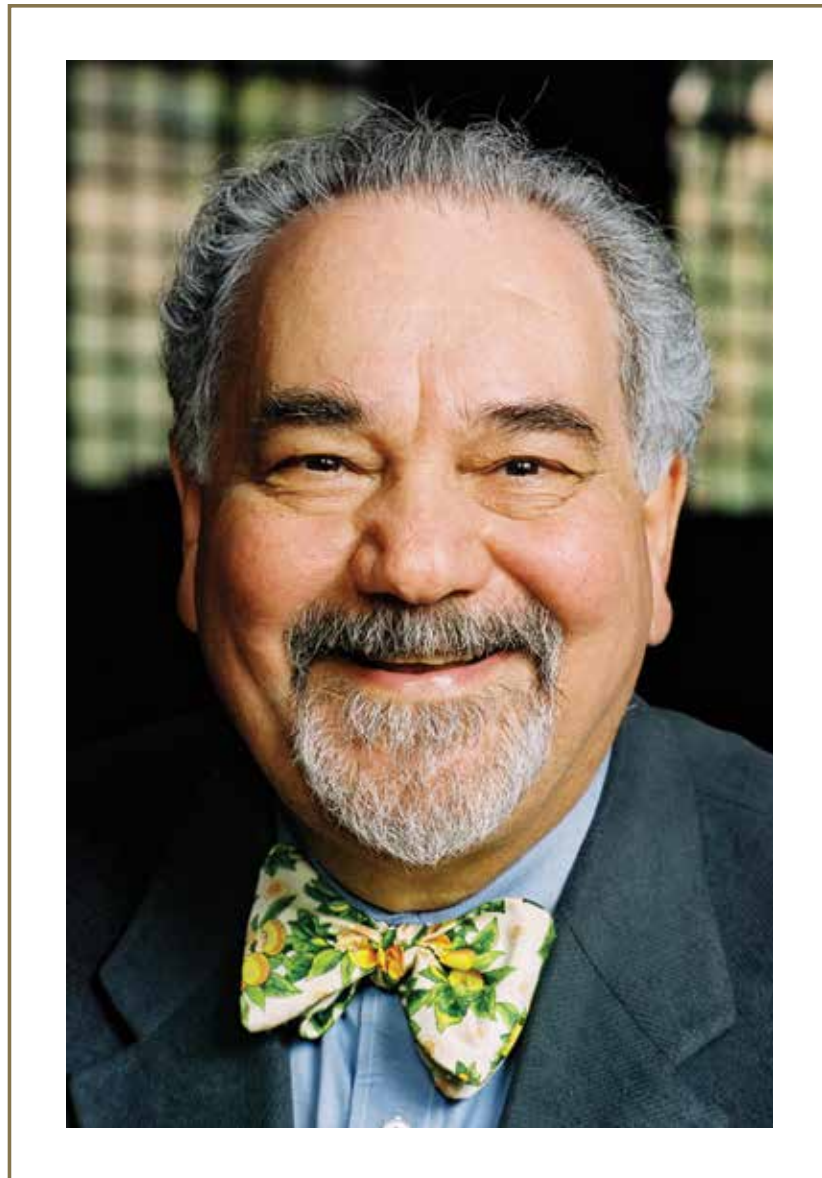




NINEVEH

CULTURAL | EDUCATIONAL | SOCIAL



Narsai David

Publication of the Assyrian Foundation of America
Volume 49, Number 3, 2024

Narsai David, Patron of the Arts

Next time you see a play at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, you may find yourself enjoying an intermission drink in the Narsai David Courtyard. Narsai not only made a lasting impact on the culinary world and the global Assyrian community, but he was also a devoted patron of the arts. Berkeley Repertory Theatre would not be what it is today without his dedicated support. The theatre-- which started in the 1960s by some UC Berkeley theatre students, with its first production at the International House on College Avenue-- is today a regional theatre powerhouse with a gorgeous home on Addison Street with two stages that employ hundreds of artists and serves thousands of audience members annually.

In a recent article (Janis Mara, "Nosh," July 26, 2024), former managing director Susie Medak is quoted describing Narsai's contribution to the theatre this way:

"He was Berkeley Rep's biggest cheerleader for decades. He loved good food, good wine, good theatre, and good friends. He exemplified what it means to be a good citizen, supporting a wide range of local organizations."

Narsai was a founding board member of the Berkeley Rep and spent almost two decades on the board. He held his annual "Narsai's Toast to the Arts" fundraiser for seventeen years until 2009. The dinners were legendary and they raised over \$4.7 million for Berkeley Rep, specifically for the theatre education, outreach, and internship programs.

As Susan Medak said in her speech at Narsai's final Toast to the Arts (Eddie Varley April 4, 2009, Broadway World):

"This is a bittersweet moment. Narsai has been a valued supporter of Berkeley Rep since the days when this theatre was just an upstart organization on College Avenue. We're not the same theatre we were 40 years ago, but our growth has come from strict adherence to the highest artistic standards and a belief in providing an environment where talented artists can do their best work. Narsai and his wife Venus have been champions of these values and of Berkeley Rep throughout the Bay Area, and their efforts have had a huge impact on advancing our growth. We are deeply grateful to Narsai for his years of service."

Every lover of the arts in the Bay Area has Narsai to thank for enriching our experience so profoundly. His legacy lives on in each performance.



Narsai and Venus David Berkeley Rep in 2014.



Photos by Drew Altizer Photography

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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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Tribute to Narsai David: A Life of Culinary Mastery and Community Service

By Elizabeth Mickaily-Huber, Ph.D.

In the heart of Napa Valley, amid vineyards where the grapes weave stories of tradition and excellence, stands a man whose life is a testament to passion, perseverance, and profound generosity. Mr. Narsai David, celebrated businessman, radio and television personality, and culinary virtuoso, has left an indelible mark on both the culinary world and the Assyrian community at large.

Born in South Bend, Indiana, Mr. David's roots trace back to Mar Bishu in the Hakkari mountains of Turkey, a connection he cherished throughout his life. His upbringing, deeply influenced by Assyrian traditions and values instilled by his father, shaped his journey from humble beginnings to becoming a renowned figure in the food industry.

At a tender age, Narsai's family relocated to Turlock, California, seeking solace among their

Assyrian brethren. It was here that his passion for food began to flourish. From flipping hamburgers at Hy's Drive-In to managing the innovative "Potluck" in Berkeley, Narsai David's culinary prowess blossomed alongside his reputation as a trailblazer in California's dining scene. His eponymous restaurant in Kensington (near Berkeley) became a culinary sanctuary renowned not only for its exquisite cuisine but also for boasting one of the world's finest wine lists, recognized by The New York Times and The Wine Spectator.

Beyond the realm of fine dining, Narsai's commitment to his Assyrian heritage and community was unwavering. His involvement with the Assyrian Aid Society, where he served as President, epitomized his dedication to humanitarian efforts. From organizing aid missions to the Middle East to supporting



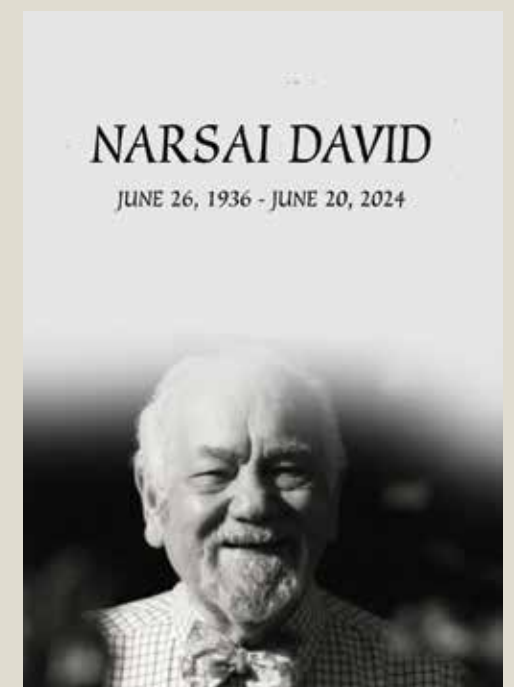
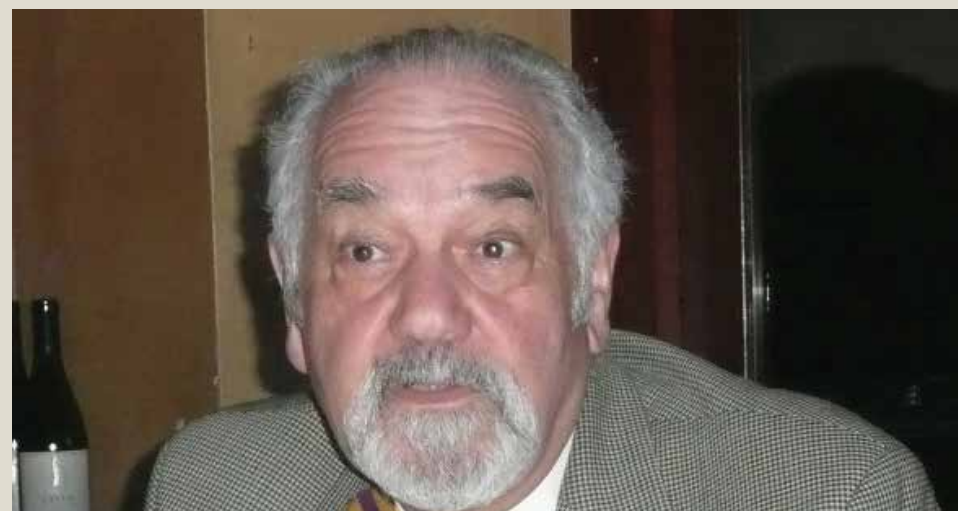
Assyrian cultural initiatives, Narsai's philanthropic spirit knew no bounds. His deep-rooted ties to his ancestry led him on a poignant journey to rediscover his mother's birthplace in Iran and connect with relatives across the globe.

