Dr. Ninwe Maraha

NM: Shlomo/Shlama Professor Barsom

How would you describe yourself and your background? Who is Prof. Paul Barsom?

I'm the son of a U.S. Air Force fighter pilot, whose father emigrated to the United States from eastern Turkey via Beirut around 1921. He came with his brother and settled in Springfield, MA. As to who I am, I'm still finding that part out. I'd say I'm a composer/performer who teaches at a university and has some unfulfilled dreams that get me out of bed every morning.

NM: What do you do?

I'm an Associate Professor of Music Composition at Penn State University. I'm also a composer/performer of my own music but the university job pays the bills for now and lets me send my kids to school without going broke.

NM: Has your ethnic background as an Assyrian helped you to become who you are?

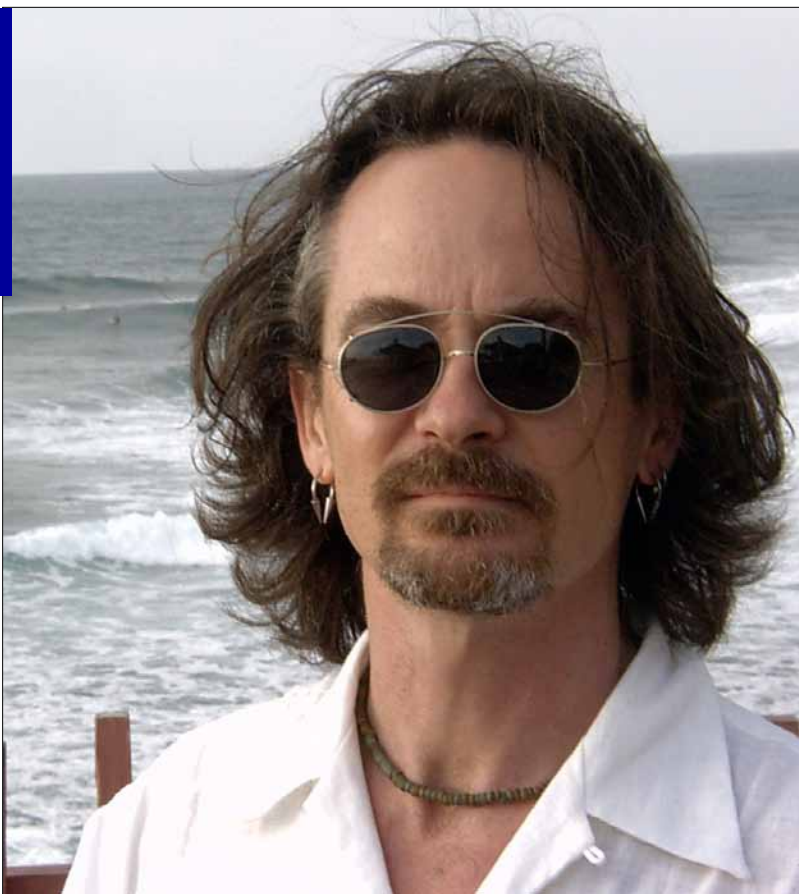
It's made me aware of social injustices in the world like those that lead to diasporas of the kind that brought my grandfather here, among other things. I'm also beginning to sense that it has something to do with my temperament. I'm pretty intense and passionate about the things that matter to me. That seems to be a common Assyrian trait and unlike anyone on my mother's side of the family.

NM: What attracted you to the music field?

Probably when my oldest brother brought home a guitar and amplifier when I was about four. I remember asking him that if he wasn't using it by the year 2000, if could I have it. I remember he thought that was a pretty pathetic request. I wish I had that guitar now.

NM: What inspired you to pursue academia within music?

Probably a combination of real interest in the music that gets taught in university music departments (mostly western classical music from about 1100-present) but also the security, stability and, presumably, the intellectual climate of a university, though most of one's colleagues tend to be practicing performers and not as interested in intellectual exchange about music as I'd anticipated as a student.



NM: Which instruments do you play?

I'm primarily a guitarist, including most types of that instrument (electric 6-string, 4, 5 and 6-string bass guitar, classical, steel string flat-top, etc.) but I've also studied and performed actively on double bass, piano, synthesizers, recorder, and a few other things. I'm also a singer and will be exploring that part of my performing toolbox quite a bit over the next few years. Other than that I'm an instrumental omnivore and will try to play just about anything. I don't play any specifically Assyrian or Middle Eastern instruments, aside from the fact that most of the instruments I play are descended from those invented in the Middle East. The guitar is the direct descendant of various forms of lute (like the 'Oud) that are still important in music of that region, for example.

NM: Has it been difficult to follow a career in academics?

Not really, except for trying to raise small children while earning a doctorate and finding a job. That was stressful, but typical for many of your readers, I'd expect. Other than that it was just a matter of keeping my head down and forging ahead, while trying to ignore things that didn't matter at the time.

NM: When you teach your students at the Pennsylvania State University, do you speak of Assyrian music?

Not specifically, except either as part of my own history or as an example of the history of any kind of music. Unfortunately, there seems to be a little bit of haze surrounding the original music of Assyria. Aside from a few written asides that mention music and instruments, as well as some pictorial evidence, carvings, and so forth, we don't know very much about that music, it's practice or theory. It's hard to know, then how it relates to modern Assyrian music, most of which I know in the form of vernacular song writing and seems to have input from many different stylistic and cultural influences. Given the cultural cross-roads where Assyria lies and the amount of time involved, teasing apart the different influences that have shaped the evolution of that music is beyond my scope as a scholar. I do talk about the Middle East a bit since it's the source for all our major musical instruments as well as our concepts of music theory.

NM: Do you listen to Assyrian music? Any favorites?

I have, just to fill in my experience, but I can't say I'm filled in enough to say I have favorite artists. To offer that opinion would suggest that I'm more knowledgeable than I am about what makes this music "good" or not. But I'm open to suggestions for listening from any of your readers.

NM: Any musical idols?

Pretty much anyone who composes music that has an honest "voice" and not to satisfy some pre-formed aesthetic demand. For example, I'm not much of a fan of the part of the music industry that produces albums by singers who don't compose their music. Sometimes good art gets made that way, but it's rare and sometimes only because of the sheer commercial and cultural force that record companies still have. The internet is changing that, though. So my musical idols are many and varied, from Stravinsky to The Shins, and don't have much in common except the truth and quality of their work, though even Beethoven had an off day now and then. All these folks are only human and trying to do the hardest, most abstract thing humans do: create aesthetically resonant art out of vibrations in the air. That's kind of weird, actually. When you think about it that way, it makes composing seem like a daring and risky act, which I guess it is, at least on a personal level. It's very easy to fail or not be very good at this activity.

NM: What would you like to say to our Assyrian youth who are interested in studying music?

Make sure you're doing what you love. Exactly what you love most, if you can. The hard thing about seriously studying something that one has done mostly for pleasure is that it becomes work. It's easy for the magic and juice to leak away and you find yourself simply laboring at it. I've seen that kill the ambitions of many music students. If you can find a way to keep it a game, a serious one, but a game all the same, you'll be able to persevere and be the

best your talent will let you be. I almost didn't do that but time and circumstances saved my career in that regard. One of the frustrations of an academic career has been the narrow-minded common assumption that a composer's creative work resides only in the field of classical music. Well, classical music is my second language, not my first, that being vernacular song, mostly American and British rock and pop. So, in the interest of getting tenure and supporting my family, I wrote for orchestras and chamber groups for years and some of that music wasn't very satisfying to me. It was like being a native English speaker with a PhD in Spanish writing novels in Spanish. There can't be the same depth of feel for the language and after a while you'd stop doing it and switch to English. I decided a long time ago that tenure and a sabbatical would provide me with the time and support to revive the songwriter in me. I wrote 25 songs on a one-semester sabbatical in 2005 and have been polishing and learning them since. I'll start performing them within the next couple of months and it will be a whole new career path for me. So I was lucky or foolish enough to take the structure of academia and turn it around to suit my purposes. But I couldn't do that until I'd become pretty desperate to get back to what really mattered to me.



Paul Barsom playing with the band Big Bang Theory

Perch Family and Sunnyland Bulghur Company

Fresno, California

1930-1977



Harry Perch, an Assyrian immigrant, came to the United States from Turkey in early 1920's, when he was in his twenties. He had to leave his wife and three children in his homeland for seven years until he could bring them to America. Harry founded his company that he named *California Sun Dry Company* on Fulton Street in downtown Fresno in the back of Illbeg's Market. He later built a new plant under the same name on Cedar and Ventura Avenue. Later his two brothers-in-law, Simon and Manuel Barsam, joined him. Eventually, Harry and his sons, George and Jivon, started what would become *Sunnyland Bulghur Company* in 1930 in a metal building on a large commercial lot located at 1435 Gearhart Avenue in Fresno. Today it is known as *Sunnyland Mills*, the largest producer of premium bulgur in the country. The *Arrowhead Mills*, *Near East* and *Sadaf* brands of bulgur are all from *Sunnyland Mills*, as is the bulk organic bulgur found at *Whole Foods*. Unlike Turkish bulgur, most of which is made from durum wheat and has a golden color, *Sunnyland Mills* bulgur comes from soft white wheat and is light brown.

George spent a great deal of time in Paso Robles on the Central coast of California each summer finding and purchasing the high quality wheat that was needed to manufacture bulghur. George contracted with various farmers to grow the special type of wheat that he needed. George did the purchasing. He was also the bookkeeper and repaired the machinery when necessary. Jivon was the plant manager. He maintained on-site personnel, scheduling, inventory and supervised the retail side of the business. Jivon was in charge of all written correspondence for the business.



The cooking of the wheat occurred from March to October; because the sun was hot enough to dry the cooked wheat on screens in

the yard. The steaming hot wheat was scooped out of the cookers made of deep open steel kettles recessed in brick and heated with natural gas. It was then transported by wheel barrow and placed on the raised screens to dry. Twice a day it was raked by hand to allow even drying of the berries. This sun drying process took three days in the hot California sun. After the wheat was dry, it was stored in burlap sacks. This was the way it was done prior to installing a dehydrator which was later used for year-round production.

The dried wheat was then ground in special grinders and sifted into distinct sizes. Bulgur was sold in 100 pound burlap sacks with the same logo that is used today.

World War II had a tremendous and impor-



product. The Orlando family changed the name to *Sunnyland Mills* and has continued in ownership ever since. In fact, today Mike and Steve Orlando are the third set of brothers to own and manage *Sunnyland*.

Harry Perch worked at *Sunnyland Bulghur Company* until his 80's and died in 1974. George Perch died in 1994 and Jivon Perch died in 1997.

Mary Perch, Jivon's widow still lives in Fresno near the plant that was located on Gearhart Avenue.

Bulgur is the meat of the poor. The grain does provide some protein, but as ancient cooks seemed to intuit, it lacks an essential amino acid found in legumes. Pairing bulgur with lentils or chickpeas, as Middle Eastern recipes routinely do, completes the protein.

tant effect on *Sunnyland Bulghur Company*. The company received a defense contract that required the utilization of cracked wheat used to feed our soldiers and to sand blast aluminum airplane parts. This required the plant to be in use twenty-four hours a day.

The early competitors to *Sunnyland Bulghur Company* were the *Armeno Cereal Company*, located near Boston and *Fisher Mills Company* in Seattle, Washington. By the 1970's, *Sunnyland Bulghur Company* was without any real competition on the Western Hemisphere. The company started exporting to Brazil, Venezuela and to parts of Central America.

In 1977, George and Jivon sold *Sunnyland Bulghur Company* to Carl and John Orlando. They chose the Orlando brothers because they had similar business ethics and the same relentless pursuit to produce a top quality food



Modest Start Preceded Moorad's rise

Baseball was a constant throughout Jeff Moorad's long, interesting journey from Modesto to running the Padres



Modesto is a dusty, undistinguished town in the heart of California's endless Central Valley, heavy in agriculture and food packaging industries, the setting for the 1973 film *American Graffiti*, a place that by many accounts lives up to its name. Modesto being Spanish for modest.

This is where Jeff Moorad, the new CEO and eventual majority owner of the San Diego Padres, was born. Where he grew up, the great grandson of Assyrian immigrants who left Persia (modern-day Iran) because, as Christians, they were strongly encouraged to relocate by Muslims. His was the third generation of the family from Modesto. Both his parents and his sister attended Modesto Junior College, as would he.

"A modest, middle-class upbringing," he says.

When he was in high school, his father worked for Tillie Lewis, the so-called "Tomato Queen" for owning the second largest tomato packing company in the world. One day, Lewis and her husband asked Moorad if he wanted to

make a few extra bucks by fetching one of their cars from their second home in Palm Desert and driving it back north.

The car was a black stretch limousine.

Moorad flew to Palm Desert and began driving. Before delivery, he stopped to play his regular one-on-one basketball game with buddy Tom Callan on Callan's driveway hoop. Moorad lost. The bet was an Icee at the local convenience store.

"We drove up in the limo," Moorad says, a wry smile creasing his closely-cropped beard. "I pretended like I was the chauffeur and went back there to find out what kind of Icee the passenger wanted. People were stretching their necks to see who was inside."

It wasn't the last time Moorad rode in a limousine.

It was the last time he would drive one.

• • •

Moorad would negotiate the blockbuster eight-year,

It wasn't the last time Moorad rode in a limousine.

It was the last time he would drive one.

\$160 million contract for free agent outfielder Manny Ramirez with the Boston Red Sox.

He would partner with super-agent Leigh Steinberg to build one of the biggest sports representation firms in history, negotiating an estimated \$3 billion worth of contracts from which they earned the standard 4 or 5 percent commission.

He would appear on *The Sporting News'* annual list of the 100 Most Powerful People in Sports eight times.

He would buy a NASCAR auto racing team.

He would have a 35-minute private meeting with President George W. Bush in the Oval Office last summer – or as Moorad says Bush calls it, “the Oval.”

But before all that, before he rode in the back of limousines instead of driving them, Moorad was a star-struck UCLA transfer student from Modesto Junior College. A girl in his dorm dated football great Jim Brown. One of the actors from “*The Brady Bunch*” lived down the hall. On the way to class he walked past tennis courts where Farrah Fawcett, the '70s heartthrob, regularly played.

“It was eye-opening, coming from a small town,” says Moorad, now 53. “You don’t think of your hometown as being small until you leave ... My senior year (at UCLA) I lived in the maid’s

quarters of a Bel Air mansion. I worked for a Beverly Hills plastic surgeon who had two Rolls-Royces and a Bentley. The irony was, I could see the dorm that I lived in the year before from the tennis court in the backyard.

“I used to pick up my girlfriend at the dorm in one of the Rolls-Royces. I felt like a big shot.”

Moorad left for Philadelphia and received a law degree from Villanova University, then returned to Newport Beach and worked for a litigation firm. Six months later, he was in the partner’s office explaining that he wanted to represent pro athletes instead.

He got a \$10,000 loan from his father, another \$5,000 from a cousin.

“The days,” Moorad says, “when I lived in fear of the question: So, who do you represent?”

The first player he tried to recruit was basketball star Larry Bird. Moorad sleuthed out his phone number, called him and asked if he could be his agent. Bird politely declined.

“I was crushed but understood,” Moorad says. “I had no credentials.”

His big break came in 1984, when he signed five members of the U.S. Olympic baseball team, which at the time consisted exclusively of collegians. He didn’t get USC’s Mark McGwire, but he did get Will Clark, Rafael Palmeiro, B.J. Surhoff, Scott Bankhead and Chris Gwynn. Gwynn was the younger brother of Tony Gwynn, and most agents, Chris says, just assumed he would sign with his brother’s agent.

“Jeff just called me up and asked the question,” Chris

Gwynn, currently a Padres scout, recalls. “I met with him, and he met my family. It was a slam dunk. I felt really comfortable. I felt like he had my best interests at heart.”

Moorad soon joined forces with Steinberg, who had gained a reputation for cornering the market on NFL quarterbacks, and moved to Berkeley.

“I rented a room in a house with literally a mattress on the floor and a phone,” Moorad says. “That’s all I needed. Two months later, we had four of the top 12 picks in the NFL draft. It was learn by fire.”

They made a great team. Steinberg recruited the athletes and handled client relations. Moorad pushed up his sleeves and negotiated the contracts. The clients were all Hollywood; the negotiations were all Modesto.

Moorad’s father was a food purchaser in the Central Valley, first for a milk company, then for the tomato queen, then Gallo Winery.

“I learned early on that sticker prices were just that,” Moorad says. “Often if you asked the price could change, and if you pushed it could change dramatically.”

• • •

***He got a \$10,000 loan from his father,
another \$5,000 from a cousin.***

Moorad thought it was a pulled groin. So he called Eric Karros, then a first baseman with the Los Angeles Dodgers and one of his clients, and asked what he should do for a pulled groin. Ice, rest, maybe some gentle stretching.

But his leg didn’t feel any better, and then he started feeling sick. Really sick. When his temperature reached 106 degrees, his wife loaded him in the back seat of the car and drove him to an emergency room near their home in Newport Beach. The next morning, an infectious disease doctor was ordering a magnetic resonance imaging test.

“He put a filter on the MRI that would show anything that was infected,” Moorad says, “and my right leg lit up like a Christmas tree. And he said, ‘Jeff, I need to take you to surgery. Immediately.’”

Necrotizing fasciitis.

A very rare and very lethal flesh-eating bacteria that quickly spreads through tissues and begins attacking the body’s vital organs. If it isn’t caught early and treated aggressively, your life quickly enters the bottom of the ninth inning.

Moorad would have seven surgeries over nine days and spend a month in the hospital while the diseased tissue was meticulously cut away. Doctors later told him they thought they’d lost him. Twice.

“A life-changing experience,” Moorad says.

This was 1997, and Moorad’s sports agency was thriving. At one point, he and Steinberg represented 25 NFL quarterbacks. They also had an All-Star roster of baseball players: Will Clark, Matt Williams, Raul Mondesi, Manny Ramirez, Mo Vaughn, Rafael Palmeiro, Travis Lee,

(Continued on page 28)

(Continued from page 27)

Shawn Green, CC Sabathia, Ivan Rodriguez, Luis Gonzalez.

But a month in the hospital, with doctors and nurses hovering over him, with the specter of death never far away either, gave him time to think.

"To reassess and re-prioritize my life," as he puts it. "I began to think about the second half of my life in a different way."

He emerged a more religious man. He also had planted the seeds of a profound and largely unprecedented career switch, from one side of the negotiating table to the other, from the guy trying to compel franchises to overspend on a free agent to trying to prevent it.

"You know how guys are when they're young, they're driven, there aren't enough hours in the day," Chris Gwynn says. "After Jeff got sick, I did notice – I don't know the word – that he was probably more in touch with what was going on around him. Maybe the trees and flowers became a little brighter, I don't know."

"But I definitely noticed something."