Narsai's influence extended far beyond the kitchen and community activism. As a beloved radio host on KCBS, he enchanted audiences with his Saturday Kitchen show, blending culinary expertise with witty banter and insightful wine tastings. His appearances on television, including memorable stints on Catherine Crosby's morning show, further solidified his status as a culinary luminary.

In every interaction, Narsai's infectious enthusiasm, youthful spirit, and trademark bowtie endeared him to all. Whether recounting tales of Sunday drives with his cousin Sam or sharing memories of his beloved restaurant patrons, Narsai David's life was a tapestry woven with warmth, laughter, and boundless hospitality.

As we reflect on the legacy of Narsai David, we celebrate a life lived with zest, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to enriching the lives of others. His culinary creations continue to inspire, his philanthropy continues to uplift, and his spirit remains eternally vibrant in the hearts of those who had the privilege to know him.

He was a founding board member of Berkeley Repertory Theater (in 1968) and served on the board for many years. The courtyard at Berkeley Rep is named in his honor (Narsai David Courtyard).

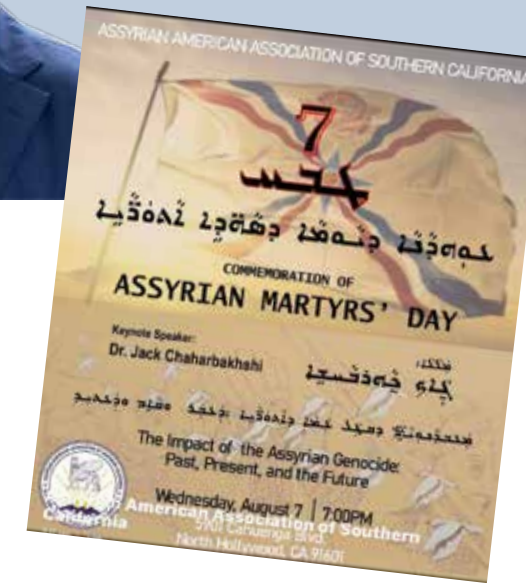


Ways in which Narsai helped AASA achieve its goals and further its mission:

- Give, Get, or Get Out philosophy for Directors. Although it was never formally instituted as a rule, he brought it up routinely and helped instill in Directors the need to bring money into the organization.
- Insistence on professionalism, transparency, and accountability. When he came to AASA Narsai already had experience on Boards of other charities and community organizations so he knew how things should work and the importance of being trusted by the public.
- Professionalism again. Narsai insisted that everything about AASA be and look professional and businesslike, from being properly registered with government agencies to how the letterhead looked. Typos and poor grammar were not allowed. He spent days working with a graphic artist to perfect the depiction of AASA's palmetto logo. In AASA merchandising, he again labored with a graphic artist to design a series of neckties featuring the Assyrian alphabet.
- Narsai was particularly interested in education and pushed AASA to fund the Assyrian schools. He believed that education would be a key to giving his people in Iraq skills that would provide them with a living and thus encourage them to remain and thrive in the homeland.
- With his celebrity and public forums, he constantly spoke of his Assyrian heritage and made non-Assyrians aware of the Assyrians' plight in the homeland.
- Narsai's Taste of the Mediterranean. The dinners have raised over \$1.5M.



Honoring Assyrian Martyrs Day: A Reflection on Resilience and Identity



On August 7, 2024, the Assyrian American Association of Southern California (AAASC) commemorated Assyrian Martyrs Day with a profound keynote address delivered by Dr. Jack Chaharbakhshi, a distinguished member of the AFA Board of Directors and Chair of the Education and Culture Committee. His presentation, titled “The Impact of Genocide,” resonated deeply with the audience and highlighted the enduring strength of the Assyrian community.

In his address, Dr. Chaharbakhshi paid tribute to the countless Assyrian men, women, and children who have perished in genocides throughout history, from the massacres in Hakkari in 1843 to the recent atrocities committed by ISIS. Despite enduring immense suffering, the Assyrian spirit has remained unbroken. Survivors have preserved their identity, culture, and Christian

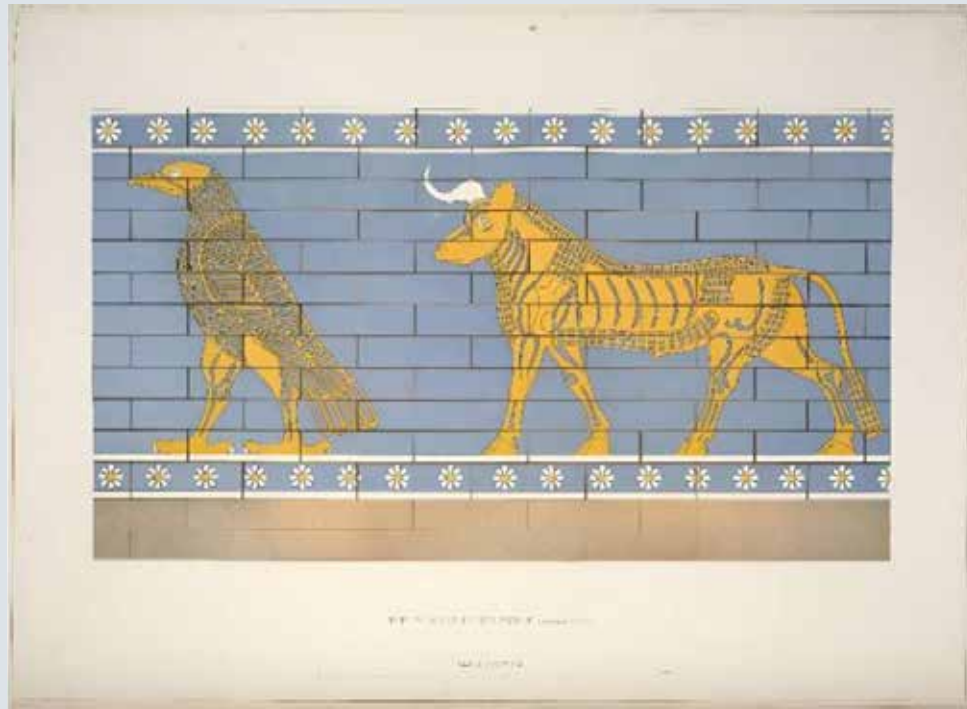
faith, ensuring that their stories of courage and resilience are handed down through generations.

Assyrian Martyrs Day serves not only as a remembrance of the past but also as a call to action for the future.

Dr. Chaharbakhshi emphasized the importance of embracing our unique identity, connecting with fellow Assyrians, and actively contributing to our communities both locally and globally. Supporting Assyrian businesses, mentoring the younger generation, and staying engaged in cultural and religious practices are vital steps in ensuring the survival and flourishing of our heritage.

Dr. Chaharbakhshi urged the community to reflect on their history and recognize the power each individual has to make a difference. Through education, advocacy, and spiritual growth, every Assyrian can contribute to a positive and lasting impact. By working together, we can build a brighter future for our people, ensuring that our identity, culture, and traditions continue to thrive for generations to come.





Assyriologist claims to have solved archaeological mystery from 700 BC

by Trinity College Dublin
Published online April 26, 2024

Trinity Assyriologist Dr. Martin Worthington has explained ancient symbols on a 2,700-year-old temple that have baffled experts for over a century.

The "mystery symbols" sequence was on view in temples at various locations in the ancient city of Dūr-Šarrukīn, present-day Khorsabad, Iraq. Sargon II, king of Assyria (721–704 BC), ruled the city.

The sequence of five symbols—a lion, eagle, bull, fig tree, and plow—was first known to the modern world through drawings published by French excavators in the late nineteenth century. Since then, many ideas about what the symbols might mean have been expressed.

They have been compared to Egyptian hieroglyphs, understood as reflections of imperial might, and suspected to represent the king's name—but how?

Dr. Martin Worthington of Trinity's School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultural Studies has proposed a new solution in a paper published April 26 in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*. He argues that the Assyrian words for the five symbols (lion, eagle, bull, fig tree, and plow) contain, in the correct sequence, the sounds that spell out the Assyrian form of the name "Sargon" (šarginu).

Sometimes, the same archaeological site uses only three symbols (lion, tree, plow), which Dr. Worthington argues again to write the name "Sargon," following similar principles.

Dr. Worthington commented, "The study of ancient languages and cultures is full of puzzles of all shapes and sizes, but it's not often in the Ancient Near East that one faces mystery symbols on a temple wall."

According to Dr. Worthington, each of the five symbols can also be understood as a constellation. Thus, the lion represents Leo, and the eagle Aquila (our constellations are inherited mainly from Mesopotamia, via the Greeks, so many of them are the same). The fig tree stands in for the hard-to-illustrate constellation "the Jaw" (which we don't have today) on the basis that iṣu "tree" sounds similar to is "jaw."