A year later, Moorad joined the Orange County chapter of the Young President's Organization, an exclusive collection of the country's best and brightest (and richest) executives. The seeds began to grow.

"YPO truly expanded my business bandwidth," Moorad says. "It gave me a network that I'd never had. The agent business is a bit of a renegade business where it's hard to have friends other than my partner and other lawyers in the firm. It's hard to have trusting relationships with anybody in the agent business."

"It made me start thinking as a principal rather than in the derivative mindset as an agent."

Says Jan, his wife of 18 years: *"There was a little bit of a lack of balance in his life. It's hard to maintain your family life and be an agent because you're constantly traveling. You're not just dealing with one team. I think he kind of got tired of it. I think he was getting stale. He was still driven. I just think he needed different challenges."*

So he cashed out. In 1999, Moorad and Steinberg sold their agency for a reported \$74 million plus two spin-off sports ventures for another \$38 million. He still represented athletes, but he put together a group of investors that quietly "kicked the tires" of several pro franchises on the market – a baseball team, a basketball team, even a hockey team.

"He left a thriving agency," says Greg Genske, who took over Moorad's agency and the 70 pro clients he left behind. "It was certainly a risk, but I think he was prepared

for it. He was ready to spread his wings."

In July 2004 Moorad got a call from Arizona Diamondbacks minority owner Ken Kendrick. Kendrick and two other members of the ownership group had decided to split with Jerry Colangelo amid \$200 million-plus of debt. They wanted someone to come in as a minority partner and run the club.

Baseball gulped.

It was one of those rare occasions when the players' union and the commissioner's office actually agreed on something: That having an agent become an owner was a scary proposition.

The union feared Moorad would share proprietary information about contract negotiations with the other side – a

double agent, so to speak. MLB executives were still simmering over the 2000 free agent derby for Ramirez that Moorad allowed ESPN cameras to chronicle, including at least one conversation that New York Yankees General Manager Brian Cashman claims was supposed to be confidential.

There also was the op-ed piece Moorad authored in *The Sporting News* during the 1994 baseball strike.

"The fans care about the game," he wrote. "The players care about the game. The owners

don't care about either. What they care about is grabbing more money and more power over the national pastime."

Moorad laughs.

"Different time, different perspective," he says.

They reached a compromise: Moorad could be CEO of the Diamondbacks and a minority owner, but he couldn't receive a paycheck for the first six months during baseball's vetting process and he couldn't represent the club at owner's meetings.

Eventually the lines blurred and fellow owners no longer felt threatened by him, even as the Diamondbacks erased their debt and went from a 111-loss season in 2004 to the brink of the World Series in 2007. By the end of his tenure in Arizona, Moorad was attending owners meetings and Major League Baseball smoothly approved his plans to incrementally buy the Padres from a group led by John Moores.

One of Moorad's final contract negotiations as an agent was for Matt Bush, the star-crossed shortstop from Mission Bay High. The Padres had the No. 1 pick in baseball's 2004 amateur draft and considered taking higher-profile players, but feared not being able to afford them if their agents played hardball. Moorad convinced the Padres to cut a deal with Bush, the local kid, before the draft.

Bush got a \$3.1 million signing bonus, a Padres record for a draft pick.



An Appeal From The AFA

There are over 2,500 Assyrian families living as refugees in Syria under conditions so pitiful that the people are desperately trying to stay alive with some feeling of dignity. The Assyrian Foundation of America helps support them, the needy, the elderly with illnesses, families with young children, those with no help, and the groups there who are trying to form schools so that the children don't lose out on their education. This year the Foundation made a contribution of \$19,600 to the refugees in Syria, which has made a great improvement in their lives. In addition we have been very concerned with the condition of Assyrians living in their villages in Armenia. Assyrian-Americans who have visited there have all reported on the desperate conditions of many Assyrians. Some of the visitors were so moved by the heart-rending conditions they saw that they gave all the money they had with them to the people there. The Foundation will send \$10,400 before the end of this year to help the Assyrians in Armenia. That makes a total of \$30,000 in direct aid to the needy. How do we do it? Because of you, because you care about the lives of our brothers and sisters there, because you know that but for a few fateful events it could have been any one of us living under those conditions.

From the beginning of its establishment in 1964 the Foundation has been dedicated to helping the needy and advancing the education of Assyrians. We have a number of bright young Assyrian students we are supporting with scholarships who are working toward advanced degrees in Assyriology and related Assyrian studies. These students are not simply studying for a Ph.D. degree. They are dedicating their entire lives for Assyrians. They will become the professors of the future, carry out research that advances knowledge about Assyrians, teach courses in college about Assyrians, write books and articles, attend conferences, give speeches, train students to get advanced degrees, etc. In other words, they will keep the flame of Assyrian history and identity burning bright in the academic world and for all Assyrians. This year we have given \$29,000 in scholarships for these students. Listen to some of their comments after they received their scholarship: "I am extremely honored and humbled. I am in my first semester of my Ph.D. degree in Assyriology at Yale University and absolutely loving it." Another student says "I am thankful for this grant which has aided me in continuing to write Assyrian related articles and attend conferences. You do amazing work." Another student: "I would like to express my gratitude to the Foundation for the scholarship you gave me. It is natural for me to try to give something back to the Assyrian nation by establishing Assyrian studies as part of my research." Another: "I would like to thank you for your undying support of good causes, and young Assyrians working their way in academics. You are one of the few institutions we have that are making a difference." Still another: "I cannot express my gratitude in mere words. I just hope that one day I will be able to do the very thing you have done for other emerging Assyrian scholars." And still another: "I cannot thank you enough for this scholarship. It not only means a great deal to me financially but to know that the support comes from an Assyrian organization like the Foundation."

And now it's up to you. The continuation of these wonderful programs next year is entirely in your hands. May you find it in your heart to help us carry them out.

**Please mail tax deductible gift, which will be acknowledged in Nineveh Magazine, to:
Assyrian Foundation of America, P.O. Box 2660, Berkeley, CA 94702
Or go to assyrianfoundation.org, click on "Nineveh Magazine" and go to PayPal**

(Continued from page 28)

Less than two weeks later, the 18-year-old Bush was arrested outside a nightclub near the team's spring training facility and charged with felony assault and misdemeanor trespassing, disorderly conduct and alcohol consumption by a minor. Last month, after several more run-ins with the law, the Padres traded Bush – who has never advanced past the Single-A level of the minor leagues – to the Toronto Blue Jays.

The irony, of course, is as Padres CEO and eventual owner, one of Moorad's primary objectives is not to sign any more Matt Bushes.

"At the end of the day, I want to win," Moorad says. "I won't rest until the Padres win a World Series ... I think you can win even in a smaller to medium-sized market (like San Diego) with a smaller to medium-sized payroll.

We just have to be better and smarter than our competition."

Mays was Moorad's first sports idol, and his first baseball memory was sitting on his grandfather's lap at the 1962 World Series between the San Francisco Giants and New York Yankees. He was 7.

Frank Shaw, his grandfather, was a baseball player himself, laboring 16 years with the Modesto Reds in the early 1900s. According to family lore, Shaw would be offered a chance to play in the big leagues but turned it down because, baseball salaries being what they were back then, he needed to stay home and support the family. They had a meat-packing business in Modesto.

"I often wonder," Moorad says, "what he'd say if he knew what I did today."

Literature Search

Book Reviews:

Assyrian-English-Assyrian Dictionary.

Editor-in-chief: Simo Parpola; associate editors: Zack Cherry, Mikko Luukko, Greta Van Buylaere. The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2007. xxii-289 pp. Paper: \$75.00.

This handsome volume, an offering from the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project under Simo Parpola's direction, combines a specialized dictionary of the two forms of Akkadian used in the Neo-Assyrian period (Neo-Assyrian and Standard Babylonian) with the first-ever English-Akkadian dictionary. For many years, the glossaries of the individual volumes of the *State Archives of Assyria* series, which offer translations and attestations of all included words, have been used by many as an unofficial Neo-Assyrian dictionary. However, to apply the glossaries in this way is not always straightforward because some feature lemmata in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian side by side and without distinction whereas the translations of certain terms differ from volume to volume. But, while this new dictionary does not contain attestations, its Assyrian-English part combines and synthesizes the information from the glossaries and moreover from all data of the remaining Nineveh materials as well as from the texts from the other Neo-Assyrian sites, most importantly Nimrud and Assur, in addition to the lexical material from the contemporary royal inscriptions and literary texts composed in Standard Babylonian, the language of learning and tradition. The book is therefore of interest for anyone working with the various cuneiform text sources of the Neo-Assyrian period. Especially, in combination with another publication of the Helsinki project, J. Hämeen-Anttila, *A Sketch of Neo-Assyrian Grammar* (*State Archives of Assyria Studies* 13; Helsinki 2000), the book will further enable and facilitate access to the primary sources in the Neo-Assyrian, edited and unedited alike. But, the aim of the book is twofold. As the editor-in-chief, Simo Parpola, states in his introduction (p. viii) the book is also meant to

be an instrument "for composing new texts in the relevant languages, be it for purposes of experimental research and teaching, or simply fun". The latter objective may appeal also to speakers of Eastern Neo-Aramaic dialects (the Modern Assyrians) in whose phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon, according to Parpola (p. xii), "many Assyrian features still survive". A member of the Modern Assyrian community of Chicago has in part sponsored the publica-

tion (p. viii). In order to allow the creation of new Assyrian texts, the possible English translations offered for the Assyrian terms are deliberately generous in number and often include additional meanings harvested from Eastern Neo-Aramaic parallels (p. vii, xvi). The English-Assyrian part has therefore many more entries (23,000, pp. 137-289) than the Assyrian-English part (13,000, pp. 1-135). But as all reconstructed meanings, and words, are marked with various symbols identifying their origins (explained on p. xxii), even purists will not find the solely Assyriological value of the book diminished.

-Karen Radner, University College London.

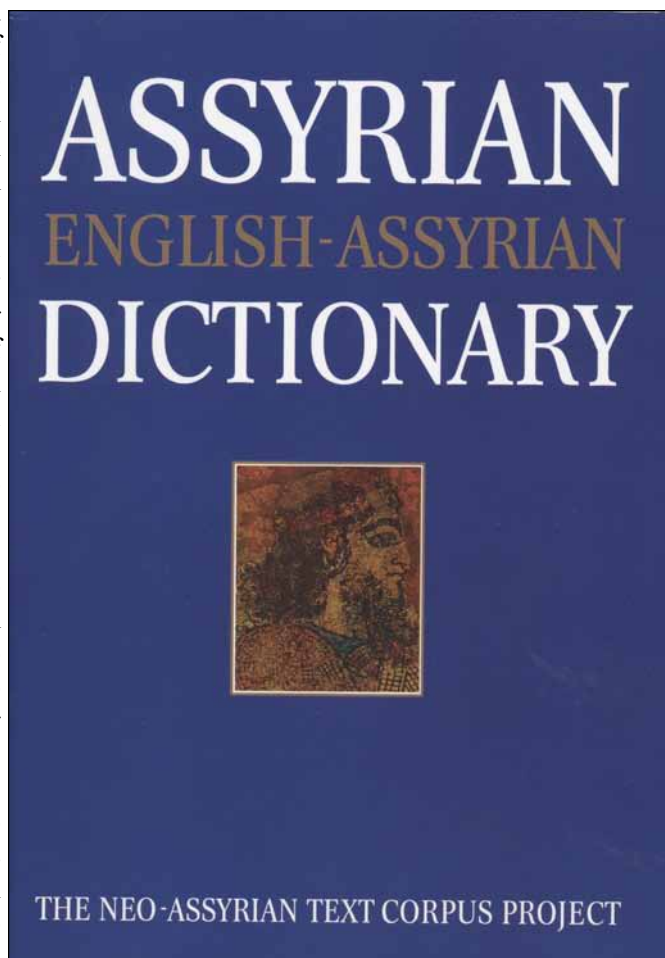
Languages of Iraq, Ancient and Modern,

edited by J.N. Postgate. British School of Archeology in

Iraq, 2007. x + 187pp. Paper. \$37.50.

This volume actually represents the proceedings of a "study-day" held in 2003 at the British School of Archaeology in Iraq (since 2007 called British Institute for the Study of Iraq), though as the volume title suggests, the organization of the book is more akin to a reference work. Following a very brief introduction by the editor (pp. 1-3) there are eight chapters, each devoted to a language or dialect.

The first chapter (pp. 5-30), written by the late Jeremy Black, is on Sumerian. The chapter begins with a definition of Sumerian and its historical phases, and gives a very brief account of its decipherment. The bulk of the chapter, however, is a handy grammatical sketch of the language, followed by a sample text given with translation and



grammatical notes.

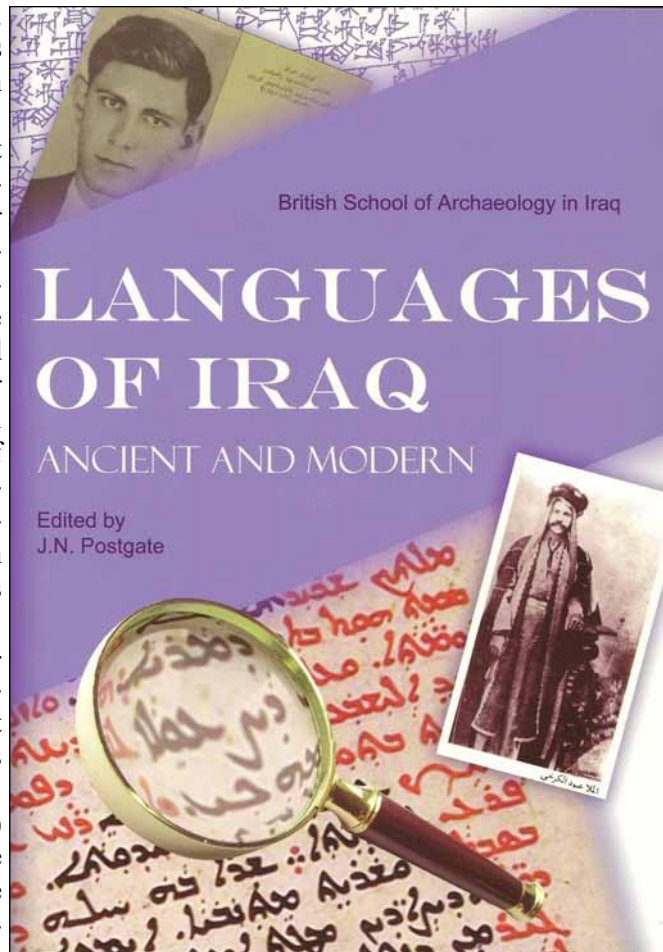
The second chapter (pp. 31-71), entitled “Babylonian and Assyrian: A History of Akkadian,” by Andrew George, is quite different from the preceding one. Black’s chapter on Sumerian is devoted mostly to grammar, while George’s chapter is solely a history of Akkadian, covering its earliest to latest attestations. This is not at all a criticism, because this chapter contains a wealth of information. George gives an overview of all the various Babylonian and Assyrian dialects, including non-standard peripheral dialects and what George calls “International Akkadian” (which others might include under the rubric Peripheral Akkadian). In fact, this chapter provides perhaps the best overview of Akkadian dialects published to date. George defines each dialect clearly, puts each in its historical context, outlines the major text corpora for each, and provides many references for further reading. Overall, George provides well over a hundred references, making this chapter a very valuable reference tool for scholars from a variety of fields. Missing is only a discussion of the grammatical features that characterize each dialect, but, such a work has yet to be published by anyone.

Chapter 3, “Hurrian” (pp. 73-84) is written by David Hawkins. The author notes that “almost no actual Hurrian texts have been found in Iraq” (p. 75), but, he argues (logically) that the ample evidence for the presence of Hurrians at notable Iraqi sites justifies the inclusion of Hurrian in this volume.

This short chapter is mostly a discussion of the Hurrians and the areas in which they lived, though the author appends a two-page list of selected features of Hurrian grammar, compiled by G. Wilhelm.

The next three chapters are devoted to dialects of Aramaic. It is perhaps surprising that Aramaic should get so much attention, but, the editor explains in the preface (p. 3) that this is because Aramaic can “be tracked through 30 centuries.” The same thing could be said of Akkadian, of course, but, the three chapters on Aramaic, written by three different scholars, do add much to the volume. The first of these (pp. 85-94), entitled “Early Aramaic”, is written by Alan Millard. Millard begins by discussing the place of Aramaic within Semitic, and lists some of its characteristic features. This discussion is marred by the

author’s misleading use of the term “West Semitic” to refer only to Aramaic and the Canaanite languages. The rest of the chapter is an overview of the use of Aramaic in Mesopotamia from the Assyrian through the early Hellenistic period, a span of time in which Aramaic is unfortunately not well attested in this region. Millard includes some discussion of orthographic and grammatical changes as well. One statement should be challenged –namely, that in Imperial Aramaic “the jussive form of the verb has prefixed *l*”. As I have shown elsewhere, only in the Old Aramaic inscription of Tell Tekheriye is a jussive form with prefixed *l*–attested.



The second chapter on Aramaic (pp. 95-113), is written by Geoffrey Khan, is entitled “Aramaic in the Medieval and Modern Periods.” The author briefly discusses the various inscriptional dialects known from the early part of the Common Era and then presents a useful overview of the Aramaic dialects that have been spoken (or written) in Iraq over the last two millennia, including Syriac, Jewish Babylonian, and Mandaic. Finally, he discusses the many Neo-Aramaic dialects that were spoken in Iraq until the upheavals of the last century. Khan puts each dialect (ancient and modern) in its historical context, and for many he includes some discussion of phonological or morphological developments. Khan is a leading figure in the field of Aramaic studies, especially in Neo-Aramaic studies, and it is unfortunate that his own important works are omitted from the

list of further readings at the end of this chapter.

The final chapter on Aramaic in this volume seems somewhat out of place. Whereas all other chapters focus on either the history or grammar of a particular language or dialect, the chapter called “Fieldwork in Aramaic” (pp. 115-122), by Eleanor Coghill, is rather personal account of linguistic fieldwork, describing how and where the author has gone about collecting data on Neo-Aramaic. This is not to say that the chapter is uninteresting or without value; on the contrary, Coghill provides several enjoyable anecdotes stemming from her research, as well as good advice on conducting fieldwork. This chapter concludes with a brief story given in the Christian Neo-Aramaic dialect of Alqosh (northern Iraq), which presumably is published here for the first time. The chapter overall might

not fit in structurally with the other chapters, but it serves to inject a human, personal element into the story of languages in Iraq.