"The effect of the five symbols was to place Sargon's name in the heavens for all eternity—a clever way to make the king's name immortal. And, of course, the idea of bombastic individuals writing their names on buildings is not unique to ancient Assyria," says Dr. Worthington.

Ancient Mesopotamia, or modern Iraq and neighboring regions, was home to Babylonians, Assyrians, Sumerians, and others and is today being researched from cuneiform writings, which survive in abundance. Indeed, writing was probably invented there around 3400 BC. So, though Sargon's scholars would not have been aware of this, they were echoing Mesopotamian history from over a thousand years before in devising new written symbols.

Dr. Worthington explained, "I can't prove my theory, but the fact that it works for both the five-symbol sequence and the three-symbol sequence and that the symbols can also be understood as culturally appropriate constellations strikes me as highly suggestive. The odds against it all being happenstance are—forgive the pun—astronomical."

Dr. Worthington specializes in the languages and civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia, including those of the Babylonians, Assyrians, and Sumerians.

This region, including present-day Iraq and parts of Iran, Turkey, and Syria, is often called the "cradle of civilization." It is where cities and empires were born, and its story is a massive part of human history.

Because of the Mesopotamian habit of counting in the sixties, we have 60 minutes in an hour today. Abraham (a central figure in three of the world's major religions) is said to have come from the Mesopotamian city of Ur.

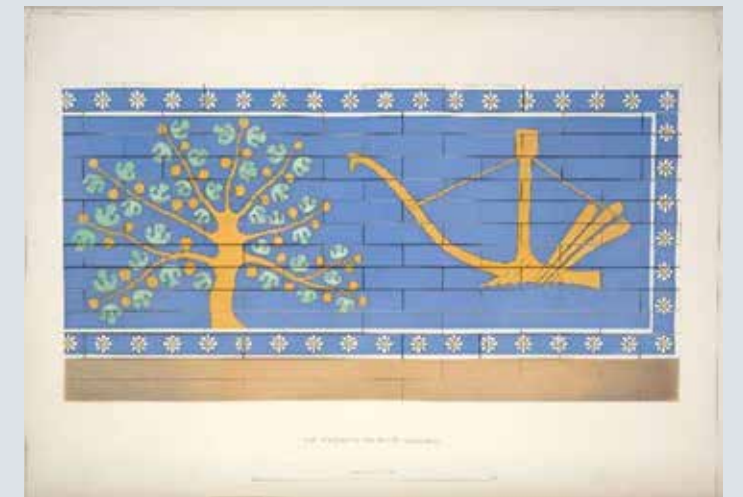
"Solving puzzles (or trying to) is an especially fun bit," says Dr. Worthington, "but Mesopotamian studies at large have the grander aim of understanding the complexity and diversity of a huge part of human societies and cultural achievements."

Solving the Starry Symbols of Sargon II Martin Worthington

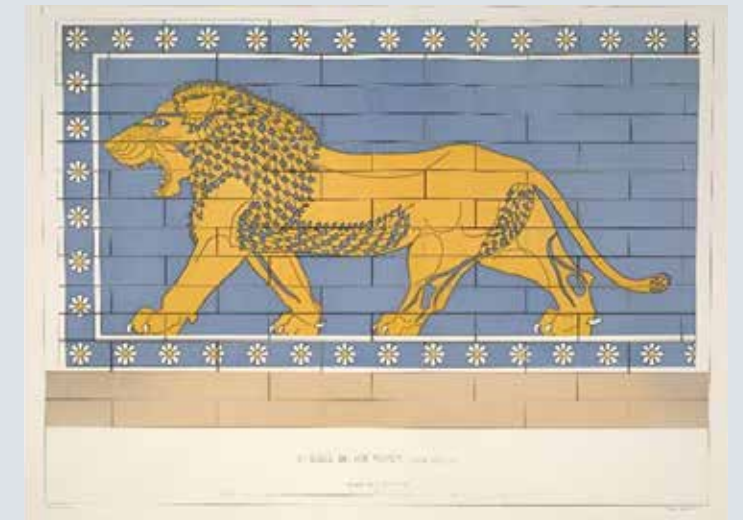
Abstract

The city of Khorsabad (ancient Dūr-Šarrukīn), the newly built capital of Sargon II of Assyria, contained multiple instances of a sequence of five images or symbols (lion, bird, bull, tree, plow) which also appeared shortened to three (lion, tree, plow). What did they mean? There is currently no consensus. This paper proposes a new solution, suggesting that the images a) symbolize specific constellations and b) represent Babylonian/Assyrian words whose sounds "spell out" Sargon's name (this works for both the long and the short version). Combining these two traits, the effect of the symbols was to assert that Sargon's name was written in the heavens, for all eternity, and also to associate him with the gods Anu and Enlil, to whom the constellations in question were linked. It is further suggested that Sargon's name was elsewhere symbolized by a lion passant (pacing lion), through a bilingual pun.

<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/epdf/10.1086/730377> Volume 391



Late 19th century drawings of the tree and plow symbols published by French excavator Victor Place. Credit: New York Public Library



Late 19th century drawings of the lion symbol published by French excavator Victor Place. Credit: New York Public Library

OPPOSITE PAGE: Late 19th century drawings of the eagle and bull symbols published by French excavator Victor Place. Credit: New York Public Library



A member of the Khabour Guards (MNK) Assyrian Syrian militia, affiliated with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), walks in the ruins of the Assyrian Church of the Virgin Mary, which was previously destroyed by Islamic State (IS) group fighters, in the village of Tal Nasri south of the town of Tal Tamr in Syria's northeastern Hasakah province on Nov. 15, 2019.

Ten Years After ISIS Invaded Mosul—Where Does That Leave Iraq's Indigenous Assyrians? | Opinion

Published Jun 27, 2024

By **Ramsen Shamon**, Deputy Opinion Editor, Newsweek

My relatives fled Mosul to save their lives before ISIS invaded and seized power in the summer of 2014. The invasion of Iraq's second largest city not only uprooted my relatives, Indigenous Assyrians, but it also led to the genocide of Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs (Christians), as well as Shiite Muslims, and Yazidis. Ten years have passed since radical Islamic militants invaded Mosul, known as biblical Nineveh, once a capital of the ancient Assyrian empire, destroying anything and killing anyone who did not submit to their deranged version of Islam. Have things improved for Iraq's Indigenous Assyrians following ISIS' defeat?

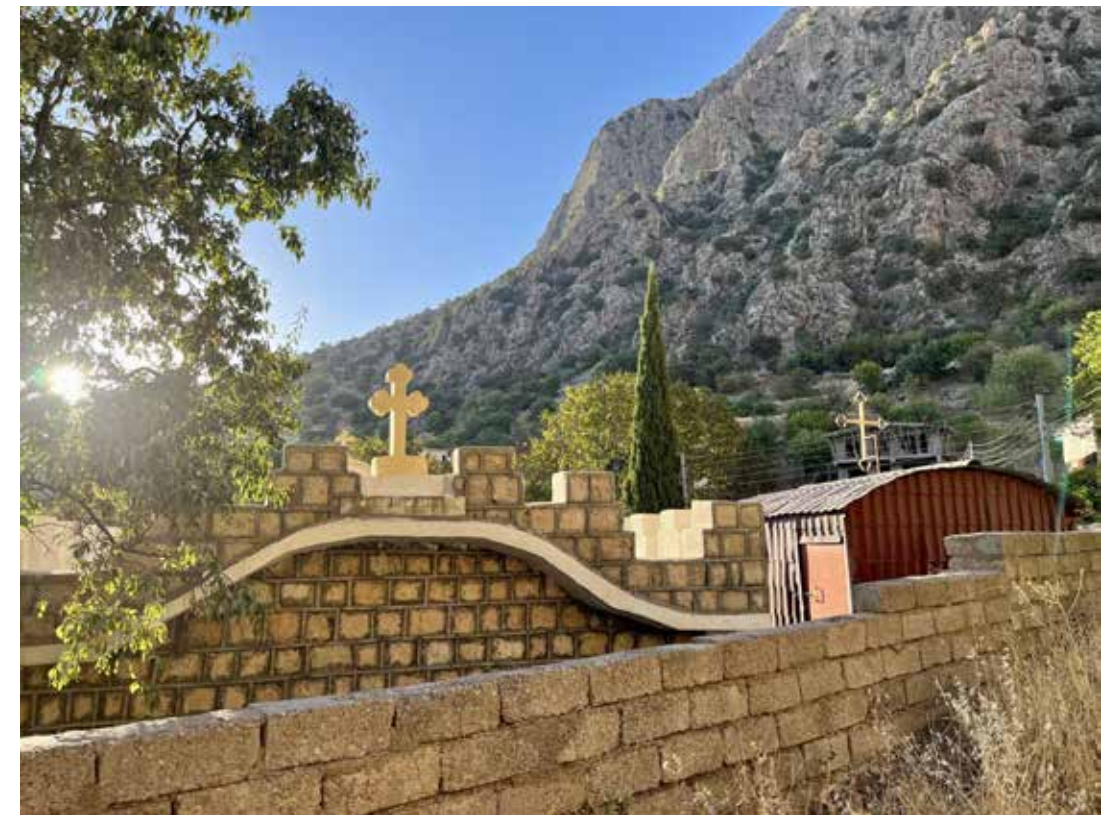
In 2014, I was a graduate journalism student in Chicago, alarmed at the news occurring half a world away—where my relatives, whom I had never met at the time, were facing religious persecution head-on.