If it is not surprising that this volume has three chapters devoted to Aramaic, it is certainly surprising that it has just one short chapter dedicated to Arabic. The chapter “Colloquial Iraqi Arabic” (pp. 123-134), by Clive Holes, begins with a brief account of the Arabicization of Iraq that began in the seventh century and then follows with a summary of the phonological and morphological features that characterize the major Iraqi dialects spoken today. Holes is correct that Iraq “presents one with a fascinating linguistic mosaic,” as Iraqi dialects differ not only according to geography, but also according to confession. To give the most famous example of this, Baghdadi Arabic can be divided into Muslim, Jewish, and Christian dialects, each of which can be quite different from the other. After summarizing the characteristics of the dialects, Holes attempts to explain the historical and social reasons for the dialect situation in Iraq. There is much of interest in this chapter, but given the long history of Arabic in Iraq and the complicated dialect situation, Arabic deserved more space in this volume.

The seventh Chapter of the book is entitled “The Kurds Are Alive: Kurdish in Iraq” (pp. 135-158). Its author, Christine Allison, writes mainly about the sociopolitical situation of Kurdish in Iraq and neighboring countries. She outlines the main dialects of Kurdish, but, the focus is mainly on the treatment of Kurds and their language by various governments. There is also some brief discussion of Kurdish literature. A number of references for further reading are provided at the end of the chapter, but, strangely missing from the list are the Kurdish grammars of McCarus (1958), Blau and Barak (1999), and Blau (2000).

The final chapter of the book (pp. 159-187), written by Christiane Bulut, is on Iraqi Turkman (usually spelled Turkmen). This is a surprising, but, very welcome, chapter, as this language is too often overlooked. The author begins with a detailed history of Turkic settlement in Iraq, followed by a description of the current linguistic situation of Turkman in Iraq. The second half of the chapter is a grammatical description of the language, with attention to the features that distinguish Iraqi Turkman dialects from other Turkic language. Appended to the chapter is a text sample with grammatical notes, as well as a number of references for further reading.

Overall, this volume provides a very good overview of the languages that have been or are still spoken in Iraq over the last five thousand years. Despite the fact that the chapters are sometimes structured in very different ways, with very different focuses, they each contain valuable information. I hope to see more affordable and informative language handbooks such as this.

-Aaron D. Rubin, Pennsylvania State University

Recent research and dissertations

Turkaye: Turkic Peoples in Syriac Literature Prior to the Seljuks. University of Cambridge, 2008.

This PhD dissertation (Cambridge, 2008), “*Turkaye: Turkic Peoples in Syriac Literature Prior to the Seljuks*,” explored how the Turkic peoples of Central Asia prior to the Seljuk invasion of the Middle East in 1055 are presented and perceived in published Syriac literature. He has also written and spoken on such topics as Syriac Gravestones discovered in Central Asia, the use of the Syriac Bible in Central Asia, and Syriac Christianity along the Silk Road.

The interaction between Syriac and Turkic culture can be examined from several angles. On the one hand, Syriac literature provides important insights on Eurasian steppe nomads, including the Turks, which can supplement references found in other literary traditions. On the other hand, Syriac texts and inscriptions from both the Middle East and Central Asia often give unique information on the spread of Christianity into the Turkic world and other parts of Asia.

Important research questions to be considered include:


- 1) How did Syriac writers view nomadic steppe peoples, including Turkic groups, and how did those perceptions change over time and in different sociopolitical contexts?
- 2) What role did Syriac Christianity play in opening up corridors of interaction between the West and the East, including the propagation of Christianity amongst various Turkic tribes in Central Asia?
- 3) To what extent was the Christian message accommodated to Turkic culture and to what extent did it remain a decidedly foreign influence?
- 4) What do Syriac and Syro-Turkic manuscripts and inscriptions from Central Asia reveal about the faith and practice of Turkic peoples who converted to Christianity?

Dr. Mark Dickens is a Research Assistant in the Department of the Study of Religions, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. His research concerns the interaction between Syriac Christianity and the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, between the 6th and 14th centuries. Of particular interest is the contrast between the multi-religious culture of the Turkic peoples, rooted in animism and shamanism, and the predominantly Christian and Semitic culture of Syriac speakers and writers. His current position involves the cataloguing, deciphering and translating of approximately 300 Syriac manuscripts discovered in Turfan, NW China in the early 20th century and now preserved in the Turfan Collection in Berlin. This is part of a larger project to catalogue some 900 manuscripts in Syriac, Christian Sogdian and Christian Old Turkic from Turfan

(<http://www.soas.ac.uk/ceoc/turfan/>).

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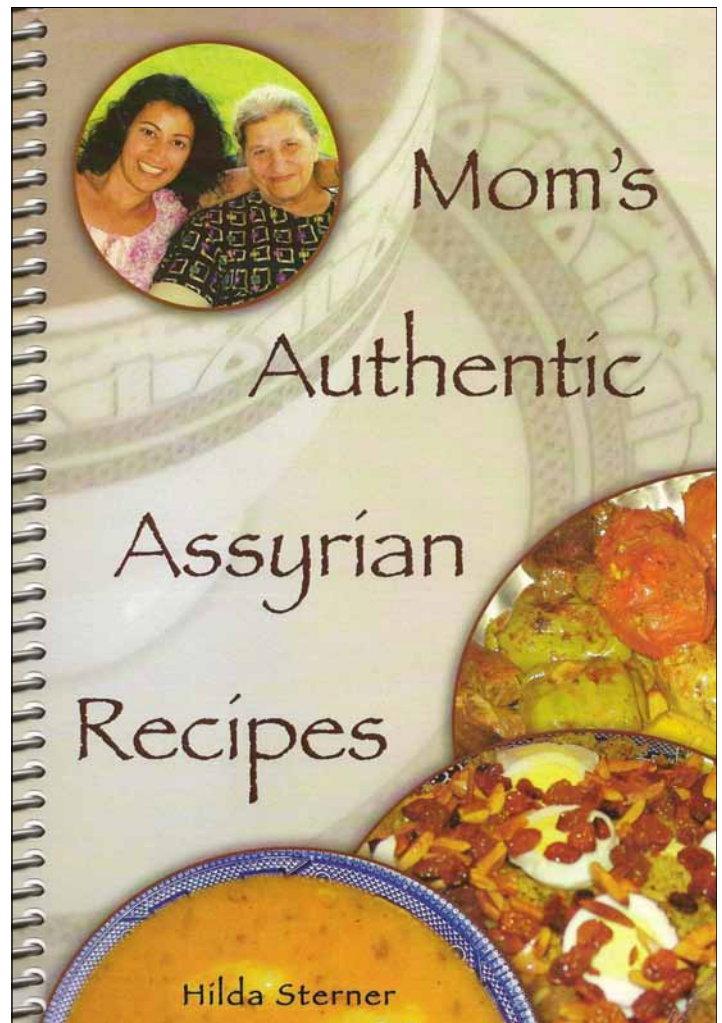
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Bob Dee Kingsbury Remembered

Bob Dee Kingsbury died at age 71 on August 7, 2009 in Walnut Creek, CA from complications arising from his year long battle with cancer.

Bob was born November 28, 1937, in Laguna Beach, CA to Benjamin Millard and Vesta May Kingsbury. His family later moved to Pleasant Hill, Oregon, where he grew up on a family farm and attended school, first in a one room school house and later at Pleasant Hill High School.

He attended Oregon State University and graduated with a degree in Chemical Engineering in 1959. After being a member of ROTC at Oregon State, he went on to serve as an officer in the United States Army Chemical Core. He was discharged after two years after earning the rank of Captain.

Bob met and married Flora Ashouri in 1969 and the twins, Ben and Lisa, were born in 1970. He spent 7 years abroad working as a Chemical Engineer, returning to the US in 1979, where he spent the next 30 years as a Residential Contractor building custom homes in Alamo and the surrounding areas.

The entire Kingsbury family became active members of the Assyrian Foundation of America in the early 1980s. As the husband of the

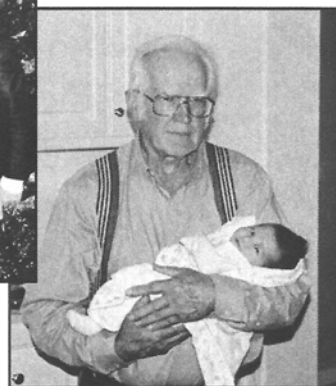
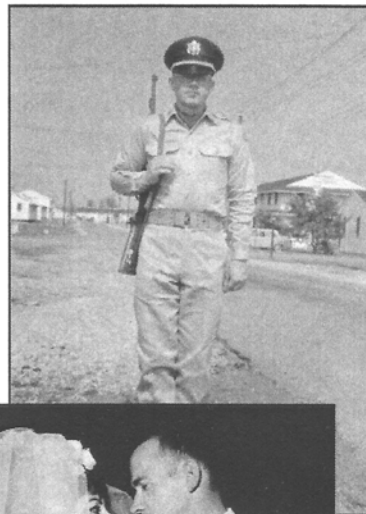
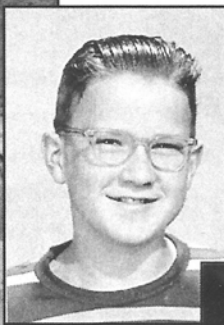
off and on Social Chairperson for the last two decades, Bob could be seen at all Foundation meetings and social gatherings patiently setting up the event, selling tickets, greeting other members, and cleaning up when the event was over. The last social gathering Bob attended was the Assyrian Foundation picnic where he wore a sticker proudly naming him an "Honorary Assyrian."

Bob is survived by his wife, Flora, his daughter, Lisa May and his son, Ben Ashur and his granddaughter, Hana Laurel. Services were held at Walnut Creek

Presbyterian Church. A private military burial was held at Sacramento Valley National Cemetery on Friday, August 14th.

Editor: For as long as I can remember, Bob (aka, miskeena Bob), was one of the most active, quiet members of the AFA. Flora volunteered him to help in setting up AFA gatherings (meetings, parties, picnics, etc.), man the entry, sell tickets, and, of course, clean up afterwards. He believed in the mission of the AFA which is to nurture and promote Assyrian identity and culture through its publications, scholarships and humanitarian efforts.

He was an integral part of the AFA family and we will miss him dearly.



November 28, 1937 – August 7, 2009



Ammo Baba: My Teammate By: Basil (Wiska) K. Pius

Ammo Baba and I spent our childhood in Habbaniya Camp which is only 55 miles west of Baghdad. We played a lot of soccer as teenagers in the camp before moving to the capital in mid 1950's, where we went our separate ways to pursue our adult careers.

In Habbaniya Camp, where our fathers were employed by the British, we played a lot of soccer with the neighborhood children, using old tennis balls or home-made soccer balls, constructed from rags. After playing for hours, we would occasionally go to Ammo's home, where his mother would offer us cold drinks and popcorn.

His father, Baba, was a gifted handyman; he took care of the neighborhood Catholic Church, which we both attended, and where Ammo served as an altar boy.

I remember, Ammo and I, along with some of the other boys, would sneak through the big gate separating us from the British lines to watch some exciting soccer matches.

Later, Ammo and I played competitive junior level soccer in Ramadi for Liwa Al-Dulaim (today known as Anbar province)



Zia Youkhanna, Ammo, Wiska and Sam Issa in Kut, Iraq, for one of our high school soccer matches.

high school team. We played many games against high school teams from Baghdad and other cities. It was during our game in Baghdad, where we were defeated by a tough and intimidating Baghdadi team, that Ammo Baba was selected as an all-star football player by the Iraqi coach, Ismail Mohammed. On that same day, Youash Tamras, another Habbaniya speedster, was selected for the same Iraqi high school team to play in Cairo, Egypt, the following month. Admittedly, I was disappointed because I was not selected for the team; but, then, I realized that I was too short to compete with the bigger fellows.

Thus, a new era had dawned on Ammo and Youash. Ammo took full advantage of the opportunity as his heart was in the game. Soon, his name became a topic of conversation throughout Habbaniya Camp. And, by the time he was seventeen, Ammo generated a lot of attention in Habbaniya, Baghdad and elsewhere.

Ammo was neither an academic nor a loafer. He followed his own dream – soccer.

In a short time Ammo became an all around soccer player. He had endurance, physical strength, an amazing agility and ability to play in all positions. He was blessed with a sense of confi-

dence and a natural leadership spirit.

One day, after we had beaten a team from Hilla, in 1950, he told me: *unless a football player is good enough to use both feet effectively and is willing to use his head daringly and smartly he*



Liwa Al-Dulaim All-Star Team, 1951. 1. Ammo 2. Wiska

will never be a good player. This casual advice stayed with me throughout my soccer playing career. It has also been my prime coaching advice to the little league soccer players in this small southeastern Montana community.

Ammo was selected to play as a high school football player to represent Iraq when he was actually not attending any school at the time. He never cared for school. For one thing, he was not interested in school regimentation and scholarly pursuits. Secondly, he must have felt that his calling was FOOTBALL, pure and simple. And, so was the case with several of his contemporary young Assyrian footballers, such as Youra Eshaya, Ammo Simpson, Edison David, Gilbert Sam, and others.

Sports fans who have followed Ammo's football career will say that he had a great impact on the sport in Iraq, especially



Ammo and Wiska. Habbaniya Lake, Iraq, 1950

when he decided to stay in the country. Even after his retirement as a player, he used his coaching talents to improve Iraq's image in the world of soccer. In this sense, he will be remembered as a true patriot. He endured great hardship and harassment, especially at the hands of his long time cruel menses, Uday, the Football Association president, and son of the notorious dictator. It must have been very difficult for Ammo, I'm sure. He sacrificed greatly, espe-

cially when his wife and children had to leave Iraq for safety reasons, just like thousands of us had done before, but he stayed behind. The separation must have been very painful.

The rest of us who played on the Liwa Al-Dulaim high school

team some 58 years ago eventually pursued our dreams to become teachers, doctors, bankers, engineers, etc, and many of us left the land of our forefathers, perhaps for ever, and for personal reasons. But, Ammo Baba decided to stay behind and work with his own fellow Iraqi citizens until his very last day. He was a dedicated Iraqi Assyrian patriot.

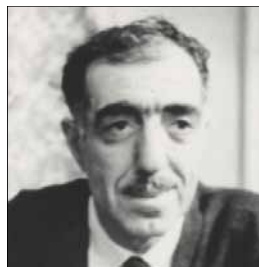
Ammo Baba was an Iraqi soccer star; a feared scorer, tough on the pitch and an impressive team leader. As a coach he will always be remembered for taking his Iraqi team all the way the Olympic Games in 1984 and 1988. Just as striking is the fact that he led his young Iraqi players to numerous victories in several countries, including the Gulf Cup three times, in 1979, 1984, and 1988 under his leadership. Another legacy Ammo has left is his soccer school for the underprivileged Iraqi boys. Today, many of his students have already gained places on Iraqi soccer teams.

Ammo was a dedicated footballer with a passion for the game and for justice. He was never afraid to speak his mind. I watched one of his television interviews on Al-Arabia a few years ago, where he expressed his feelings freely, eloquently, bravely, and intelligently.

In conclusion, I thank my dear friend Ammo Baba for the fun we had together as teenagers. We strolled side by side along the perimeters of the never ending tall gray steel fence which was to hold us back from trespassing into the British lines. We had a good time at Lake Habbaniya with other friends, rode our bicycles in the dusty streets of Habbaniya Camp and we stayed close as teammates for a time. We enjoyed the soccer trips to Kut, where we were fed fresh fish right out of Euphrates –three times a day! And, while in Hilla, we visited the ancient ruins of Babylon. We talked about our big captain, Mar’ee Yahya, the hamaji guy, and about the self-appointed cheerleader Hadji, our tall bus driver, and told other silly jokes. Just a few of the many great memories....

I admire Ammo for his courage, his great sense of justice and his unique and amazing loyalty to Iraq and its citizens. His legacy will be a bright part of Iraqi history.

May God reward Ammo with His eternal peace and look after his family with gentle care.



Mikhail Piraeff
By: Daniel Lachin

The Assyrian community of Tbilisi, Georgia, and its surroundings was deeply saddened to learn of the death of beloved master sportsman and international footballer, Mikhail Piraeff. He was 88 year old. Funeral service was

held in Tbilisi memorial park, with many relatives and friends as well as former and present athletes in attendance.

Son of Jacob and Nanajan, Mikhail was born, grew up and trained in Tbilisi. At an early age, he joined the Spartak Soccer team of Tbilisi. Playing alongside many famous Georgian footballers, young Mikhail, who was a goalkeeper, was one of the best known and loved among the fans. He went through a speedy naturalization process and was selected to represent the Air Force soccer team (BBC, Air Frontier Forces) of Moscow, which was under the patronage of Gen. Vasili Stalin. There, he played from 1950 to 1952.

In 1953, Mikhail joined Spartak Moscow, one of the most popular teams in Russia. He played in many national and international championship games with this team. During this period, Siniyascsky, a sports commentator, stated: *it is not an exaggeration to say that Mikhail Piraeff is one of the greatest goalkeepers of our time.* In the matches he played in England, for his phenomenal jumping ability and lightning-speed reactions, he earned the title *Black Panther*.

In 1955, he was brought to Tbilisi to play for Dinamo Tbilisi. In 1956, as a member of a team made up of players from different teams from Georgia competing in a competition involving teams from all over USSR (Spartakiada), he won a prize.

He played for Dinamo Tbilisi until 1957, at which time he retired from professional soccer and began coaching.

Through the years, Mikhail won many trophies and prizes. He is survived by his wife, daughters, grandchildren and many relatives and friends. He was a loving man towards his family and friends and devoted to his people. He will be missed by all.



An honor guard carries the casket of Iraqi national football coach Emmanuel Baba Dawud, one of Iraq's most revered sports figures, during his funeral in Baghdad, Iraq, Friday, May 29, 2009. Ammo Baba shot to football fame in Iraq after scoring the country's first goal in an international game in the 1957 Pan Arab games.



Malfono Abrohom Nuro
(1923 – 6 Jan. 2009)

Malfono Abrohom Nuro was born in 1923 in Urha/oy (Edessa).

In 1924, his family, along with many others, moved to Aleppo, which was under the French Mandate, and settled in what was called Hay as-Syrian.

In 1946 he entered University of St. Joseph in Beirut, to study law. However, he was unable to complete his studies due to illness.

In the 1950's he became involved in the study of Syriac language and literature. He studied with Yuhannon dolabani (d. 1969), Abdelmasih Karabashi (d. 1983) and Danho Ghattas Makdasi Elyas(d. 2008).

From 1964 to 1982 he lived in Beirut, where he taught at *Taw Meem Simkath* School.

He was most passionate about our language. He wrote many articles and books on Syriac language and literature. He was especially concerned with ensuring its survival, and wrote several books and articles and many presentations on new ways to teach the language and to create new words (neologisms) for modern technical terms, using classical Syriac roots, in order to keep the language up-to-date (*Tawldotho*; Syria, 1997).