I recall telling my classmates that the invasion of Mosul would lead to widespread destruction in the region and the genocide of those who did not submit to their radical ways. I was met with laughs and shrugs—they couldn't care less and did not believe ISIS would turn into what it infamously became—a nonstop killing machine, hungry to control more swaths of land at the expense of Indigenous Communities, whose art they destroyed and sold on the black market in their lucrative "antiquities division." The response from my colleagues shouldn't have surprised me then, as the plight of Indigenous Peoples is often overlooked, time and time again, the world over. As gruesome reports emerged, my classmates later conducted their reporting on how Chicagoans were being impacted by events

occurring in the Middle East.

Putting the destruction of millennia-old art aside, many suffered greatly at the hands of ISIS. And some families are still suffering. Women and girls remain missing. Taken as sexual slaves by ISIS militants, Yazidis and some Assyrians were forcibly abducted from their families and told to convert and submit. An estimated 2,700 girls are missing today. The world has overlooked their plight and the plight of those who survived the genocide at the hands of radical Islamic terrorists. With headlines refreshing every 24 hours, there is little to no attention offered to those that lived under ISIS' wrath—attention that was minimal while events were occurring in real time.

Assyrians, much like their fellow citizens in Iraq, were not compensated for the destruction of their homes and places of worship by terrorists, nor for having to essentially start their lives over from scratch—whether within Iraq, or outside the country. While baseless Iraqi laws



Saint Odisho Monastery in northern Iraq is pictured. The monastery was previously bombed and destroyed by both Saddam Hussein and Kurdish forces. The Assyrian community in the diaspora raised funds multiple times for its reconstruction...



Faces of characters from a biblical scene painted on the side of a church have been defaced by Islamic State during their occupation of the predominantly Christian village of Bartella on Oct. 23, 2016, in CARL COURT/GETTY IMAGES

exist to "ensure" compensation from hardships and honoring the rights of diverse groups within the country, corruption and disenfranchisement reign supreme and are tokens of Iraqi politics. What justice can be granted to survivors when justice does not exist in Iraq?

My relatives fled Mosul to save their lives before ISIS invaded and seized power in the summer of 2014. The invasion of Iraq's second largest city not only uprooted my relatives, Indigenous Assyrians, but it also led to the genocide of Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs (Christians), as well as Shiite Muslims, and Yazidis. Ten years have passed since radical Islamic militants invaded Mosul, known as biblical Nineveh, once a capital of the ancient Assyrian empire, destroying anything and killing anyone who did not submit to their deranged version of Islam. Have things improved for Iraq's Indigenous

Assyrians following ISIS' defeat?

In 2014, I was a graduate journalism student in Chicago, alarmed at the news occurring half a world away—where my relatives, whom I never met at the time, were facing religious persecution head-on.

Much of the reconstruction of destroyed buildings lays on the shoulders of Assyrians in the diaspora, who raise funds to rebuild churches, support local businesses, and try to safeguard what dwindling numbers of the Indigenous Community remains despite the odds stacked up against them. Organizations like the Assyrian Aid Society, A Demand For Action, Shlama Foundation, Iraqi Christian Relief Council, Nineveh Rising, and Yazda work tirelessly and step in to provide aid and fund essential economic and rebuilding projects in Iraq, where the Iraqi government is virtually nonexistent.

Pre-2003, the Christians in Iraq numbered 1.5 million. That number is now estimated to be between 100,000-200,000. The dismal figure highlights the exodus of Iraq's Indigenous Peoples due to war and persecution throughout recent years, and a lack of support from both the international community at-large and Iraq's federal government in addressing persecution and discrimination in Iraqi society. While Pope Francis' 2021 trip to Iraq was met with much fanfare, ultimately very little changed for local Christians following the historic visit.

A NGO will occasionally chip in with the remodeling of a destroyed church. Recently, UNESCO helped rebuild a church in Mosul, 10 years after it was destroyed. That begs the question: What is the point of rebuilding and remodeling churches if there are no congregants to pray in God's home? Much of Mosul today has nowhere near the Christians it once had, and it

isn't easy to project if they will ever return. My relatives have not returned to their home in Mosul but have sought refuge in a neighboring Iraqi city. Others who lived under ISIS have entirely left Iraq.

The reality of not fleeing from one's home for safety is not the basis for one to live freely and with respect. Sure, fighting due to ISIS has relatively ceased and is not disrupting the lives of Assyrians in Iraq. But combat, in general, has not stopped. Turkey's incremental encroachment in northern Iraq against Kurdish militants belonging to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which the U.S. classified as terrorists, is ongoing. Assyrians and their ancestral lands, especially in the Nahla Valley, are once again in crossfire and such a reality seems difficult to change with virtually no support from outside the community. The existence of Assyrians and Yazidis on their Indigenous lands remains precarious at best.



This picture taken on Nov. 19, 2021, shows a view of the rubble of broken tombstones, damaged by Islamic State (IS) group fighters during their occupation of northern Iraq, at the Chaldean Monastery of St....More ZAID AL-OBEIDI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Restoration of Mor Kiryakus Monastery Underway

Editor : Koray Erdoğan
2024-06-04

In Batman's Besiri district, the restoration of the 1600-year-old Mor Kiryakus Monastery, built by Assyrian Christians in the fifth century, is nearing completion. While the entrance gate and the burial chamber of the monastery were renovated, the church and the central courtyard were restored. The monastery will make an important contribution to tourism. With the completion of the restoration, a new tourism destination is expected to emerge.

Provincial Culture and Tourism Director Mehmet Ihsan Aslanli said the restoration work started in 2017 and was carried out in three stages. With the completion of the monastery restoration, Batman will gain a new tourism destination. With the creation of this new route, Batman tradesmen are likely to benefit from increased tourism revenues.

Easier access and increased tourist interest

In a move to highlight the historical significance and tourism potential of a monastery near Hasankeyf, an alternative road has been constructed to improve accessibility for visitors. This development, coupled with the monastery's inclusion on new destination lists by tour operators and the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies, is expected to boost tourist interest in the area significantly.

After the restoration of the monastery is completed, it will be transformed into a memorial museum, preserving its rich history, while also reopening its doors for worship by Assyrian Christians. These developments are anticipated to significantly increase tourist arrivals in Batman.



The entrance door and the burial chamber of the monastery built by Assyrian Christians in the fifth century in the village of Ayranci in Batman have been renovated, while the church and the central courtyard have been restored



Existential Concerns, Resilience and Coping Among Assyrian Refugees

By Önver Cetre PhD
2024-07-03



Collective ritual mourning of friends and relatives, Assyrian refugees in Istanbul

Introduction

Life stories often include accounts of adversity, danger, and struggle. The stories are also about overcoming those dangers, about heroism and transformation, sometimes on one's own and sometimes with the guidance of a magical force (Masten, 2014). Such stories capture a fundamental truth about our human nature - that resilience grows out of crisis and out of everyday experience (Masten, 2014). This is expressed in the two excerpts above from the Epic of Gilgamesh, one of crisis and trauma, including the fear of death, and the other of resilience and coping, reflecting change and growth.

Throughout this chapter, the voices of Assyrian refugees reveal the emotional challenges experienced as a result of war and migration, drawn from two research projects I was involved in: Assyrian-Iraqi refugees in Sweden between 2010-2013 (see Cetrez et al., 2021a and Sundvall et al., 2020) and Assyrian-Syrian refugees in Istanbul using Turkey as a transit country between 2014-2016 (see Cetrez & DeMarinis, 2017, Cetrez & Balkir, 2020; Balkir & Cetrez, 2017).

Concepts: trauma, resilience, resilience, existential

Symptoms of trauma such as insomnia, anxiety, and lack of security, as expressed by this Assyrian-Syrian woman: "I feel stressed. I think a lot and I can't sleep until 4 o'clock in the morning." Another Assyrian-Iraqi woman and mother expressed the difficult trauma of the war:

"I don't feel safe anymore. I belong to the Assyrian minority. We feel threatened by ISIS, which wants to kill us. I'm tired of this miserable situation we live in."

These emotional reactions would fit the definition of trauma (APA, 2024), which is described as an emotional response to a dramatic event that exceeds an individual's normal capacity to cope with adversity. In order to understand the individual refugees and their reactions, we need to become familiar with a few more concepts: resilience, coping, existential, and meaning.

Resilience and Coping:

Psychologist Ann Masten has succinctly defined resilience as "positive adaptation in situations of risk and adversity" (Masten, 2014:9). A characteristic of resilience, according to psychologist Michael Ungar (2021), is the willingness to learn, i.e., to try new solutions to deal with the stresses that arise, to learn from each attempt, and to integrate failure and success into future strategies.

When we face an event (stressor) more challenging than usual, it results in distress and we try to cope by using strategies to manage the stress (Biggs, et al., 2017). The coping process produces an outcome that is either favourable, unfavourable, or unresolved (Biggs, et al., 2017). Here are two different coping strategies. A young Assyrian woman expressed how she would deal with past stress and, based on her own coping style, she is confident that she can handle future challenges:

I've been through a lot of terrible things and I've been able to deal with them, so now I have the courage to do anything. [...] There is still something in me, jokes, laughter, humour.

"Enkidu my friend, companion of my youth, together we faced battle, we scaled mountains...

Now he lies lifeless... Shall I too one day lie in the dust...?" (Gilgamesh: Tablet VII)

"Let us go up on the wall of Uruk... Look upon its foundations, inspect its brickwork! Built it not to endure forever?" (Gilgamesh: Tablet XII)

Sara, however, a middle-aged Assyrian-Syrian woman, found herself in a situation new for her, and she wasn't able to perform the traditional burial ritual, a crucial coping method to deal with the loss of her husband:

"My husband had smuggled his way to Sweden. We knew he would face many challenges along the way. He arrived safely and was in the process of applying for family reunification when we received the terrible news. The phone rang, it was our relatives from Sweden. They told me that my husband had suddenly died of a heart attack. I fell to the floor. How could that happen, just like that? I couldn't believe it. I was in Istanbul with two children and I could not go to Sweden or back to Syria. But that wasn't the hardest part. The hardest part was that I couldn't be with my husband at that moment. I felt an emptiness when I couldn't bury him. All my dignity as a human being was taken away. My hair turned completely grey overnight.

Resilience as Evolving:

Resilience as a concept has not escaped criticism. Much resilience research in the past, and still today, has shown an overemphasis on individual attributes and capacities that people are assumed to have or not have (Simich & Andermann, 2014; Ungar, 2012). From a feminist perspective, resilience is criticised for focusing primarily on resources and access and what is given rather than what is physical, historical, or ongoing. As such, resilience reveals the vulnerability and power injustices women face. This leaves the person with a sense of guilt, failure and pain, or insufficiency, both towards the original culture and its structures, and in the new situation, as expressed by Seyde, a young Assyrian-Syrian mother with two young children in Istanbul:

"I grew up in a safe home. I remember my playful childhood with my brothers and sisters. Then I

went to university, looked forward to marriage, and imagined a life where I would continue to develop as a woman. But things changed. My husband and in-laws had other plans. They restricted my freedom. I entered the marriage cage, which wasn't golden at all, but more like a prison. I had to stay at home and only take

care of the household and my in-laws. I felt like I was living in a cage, with the door open but unable to fly out. I was emotionally broken. Then came the war and my situation became worse and worse. I wanted to flee with my husband and children. But he did not want to leave his parents behind. I felt abandoned, but also somewhat liberated. In the midst of all this, I imagined a new life, where I could realise myself and my children's future. Even now, in Istanbul, I would say [I am] a bird in a cage with the door open, but unable to fly out. There is something blocking me. [...] There is fear. Maybe a desire to be strong and mighty, to carry all the responsibilities and burdens on my shoulders and not want to fall down. Is it possible that one day I can go out and find my freedom and be in a safe place?"

Seyde made it to Europe, smuggled by boat with her two children through the dangerous Aegean Sea route. In this and similar stories, we see resilience as historical, cultural, and physical, where women's migration is linked to family



A young man painting, as part of the therapeutic activities at Qnushyo, Istanbul.

school, learn the new language, and one day have a better life:

"My children are my eyes, my love, and everything to me. [I am living this time for my children. I want to guarantee them a better future.]"

Resilience, then, is better described by what is to come, and what is evolving, albeit from a difficult moment of crisis.

Existential as Form and Content:

Psychologists have approached the existential with different perspectives and explanations. One of the most influential has been psychologist E. Yalom, who has described the existential as human reflection on the ultimate questions of life: death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness (1980). However, the existential literature in psychology is primarily concerned with individual expressions of illness, with limited connection to community, institutional, political, or historical dimensions. How should we understand the voices described in the introduction who cry that they have no goals or hope for the future, who worry about their children now and the parents they left behind, or who are targeted as a community? These feelings are not isolated psychological matters, free from bio-socio-ecological determinants or structures. For this purpose, I will use three concepts of the Mexican philosopher E. Uranga (2021), who discusses the existential with attention to the cultural and historical dimensions and in the context of indigenous populations. He uses three concepts, *insufficiency*, *nepantla*, and *zozobra*.

Ontologically, *insufficiency* refers to a lack of being in human existence, the individual always existing in a state of dependence, unfulfillment, and incompleteness (Uranga, 2021:78-79).

The second concept, *nepantla*, refers to being "in between," on the way from one place to another, in the midst of crisis or change, or living in a state of pendulum (Uranga, 2021:79-80). Uranga reflects on the conditions of the migrant as an "endless journey, always in transit," away from one's origins and roots, to which one cannot return, to a destination and a life that one may never fully arrive at or that may never welcome one (pp. 80-81).

Uranga's third concept, *zozobra*, consists of feelings of anxiety, angst, fear, unease, etc (Uranga, 2021). According to Uranga, this way of being and how it takes form results in pain and suffering (p. 88).

By paying attention to resilience, coping, and existential among refugees and analysing these experiences from both Yalom's and Uranga's perspectives, we can broaden the

use of the term, address the criticisms raised earlier, and ultimately fill a knowledge gap.

Existential conflicts and insufficiency Freedom reveals the human conflict between our confrontation with groundlessness and our desire for ground and structure, an existential concern, according to Yalom (1980). It is closely related to the responsibility to shape one's own destiny and future. Responsibility, in turn, is linked to a sense of existential guilt in trying to fulfil one's potential, in self-realisation and in the search for autonomy, as expressed earlier by Seyde, the university educated Assyrian-Syrian woman who felt her freedom restricted by her in-laws and paradoxically saw the war as a way to free herself from given structures.

In many of our interviews, the feeling of guilt emerges, guilt for having abandoned one's own goals and opportunities, as in Seyde's case. It is usually about abandoning someone, as expressed by other migrants who feel guilty about leaving their parents. It is also about leaving someone behind or not being able to attend a funeral, as in Sara's case. But if we stop here in our analysis of the refugee experience as an existential dilemma between ground and groundlessness, we will end up with an understanding of the refugee as powerless, as lacking agency, as weak, which in turn represents a view of the migration as a failure. This is why Uranga's understanding that, ontologically, human beings are never fully sufficient is necessary. Rather, humans always exist in a state of dependence, unfulfillment, and incompleteness (Uranga, 2021:79). Thus, in this framework, Assyrian refugees are not *less than* or inferior to others because of their experiences. Instead, their sense of inadequacy is "the outward manifestation of a deeper, but entirely human, existential or ontological condition of insecurity and lack" (p. 79), as also described by Uranga.

Existential as in-betweenness Isolation, as an existential concern, according to Yalom, is when the individual feels alone in the world while at the same time longing for protection, contact, and being part of a larger whole. For the migrant, existential isolation could be when the person loses ground and is no longer able to interpret events through the worldview once formed. This consists of disappointments in life, feelings of guilt, abandonment by God, and loss of faith, as Maryam, the young Assyrian-Syrian woman, expressed when I met her in Istanbul. She had been on the road for several years trying to find a way to Europe:

"All my childhood I had been active in the church choir. I was confirmed and had a strong faith. One day the war came. My parents sent me to another



Keeping the passport dry, during the smuggling over the Aegean Sea

country in the Middle East. They were too old to escape themselves. I left them with others, but I was not sure they would be well cared for. I spent a year in a monastery. I thought I would meet people with more spirituality, but instead I was very disappointed. I was treated badly. At the same time, I heard that my parents had died, which made me feel very guilty. I began to have trouble sleeping. Now I have lost my faith in a good God. The reason is the war. When you pray and pray to God and you need Him and He is not with you, your faith becomes weaker and weaker. You fall down. [...] I feel far away and angry with God right now. Let him leave me alone. I have been with him all my life and now where is God in what is happening to me?

As we see from Maryam's experience, feeling alone inside, in relation to others, and in relation to something larger is an existential conflict. However, the emotional consequence of being isolated, feeling discomfort, anxiety, or fear, are also characteristics of human nature. From

the perspective of *neplanta*, being in the midst of a crisis, transformation, or shift in worldview is also a process of becoming. Moreover, as Uranga points out, indigenous people as a collective experience a sense of insecurity, of always being in transition and in "an exhausting process of becoming" (2021:81). For minorities like the Assyrians, being alone in this world is a collective experience, even a matter of heritage and a fear of cultural extinction. They experience oppression and flight because of their ethno-religious affiliation, which becomes a symbolic pain they bear collectively, as expressed here by an Assyrian-Iraqi woman: "*We never feel safe because we are always a target*" (see more below).

An existential goal to find meaning in suffering

Yalom describes meaning as *coherence*, that life has a purpose. It is related to *meaning*, that our experiences and actions have meaning for us. For many refugees, these aspects, and especially living for one's children, are powerful expressions of meaning. However, when one is in transition, in limbo, or more concretely, when conditions change and one's situation is uncertain, meaning easily turns into meaninglessness, as Sara experienced when her husband died in Sweden and she was stuck in Istanbul. Sara's experience shows how quickly meaning can turn into meaninglessness, with conflict and pain. This is an existential concern, also as Uranga describes it, as "that feeling of *drowning* and breathlessness experienced by one who, in the throes of anxiety, hyperventilates, coming in and out of consciousness" (Uranga, 2021:85, italics in original). The emotional aspect of existential, *zozobra*, refers to Sara's feelings of being "in suspense, in oscillation" (p. 86). In the existential state, the person is "constitutively fragile" (p. 86), exposed to a rough order, and never able to know who or what to count on.