Since 1943 he organized many evening classes in Aleppo, Beirut, Qamishli, and Mor Gabriel Monastery. He taught in make-shift schools and classrooms in the Near East, Europe and the United States, where his goal was to revive Classical Syriac to its status as a spoken language. As part of his teaching method, he developed an audio-visual program, he called *Suloqo*, later published in book form (*Suloqo*; St. Ephrem Press, Holland, 1989).

Malfono Abrohom Nuro did not want to get involved in politics or public discussions and arguments regarding our name (Assyrian vs. Aramaean vs. Syrian/c, etc). He felt these arguments were counterproductive and divisive at best, and took away attention from the real task which is to ensure our survival, as a people with a rich cultural heritage that spans several millennia.

When he wanted to organize Syriac classes in Syria, for example, in order to convince the government to allow him to teach in public schools, he told the authorities that Syriac was one of the ancient languages

of the country, just as the name implied. He did not want the (teaching of the) language banned because it was the language of the Assyrians. In fact, he was proud of the fact that he had many non-Assyrian students attending his classes and learning to speak classical Syriac!



Abrohom Nuro speaking at the Assyrian American Association of Chicago

He was also very concerned with the increasing emigration of our people from our traditional homelands. In one of his lectures in Chicago he said: *"The true Assyrian will not entice his relatives to come to Western countries. If we encourage our people to leave the Middle East, then surely we will lose our identity and culture. You who are in the West, whether you like what I have to say or not, must agree with me. In the East, we will keep our culture, language and identity. This is not possible in the West....sooner or later we will be assimilated. It is only possible to preserve our ethnicity in the East!"*

Besides the local governments in the Middle East, he had also to be careful not to anger the clerical hierarchy, especially of the Orthodox Church, which he was a member of. I remember him telling me of what he had to go through when he was in the Netherlands, working on the publication of *Suloqo*. In the manuscript of the book,

which is formatted as conversations between individuals, he had several Assyrian names, like Shammiram, Sargon, and Sharbel. The clergy who had reviewed the manuscript had suggested that he remove those names and replace them with more acceptable (biblical) ones. However, he had resisted and it was agreed to leave the names as they were. On the evening that publication was to start, he was out for his usual after-dinner walk/exercise, and decided to go to the printing press to see how things were proceeding. Upon examining the proof he noticed that all those names had been removed and replaced. So, he changed them back and told the printer, who was Dutch, that these were typographical mistakes which he corrected. In the autographed copy he sent to the Assyrian Foundation of America, he wrote: *"In appreciation of all you do for the education and welfare of our Assyrian people."*

He had an extensive library with more than 3850 books and periodicals.

Besides *Suloqo*; 1989 (on the teaching of classical Syriac) and

Tawldotho; 1997 (Neologisms), he also published *My tour*; 1967, which is a travelogue and extensive data about our churches and communities in Syria and Lebanon.

Funeral service was held at Mor Gerogis Church, celebrated by Mor Gregorius Yuhanna Ibrahim.



Malfono Abrohom Nuro in an informal session with young Assyrians of Chicago at the AshurBanipal Library.

Dr. Hirmis Aboona

(1940-April 27, 2009)

After a long battle with illness, on the evening of Monday April 27, 2009, the Assyrian historian, Dr. Hirmis Aboona, passed away at the age of 69, in the city of Toronto, Canada. Rabi Hirmis Aboona is the author of several books on the ancient and modern history of the Assyrian people. His articles and books deal with the origin of Assyrian identity, the emergence of Assyrian political movements, and the development of Assyrian culture. Dr. Aboona holds a Ph.D. from the University of Exeter, and has lectured at universities, including the University of Sydney, University of Cambridge, as well as various universities in Syria and Lebanon.

Rabi Hirmis Aboona was born in the Assyrian town of Alqosh in 1940, a place whose origins date back to 15,000 B.C. according to one of the many well-documented articles published by him. His parents Mousa Aboona and Maryam Asmaro, made their living by farming their land, and later by running a grocery store. His family is from the original line of the Patriarch of the Church of the East known as the patriarchs of Mar Elia - Beth Aboona. The last was Yohanan Hormizd Aboona who converted to Catholicism. He was the first patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church. Rabi Hirmis Aboona spent his childhood in Alqosh, where he received his preliminary education before going on to Baghdad to obtain a degree in Surveying and a BA degree in Law from the University of Baghdad in 1963/64. In 1967, he married Nanni Esa Rasho and together they were blessed with three children.

He left Beth Nahrin for England in 1982 where he spent six years studying and conducting research for his Ph.D. degree in Assyrian History. Due to personal problems, he left for Canada in 1988. In recent years, he received his Ph.D. degree from University of Exeter in Canada.

Rabi Hirmis had devoted his life to research and study of our history. His articles have been published in magazines and newspapers in North America, Europe and the Middle East. He had also helped other Assyrian writers edit their works for publication. An additional fruit of his research is a comprehensive series of twelve manuscripts, titled *The Assyrians After the Fall of Nineveh*. The individual titles of his twelve volumes are as follows:

- I. From the Fall of Nineveh to the Arrival of Christianity
- II. The Assyrians and Christianity
- III. The Assyrians During the Arab Islamic Rule
- V. Part 1 - The Assyrians Under the Mongol Rule. Part 2 - The History of the Kurdish Settlement in Assyria
- V. Independent Assyrian Tribes in Tiyare and Hakkari and the Surrounding Assyrian Regions
- VI. The Massacres of Bedr Khan Beg in Tiyare and Hakkari 1843-1846
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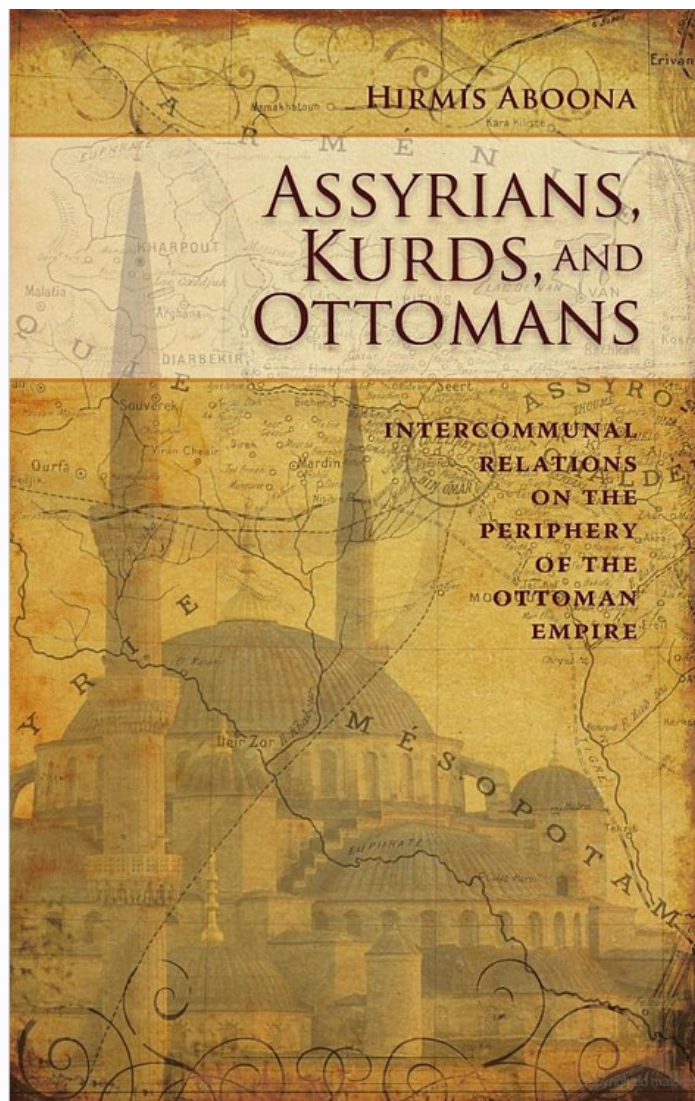


ple Names"

XII. Assyrians and the Contemporary Political Movement

Volumes V, VI and VIII have appeared in print in Arabic thus far. The rest, written and some ready on computer, await publishing. They contain a great deal of new historical facts about our people. Also, in December 28, 2008, his dissertation was published as a book in English titled: *"Assyrians, Kurds, and Ottomans: Intercommunal Relations on the Periphery of the Ottoman Empire"*.

Rabi Hirmis Aboona was a great talent and deserved far greater attention than he received. He was a fighter who was racing to write day after day despite the health problems that he faced. He was a man of courage, dedication and talent. Although he wished to have his life-long work published, but his main hope was that "Our nation unites. For our survival, we have no choice other than Huyada."



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Nikolia and Youlia Pirayou



Nikolia Pirayou was born on May 27, 1925, in Berdyansk, Ukraine, to Ilia and Olga Pirayou. In 1938, after his father was imprisoned at the Gulags in Siberia,

Nikolia, his mother and 4 siblings relocated to Hamadan, Iran.

At 20 years of age, Nikolia served in the United States military camp in Hamadan, serving the Allies in World War II. After WW II, Nikolia was reunited with his father and the family relocated to Tehran, Iran. Over the next 30 years, Nikolia established a successful transportation company in Tehran.

On December 21, 1957, he married Youlia Yousef, and became an active member of the Assyrian community in Iran generously supporting a number of civic and social causes. During his life, he was blessed with the birth of three children, Maryam, Elia, and Joseph.

On September 10, 1978, Nikolia relocated his family to the United States settling in San Jose, California, where he took great pride and joy in watching his grandchildren, Michael and Rebecca Pirayou, grow and learn from him.

On February 3, 2009, after a courageous battle against multiple diseases, he passed to Eternal Life.