Intense anxiety, a threat to one's life, and fear of one's possibilities all express a weakened sense of security. More than a threat to individual existence, refugees also express the fear of extinction in collective terms, as expressed by an Assyrian-Iraqi woman now living in Sweden:

"It is different for us Christians. We never feel safe because we are always a target. It is 'halal' (clean) to kill us. We are always worried about our families and children.

This fear of death is not expressed primarily as an individual concern, but rather on a collective level, as a fear of group extinction.

Again, where we see hopelessness and existential meaninglessness, Uranga sees hope. Despite the suffering and pain of these existential conditions, he writes, "life itself is a pendulum" (p. 87), simultaneously dependent on two extremes, holding on to both ends of the chain. Suffering, Uranga concludes, when communicated and shared with others, becomes visible and recognized by others and recognized in others, creating a sense of sharing, community, and a sense that we are in this world together.

Closure

Throughout this chapter, we have had a glimpse into the feelings and thoughts of different individuals, all of whom have gone through very difficult experiences. It is in this context of crisis that many individuals found strength in hope for a better future, in prayer and collective rituals, in a better future for their children, in a goal to fulfil their dreams, in a search for freedom and peace, and in adherence to positive human values where people are treated with justice and respect. Seyde, quoted earlier, captures the multifaceted dimension of existential and resilience when she says:

"I want to believe that this is temporary, not permanent. I have hope. One day I will be in a better situation. We cannot live like this all the time. This is something I have to endure and deal with. Hope is always there. Hope never stops. There are some periods when you get a broken heart or feel down, but they are short. My faith always helps me and gives me motivation.

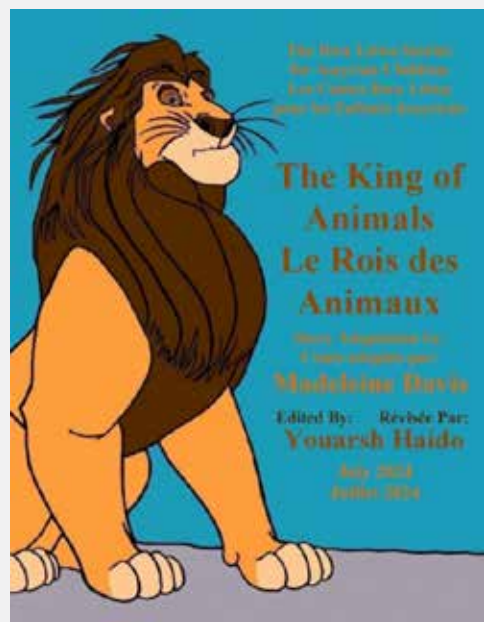
The examples in this chapter of dealing with existential conflicts tell us something different in part from what we have heard before. Much of the previous focus on existential meaning has been on personal crises in an otherwise stable society, emphasising the individual's experience of coherence and meaning. In addition to understanding existential meaning as individual-centred, we also need to understand it as *relational*. In the case of migrants, the crisis is caused by a collapse at the societal level, by the failure of the superordinate systems, and has consequences at the individual level. This shows very clearly how different systems are interconnected and how a single collapse triggers a crisis in other systems.

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**The King of Animals
By Madeleine Davis**

"The King of Animals" is a new story book for Assyrian kids. If you think they already know the story of Lion King and will not be interested in this Assyrian version, please read the outline below:



Ayrouk, the young lion cub, believes his father, the ruler of the animal kingdom, is just and wise. He does not know that in fact, Adouhia, is a cruel king who devours other animals and allows the lions and even the hyenas to kill innocent animals relentlessly. He has even chained his own brother who together with a group of other lions and lionesses protested against the king's policy and insisted that they should stop eating fellow animals. Moreover, Adouhia neglects nature and does not care for plants, trees and the well-being of the animals living in his kingdom. And as his territory turns almost into a desert and half of the animals are forced to move to greener countries, the wild bulls plot to kill Adouhia. When Ayrouk discovers the truth about his father he is devastated and when he witnesses his assassination by the wild bulls, fear paralyzes him. Read the story of Ayrouk, the young lion cub and discover his destiny.

This book is now available from Lulu.com. and these are the details:

This book is sold for \$12, and the direct link is:
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Book Specifications

Book Size: US Letter (8.5 x 11 in / 216 x 279 mm)
 Page Count: 54 Pages
 Interior Color: Black & White Standard
 Paper Type: 60# White
 Book Binding: Paperback
 Cover Finish: Glossy

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**The Oldest Kitchen in the World:
4,000 Years of Middle Eastern
Cooking Passed Down through
Generation**

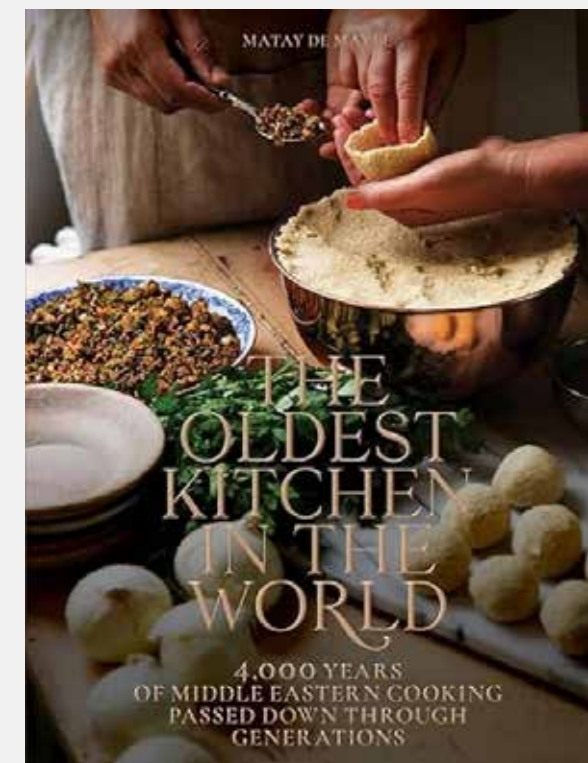
By Matay de Mayee

"A rare and fascinating insight into an ancient and delicious cuisine. This is the best sort of cook book—with time-honoured recipes from the heart of a home."

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Discover the oldest, most authentic cuisine in the world in this unique cookbook that explores the basis of all cuisines in the Middle East.

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The Oldest Kitchen in the World describes both the oldest cuisine in the world and the culture of the Assyrians. Now scattered all over the world, they all still speak dialects of Aramaic, and more importantly: they still cook the dishes that all Middle Eastern kitchens are indebted to.



Hardcover – September 24, 2024 by Matay de Mayee (Author)
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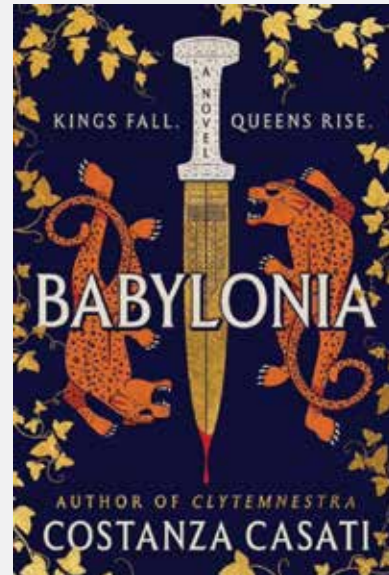
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Babylonia

By Costanza Casati

Exclusive Cover Reveal + Q&A: Costanza Casati's Babylonia Brings the Story of Semiramis to Life

By [Lacy Baugher Milas](#) | June 20, 2024 | 10:00am
[BOOKS FEATURES COSTANZA CASATI](#)



Costanza Casati's debut novel *Clytemnestra* is a fierce, feminist Greek mythology retelling that asks its readers to rethink their preconceived ideas about the frequently reviled queen (and murderer) who appears in everything from Homer to Aeschylus to Sophocles. (Spoiler alert: [It's great](#), and spends most of its time digging into the aspects of *Clytemnestra's* story that aren't as familiar to modern readers.) Now, Casati's latest book, titled *Babylonia*, aims to shift its focus to another often misunderstood woman from ancient history and legend: Semiramis.

Don't know much about Semiramis? Well, you're likely not alone. The Assyrian Empire's only female ruler, the legendary queen held the throne in her own right while she waited for her young son, Adad Nirari III, to come of age. This is remarkable for many reasons, not the least of which being that, historically speaking, women were not allowed to hold positions of power or authority in the Assyrian Empire. So how Semiramis rose to become queen—and, perhaps more importantly, how she held on to that power and what ways she chose to wield it—are themes and questions that *Babylonia* will undoubtedly explore.

Here's how the publisher describes the story.

When kings fall, queens rise.

Nothing about Semiramis's upbringing could have foretold her legacy or the power she would come to wield. A female ruler, once an orphan raised on the outskirts of an empire – certainly no one in Ancient Assyria would bend to her command willingly. Semiramis was a woman who knew if she wanted power, she would have to claim it.

There are whispers of her fame in Mesopotamian myth—Semiramis was a queen, an ambitious warrior, a commander whose reputation reaches the majestic proportions of Alexander the Great. Historical record, on the other hand, falls eerily quiet.

In her second novel, Costanza Casati brilliantly weaves myth and ancient history together to give Semiramis a voice, charting her captivating ascent to a throne no one promised her. The world Casati expertly builds is rich with dazzling detail and will transport her readers to the heat of the Assyrian Empire and a world long gone.