Nikolia was a proud member of Assyrian American Association of San Jose and *Bet Eil Assyrian Church*.

Youlia Pirayou was born on August 23, 1932 in Urmia (Shirabad), Iran to Benyamin and Martha Yousef. While in elementary school, she studied the Assyrian language with Rabi Givargis Yadegar. She was a teenager when the government of Urmia region granted permission to the Assyrian community to teach their native language in public schools. Youlia in her late teens passed the required exam and became a teacher of the Assyrian language in the public school in Shirabad. Many of her students later became active members of the Assyrian community in Iran, and a few of them kept in contact, writing her letters in Assyrian.

In 1957 she married Nikolia Pirayou and settled in Tehran, Iran. Youlia was offered a teaching position in Shooshan School in Tehran to teach the Assyrian language which she turned down to devote all her time to raising her children.

Youlia's family like many Assyrian families living in today's Western Iran and Southern Turkey, was the target of atrocities committed by Moslems (Turks, Kurds) during WW I. It was very important to Youlia that her children do not forget this dark age of the Assyrian history. Among some of Youlia's relatives who perished during these atrocities was her 9 month old sister Mayo. Youlia always recalled her sister with tears in her eyes.

Youlia was a proud member of the Assyrian Association of San Jose where she taught Assyrian for many years and was a member of the Ladies' Committee. She was also a member of the Assyrian Evangelical Church of San Jose and treasurer of the Ladies' Hospitality Group for a number of years. At Bet-Eil Assyrian Church she continued teaching Assyrian where her young students were able to read from the Bible and recite hymns in Assyrian. She also participated in vacation Bible classes as a teacher.

Youlia loved sacrificially and was a devoted mother and wife. She loved life and her strong will enabled her to lead an active

life despite her heart condition. She was very proud of her Assyrian heritage and was active in national and cultural issues urging her children and others to do the same.

On July 4, 2009, after a courageous battle with multiple diseases, she passed to Eternal Life to be with her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They leave their loving family: daughter Maryam (Rita), son Joseph, grandchildren Michael and Rebecca. Their sweet and loving memories will always be cherished by their family and friends.

Raabi Albert Babilla.



Circa 1942: Left to right, *Raabi* Albert Babilla with his fellow teachers, the late *Raabi* Youkhanna Shimshon Barkho and *Raabi* Emmanuel Jacob. The latter was Raabi Yacoub's son and the organizer and first Scoutmaster of Union School Boy Scout & Girl Guide movement, which later became, under RAF former Scouters' guidance, 1st Habbaniya (Iraq) Boy Scout & Girl Guide

Albert Aghasi Babilla of Eastbourne, England, and the last surviving teacher of former Habbaniya Union School, passed away, on 5/17/2009, aged 87, .

Raabi Albert (as we all called him) grew up in Quota Camp of Royal Air Force Station of Hinaidi, near Baghdad. There he had his elementary schooling at Raabi Yacoub's Assyrian & Armenian Union School. When his family re-located, with the air base, in 1936-37 to the new site at Habbaniya, 55 miles west, he stayed in Baghdad and had his high school education at Dr. Studt's American School for Boys. Immediately after he graduated in mid-1941, he taught for one year (1941-42) at Raabi Yacoub's Union School in Civil Cantonment of Habbaniya, before he obtained employment with the RAF Meteorological Office. He married Jane on November 16, 1946 and raised his family in Habbaniya and worked and lived there until 1956 when the family immigrated to England. They also lived in Turlock, California, for about ten years before returning to England four years ago.

One of the youngest teachers, *Raabi* Albert was a handsome man. He was energetic, smart and athletic-looking and cut a fine figure during the Boy Scout parades when he succeeded Raabi Emmanuel Jacob for a year as Scoutmaster. He was active in both social and Evangelical religious activities of our local community of Civil Cantonment and was an effective president of the RAF Assyrian Employees' Club for three or four years in early 1950s. He was a tennis player and a noted cyclist.

He was respected by everyone in our Assyrian community of Turlock-Modesto in California, and was considered as a father figurehead by all his former students and friends. For a while, he took part in a Bible program on AssyriaSat TV of Ceres, California. During 1993-6, he served as adviser to our Ex-Habbaniya Community Group. Our heart-felt sympathy goes to his family. He was a God-fearing man and always expressed eager readiness in his latter years to meet his Maker.

Mikhael K. Pius, Modesto, CA.

In Memoriam



Zia Lawand Michael, 77, passed away on 9/27/2009 in London, England. He was born in Nuhadra (Dohuk), Iraq, in 1932 to Lawand Michael and Khawa Ablakhad, both of the land of Timar in Turkey. He finished his secondary school in Mosul, and graduated from the College of Commerce in Baghdad, in 1956. Zia then joined the army, with

the rank of second lieutenant, in Habbaniya. In 1960, he married Manni Murad in Habbaniya, and the two were blessed with four children. After 11 years, he left the army and moved, with his family, to London, where he worked as an accountant, retiring in 2002. He will be missed by his family and friends.



Paranjem Bijou Rehana, a former resident of Habbaniya, passed away, after a long illness, in Chicago, on 10/22/2008. The late Paranjem, popularly known to her family and friends as "Paro", was born on 11/11/1927. She was the wife of the late John Bijou Rehana, a member of the Habbaniya Union School founding Committee.

She will be missed by her family and friends.



Sargon S. Malik passed away on 2/14/2009.

He was born on 9/19/1936, on the British Royal Air Force Base, in Habbaniya, Iraq. He emigrated to the United States at 17, and settled in Chicago.

His greatest joy in life was spending time with his grandchildren.

His entire family and friends will sorely miss Sam.



Akhsherash M. Jango passed away on 12/12/2008, at 75.

He was involved in the building and, later, the Founding Committee of Saint Mary's Church in The Assyrian Center in New Baghdad (Nairiya Gayara).

He moved to the United States, and settled in Newport News, Virginia.

He is survived by Roza Camber Jango,

his wife of 49 years, five children and several grandchildren.

Akhsherash was a gentle and cheerful person, a dedicated Christian, a loving family man, and a good friend. He will be missed by all.



Helen Zacharia passed away on 10/20/2008 in Chicago, surrounded by family and friends.

She was born on 6/10/1934 in Amadia, Iraq. Helen was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, sister and friend.

She is survived by her husband, Zacharia, four children and several grandchildren. She will be missed by her family and friends.



Benyamin Gewargis Shabo was born in Hinaidi, Iraq, in 1937. He was the youngest child of the late Rab-Tremma Gewargis and Helen Rev. Yohana Esho.

He came to the United States in 1960 as a student and graduated from Auburn U, as an electrical engineer. While at Auburn, he established the first soccer program there, and became their first coach.

He was a major instigator in the establishment of the 911 emergency call system for Nortel Digital Products.

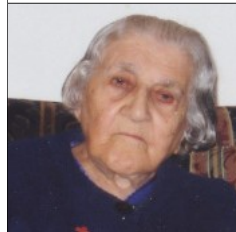
While serving as an interpreter for the American forces in Baghdad, Iraq, Ben suffered a major heart attack on 12/24/2007. On 8/22/2008 he suffered another heart attack that put him to final sleep. Benjamin was a loving husband, father, grandfather and friend. He will be missed dearly.



Charles John Samo passed away on 7/21/2009. He was one of the first immigrants affiliated with the Assyrian Foundation of America.

He was born in Tehran, Iran and moved to Lebanon at 17 to attend the American University of Beirut. After graduation, he moved to San Francisco.

Upon graduation from SF State University, he worked as an engineer at the California State Fire Marshall's office, heading the Southern California division. Charles was a loving husband, father, brother and friend; a humble man who never wanted public adoration. He will be missed by his wife, Layla, and son, Robert, as well as many relatives and friends.



Lisa Solomon passed away on 5/11/2008, surrounded by her loving family and friends.

She was born on 7/1/1907, in Urmia, Iran. She married the late Awimalk Solomon in Mosul, Iraq, and had three children. In 1970, she, along with her family, moved to the United States; initially to Chicago, then to California, where she settled in South San Francisco, living with her daughters. On July 1, 2007, we celebrated her 100th birthday!

Auntie Lisa, as everyone called her, was a loving woman, with a kind smile and a wonderful sense of humor. She will always live on in our hearts.

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٢٠٥٨ ذُكَيْج

مکتبہ سائنس و کھیتی باڑی دہلی، انڈیا

[illegible]

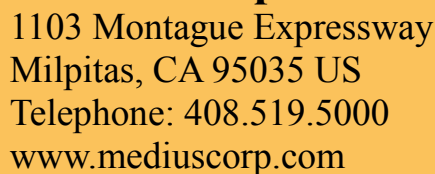
چنگیز دلماسا دزمک چانگیز
جست بک دهماسا دشو شوق شاماسا
مچ بجمه تکی متدیوت حمیدب
حدهن دیس نسقم اش حدهیس دبدلص

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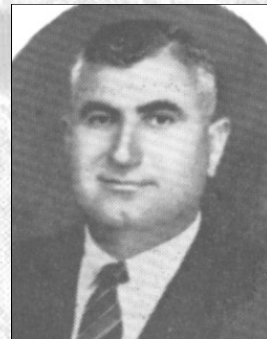
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تەنگەب ئىگەن



تەنگەب ۱. تەنگەب دىمەتەن

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۱۳۴۳ ۱۹۶۴

سوره

مجله پژوهش‌های باستان‌شناختی و تاریخی

دوره ۳۲، شماره ۲، ۱۳۴۳ ۶۷۵۹

جله هفدهم ۴۶