Babylonia won't hit shelves until January 14, 2025, but we're thrilled to be able to bring you a first look at its (gorgeous!) cover right now.

We also had the chance to sit down with Casati herself to talk about her second novel, what researching Semiramis's story involved, and lots more.

Paste Magazine: Tell us a little bit about *Babylonia*! What can readers expect from the story?

Costanza Casati: *Babylonia* is set in the world of Ancient Mesopotamia, 'the land between the two rivers', and it tells the story of orphan Semiramis and the infamous love triangle that made her the only female ruler of the empire of Ancient Assyria. Semiramis is a legendary figure, based on the real-life historical queen Sammu-ramat, who, in the 9th century BCE, ruled an empire that stretched from the Mediterranean coast in Syria to present-day Western Iran.

Babylonia is partly myth retelling, partly historical fiction and it is a novel about female power, desire and ambition, love in the

face of loss, the tragic consequences of war, and the quest for immortality.

Paste: Your most recent novel, *Clytemnestra*, was about one of the most well-known women from Greek mythology. What made you want to tell the story of Semiramis next, who is a figure that I suspect is much less familiar to modern readers?

Casati: I discovered the figure of Semiramis while reading a collection of women's biographies from the ancient world. She was a queen, warrior, and commander who rose from humble beginnings to rule one of the most powerful empires in the world. According to the myth, she built monumental cities and campaigned as far as India—she is depicted almost a female Alexander the Great.

What really fascinated me was her extraordinary rise to power: Semiramis was an orphan raised in the outskirts of the empire. When a governor named Onnes, the most trusted advisor and friend to king Ninus, visited her village, she caught his attention, and he brought her with him to the Assyrian capital. Here, her story unfolds in a tragic cycle of ambition, desire, and betrayal.

Paste: How was doing the research for *Babylonia* different from that for *Clytemnestra*? Particularly since there are so few historical sources versus your previous book (not that I know if Aeschylus particularly counts as a historical source haha!)

Casati: The research process was very different for *Babylonia*. When I wrote *Clytemnestra*, I was already familiar with the Greek myths, plays, and epics. While I knew who Semiramis was and knew a little bit about the world of Ancient Mesopotamia, it wasn't enough to write a whole book about it.

Interestingly, there are far more historical sources on Ancient Assyria than on Bronze Age Greece. I did a lot of research into the myths surrounding Semiramis, into Ancient Mesopotamian literature—which is incredibly rich, considering this is the place where writing was invented and where the first epic was written, a thousand years before *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*—and into the history of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Just like with *Clytemnestra*, my research focused on both the cultural aspect of this world—their perception of love and death, their proverbs and superstitions, the role of ghosts and spirits etc.—and the more practical aspect—the structure of the palaces and temples, the bas-reliefs that covered every wall, the food, the war tactics and so on.

I discovered a fascinating world where beauty and brutality coexisted. At some point in my novel, Ninus, King of Assyria, says, 'My father believed brutality made things beautiful'. This is the Assyrian world in a nutshell: a luxurious, but dangerous place where my characters fight to survive.

Paste: Did you learn anything about Semiramis' life or legend that surprised you or that you're particularly excited to bring to readers?

Casati: For me, the choice of a story always comes from having a strong emotional reaction to a particular scene or moment from myth or history. In the case of Semiramis' legend, it was the love triangle between her, the governor and the king that caught my attention and made me obsessed with the story.

According to the myth, after Semiramis joins Onnes and Ninus on a campaign to the faraway land of Bactria, the king falls in love with her. But this isn't a traditional love triangle. In *Babylonia*, the three main characters are, at different points in the novel, all involved with one another. So rather than having two characters fight over a third, as often happens with love triangles in fiction, here all three characters desire one another, live for one another, cannot feel whole without each other.

Paste: Mythological retellings and reimaginings that focus on the often forgotten or unfairly maligned women of history are such a popular subgenre in publishing right now. What do you think it is about these sorts of stories that are so appealing to readers?

Casati: I think readers love to see that women in power have always existed, no matter how much history tried to erase them.

Retellings can be either about bringing a lesser-known character to the spotlight and retelling a myth through her perspective, or casting an infamous character in a new light. My writing focuses on the latter. Both *Clytemnestra* and *Semiramis* were incredibly powerful in the original myths, but then, because of centuries of reading these stories through the patriarchal lenses, they have been reduced to stereotypes: in the case of *Clytemnestra*, she has been cast as the archetype of the 'bad wife', while *Semiramis* has become the embodiment of 'lust and evil.'

But if we look at the original stories, in the play *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus, *Clytemnestra* is a woman in power, eloquent and unapologetic, a ruler who is not influenced by other people's opinions of her. Similarly, *Semiramis* in the myth as recounted by ancient historian Diodorus Siculus is called "the most renowned of all women of whom we have any record". She is skilled, intelligent, and resourceful, a survivor who fought against all the tragedies that befell her.

***Babylonia* will be released on January 14, 2025, but you can [pre-order it right now](#).**

Lacy Baugher Milas is the Books Editor at Paste Magazine, but loves nerding out about all sorts of pop culture. You can find her on Twitter [@LacyMB](#)

Lady and the Ocean
By Marina Benjamin



Vasili Shoumanov designed the Assyrian cover for the book written by Marina Benjamin titled; "Wild Embers".

The author, Marina Benjamin, painted herself the cover for the book titled "The Lady and the Ocean".

Marina Benjamin, a distinguished poet rooted in rich cultural heritage, is proud to announce the release of two remarkable new works. The first is *Wild Embers*, a collection of poetry written in the Assyrian language, a passionate and evocative exploration of identity, memory, and resilience. In addition, she is excited to present *Lady and the Ocean*, the English translation of her first celebrated book, offering readers a chance to dive into the poetic expressions of longing and connection that have captivated her audiences from the very beginning. If interested in attaining your copy of these two books, please contact (marinaishtar@hotmail.com)

Assyrian-English Dictionary
www.sharrukin.io

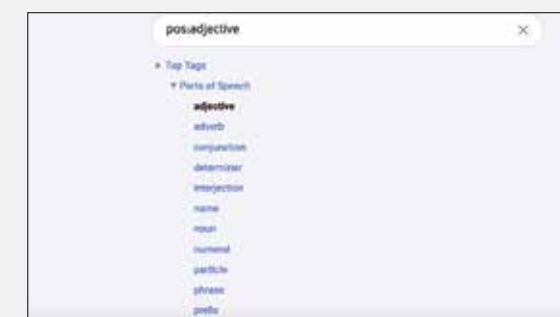


One of the features is a visualized verb conjugator where the semitic tri-root is represented by 3 colored boxes, each containing a letter of the root



You can test this out by clicking/tapping on the colorful button in these two links

<https://www.sharrukin.io/assyrian-dictionary/?search=pos:verb>
<https://www.sharrukin.io/assyrian-dictionary/?search=pos:root>



my projects (github repo)

ordered from oldest to newest

- assyrian aramaic bible - directly translated from the koine greek new testament
- assyrian-english transliterator - also works for western assyrian (suryoyo/surayt)
- searchable assyrian bible - find examples of assyrians words used in sentences
- assyrian-english dictionary - accounts for bulk of traffic to sharrukin.io
- new bet nahrain - a poem written by my dad

my assyrian heritage

- ancestors on both sides my family fled during sayfo - some were killed on my dad's side
- in the early 1960s my mom's dad built the modern church with a spire for the assyrian church of the east's st mary church in iran
- i made my first website in 2002 out of kitschy web 1.0 scraps (jokerman, comic sans, aim) for my youth group at the assyrian evangelical church



Assyrian Mar Youkhanna Church in Adeb (Ada)

By Hannibal Gevargis
Translated and Abridged By Dr. Arianne Ishaya

Ada in the Passage of Time

Foreword:

Hannibal Gevargis is an Assyrian scholar with a vast library of first-hand documents on the history of the Assyrians. He is the type of historian whose writings are based on authentic sources. His book on the Assyrian village of Ada is no exception. Every account is referenced from sources such as the monthly periodical *Kokhva* which was in publication from 1906-1917 in Urmia, American missionary documents dating back to the 19th century, and Iranian archival sources.

Ada is one of the most ancient villages of Christian Assyrian era. Unfortunately, no written documents have survived its early history. The only evidence of its antiquity is the surviving churches that have withstood the vagaries of time. According to the records of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage of Western Azerbaijan, The Mar Daniel shrine, the patron saint of the village of Ada, dates back to the time of the Sassanid kings that ruled Persia from 224-651 A.D. A second church, Mar Youkhanna, dates back to the IL khans, the Mongol dynasty that ruled Iran in the 13th century (1256-1335 A.D.).

Arianne Ishaya

Introduction:

Just as a wild wildfire strips an entire habitat of its natural and animal resources and leaves behind nothing but heaps of ash, carcasses of dead animals, and half-burnt stumps of centuries-old trees, the event of World War I left in ruins entire Assyrian communities in the Plain of Urmia. Where ancient churches were landmarks of a rich religious heritage, where schools nurtured scholars, teachers, physicians, and, poets, where farms and orchards yielded bountiful harvests due to the painstaking care of their Assyrian owners, within the course of a few months nothing remained but ruined and pillaged homes, slaughtered bodies in the streets, women raped and taken into slavery, and hundreds of children left orphaned.

The account below showcases Ada, a village in the plain of Urmia, with its rich historical and cultural heritage and the tragic arrest and ultimate destruction of all of its achievements. One laments not only the loss in the past; but the potential for future achievements of men and women that never materialized.

There were 115 villages in the plain of Urmia inhabited mostly by Assyrians who suffered the same fate as Ada from 1914-1918.

Arianne Ishaya

The Landscape of the Village:

There is a charming account of the natural beauty of the village sight by Rabi (later) Hakim Alkhas Amrikhas in a 1913 issue of the Assyrian periodical *Kokhva*¹. He writes in part,

Ada is located in a green and lush meadow dotted by trees, only two miles away from Lake Urmia. In Azari Turkish Ada means island. The reason for this appellation is that it is flanked by two rivers and several marshes.

In 1913² the Assyrian population of the village numbered 240 families. The farmland around the village is very fertile and amenable to the growing of all kinds of produce. The village is famous for its fruit orchards and vegetable gardens. In the garden of Mirza Babo a watermelon was found that weighed more than 17 kilos (37.479 pounds,)



1. *Kokhva*. January 1913. P. 148 2. Editor's Note: In 2014 there were only three Assyrian families in Ada down from 700 Assyrian families prior to the Assyrian genocide. Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Most of the land is owned by small-scale farmers; Assyrians who have invested their meager investments in farmland. They have purchased their farms from large landlords. In fact, the number of small farms is double that of the large landlords.

Although not rich, most of the Assyrian farmers live comfortably. Their income from the farms is supplemented by the young men in the family who travel across the border to Russia to engage in wage work. With their savings, they return home to invest in land.

The First Silent Movie in Urmia:

Ada was one of the most progressive villages in the plain of Urmia. Kokhva reports that in 1914 Daniel Amrikhas of Ada together with Shmoel Yohanna of Garajalou (another nearby village) brought a box containing moving images. This film was shown for the first time in the newly built residence of Shlimoon³.

The Opening of a Photography Shop in Ada:

Another innovative move was taken by Amrikhas of Ada who had learned photography in Russia. He brought his equipment to the village in 1912 and announced that whoever wanted his picture taken could see him at his residence⁴.

Schools of Ada: (1830-1918)

The first school in Ada opened in 1836. It was founded by the American missionary Dr. A. Perkins and the German [Hornell]. In its first year, it had 40 students. Dr. Perkins was amazed to see the enthusiasm of the villagers for education.

According to Hakim (Dr.) Alkhas Amrikhas in 1907 there were five schools in Ada.

1. The Church of the East school was administered by Rabi (title for a teacher) Shmoel David of Digala (A village in the plain of Urmia) and Rabi Souriya Babakhan. It had 80 students.
2. The Catholic Church school had a teacher by the name of Rabi Rakhil Khangald. It had 30 students.
3. The Protestant Church had two teachers: Rabi Khava Minaskan and Rabi Avshalim Sayad.

4 and 5. The fourth and fifth schools belonged to the Protestant Mission churches. The teacher and headmaster was Rabi Alkhas Amrikhas. The number of students in these two schools was 50. The students had to pay a nominal tuition to defray the expenses of the schools. Altogether there were 120 boys and 80 girls in these schools in 1907⁵.

Sayad Youssef and Odishoo were two students who began their education in Ada schools and went on to Mission College in Seir. Sayad graduated in 1852 and began to distribute and sell Bibles. Odishoo graduated in 1854 and became the pastor of the church in Abajaloo (a village in the plain of Urmia).

The Churches of Ada: (1830-1918)

Mar Daniel Church:

This ancient Church is located close to three miles east of the village and is built on a hilltop. It dates back to the third century A.D. It is close to the bank of the Nazlu River, and is the sanctuary of the Assyrian Church of the East. According to the archivists of the Iranian Cultural Heritage, the Church was built during the Sassanid rule in Persia. The structure is built entirely with sedimentary rocks of the golden hues of the wheat plant.

The church fell in ruins during the events of World War I but was repaired later by the residents of Ada. The distinguishing features of the sanctuary are the low entrance door and the altar arched by a Roman-style dome. The residents of Ada regard Mar Daniel as a first-century A.D. Christian saint and revere him as their patron saint.

3. Kokhva 1914. No.2. P.234 4. Kokhva 1912. No. 19, P.228 5. Kokhva 1907. No. 2. P. 140.

Mar Youkhanna Church:

According to the publications of the Ministry of the Iranian Cultural Heritage of western Azerbaijan, Mar Youkhanna is located 24 kilometers north of the town of Urmia, in the middle of the village of Ada.

This church was built in 1901 upon the ruins of an ancient church dating back to the time of Ilkhans in the 14th century A.D.

Its architectural features are outstanding and beautiful. It is built entirely with burnt brown bricks. It has a four-story tower that is built atop the entrance door. On the pinnacle is a cross that can be seen from miles away. It is the tallest building in the village.

St Mary's Catholic Church:

This church is located steps away from Mar Youkhanna Church. It dates back to the second half of the 19th century. Two prominent clergies are buried on the premises of this sanctuary. One is pastor Gevargis who was purportedly the founder of this Church. The other is Mar Yossip. The inscription on his tomb reads (1779-1876) as to the date of birth and death. There are two other tombs located outside of the sanctuary flanking the entrance door. The first is that of Eshoo Mar Yossip who passed away in 1914 at the age of 95. The second is Polus Mar Yossip who passed away in 1941 at the age of 73.

The Protestant Church was built in 1888 with the financial help of the American Mission in Urmia. The Pentecostal Church was built in 1931. This denomination was established in Ada in the year 1910-1911. Brother Yaccub, the father of Dr. Aprim Eshaq, the famous economic advisor to the United Nations. He had received religious training in Russia, and upon his return to Ada he began to pastor the Pentecostal church.

Distinguished Clergy of Ada: (1830-1918)

Hannibal Gevargis provides a profile of 11 distinguished clergies who were of Ada ancestry. Only those who served before World War I are mentioned below.

- Mar Yossip collaborated with Dr. Perkins to open the first school in Ada in April of 1836. This was the first coeducational school in all of Iran where both boys and girls could study side by side.
- Mar Yossip is listed as one of the five most distinguished priests of the Assyrian Church of the East⁶.
- Pastor Gevargis Arkan Chimeh of the Catholic Church who passed away in 1907 after 20 years of service⁷
- Rev. Enwiya of Wazirava was the minister of the Evangelical Church in Ada and passed away in 1907 after 18 years of service.
- Pastor Ravoul Arsanis was born in Ada (1884-1957). He received his training in the Assyrian Church of the East from Mar Timotheus the archbishop of Malabar in India.
- Pastor Eshoo Beit Mar Yossip was a minister of the Evangelical Church in Ada and served for 18 years. He passed away in 1907⁸.

The Famous women from Ada (1830-1918):

Hannibal Gevargis presents 10 distinguished women from Ada. Only those who lived before 1918 are mentioned below.

- Rabi Louise Urshan (1908-1949). The daughter of Rabi Aprim Urshan, was a graduate of Sage Mission College in USA. For some time she was the private instructor of one of Shah's sisters. Later she became the principal of the Anoushirvan Dadegar High School. During the 18 years of her supervision,

6. The other four are: Mar Yohanna the bishop of Gavilan, Mar Ovrahim the bishop of Armudaghaj, Mar Elia the bishop of Goytapa, Mar Goriel the bishop of Ardishay, 7. Kokhva 1907.P.152 8. Kokhva 1907.No.5. P. 57

the school achieved such a reputation for its quality of education that princes and the daughters of the very rich attended that school. She received a medal of merit from the Shah for her competence in running the school.

- Rabi Lucy Urshan was another daughter of Rabi Aprim Urshan. She was a graduate of the American Mission College in Urmia. She was the private English instructor of one of Shah's brothers. She also received a medal of honor from the Shah⁹.
- Lady Bato Sayad. Bato's ancestry was from Ada. She was a graduate of the American Mission College. She was proficient in both the Assyrian and English languages. In Flint, Michigan where the family lived later, she helped many Assyrians in the preparation of their immigration documents as she was familiar with American Immigration law. Whoever needed legal advice would refer to her. In effect, she became a legal consultant or advocate for many Assyrians. She also offered her assistance in charitable community services as a volunteer.
- Rabi Khanna Lazar (1908-2002). Rabi Hanna's mother was from Ada. During the flight of Assyrians in 1918, she lost both her mother and father. At that time she was ten years old and had a brother age 12. They were both sent to the American Mission Orphanage where she attended school. Some years later her uncle, Rabi Eskhaq Urshan assisted her to move to and teach school in the village of Ada.

The Celebrities of Ada (1830-1918)

Hannibal Gevargis provides the readers with a profile of 12 celebrities that were from Ada. Only the ones that were born before World War I are listed below:

- Eshoo nicknamed Gagishoo was the headman of the village of Ada. He attained this position because of his acumen and generosity. He tended to village problems in the years right before the 1914 uprooting of the Assyrians from the village.
- Benjamin Adams was born in Ada in 1913. During the flight of the Assyrians from the region of Urmia, on the way to Hamadan, his father Sayad died and left his widow Elishwa with four small children.
- Benjamin and his brothers were sent to an orphanage in Baghdad. Mrs, Harriet who was a teacher in the orphanage adopted Benjamin and took him with her to Tuscan, Arizona. Benjamin served in the army during World War II. Afterwards, he became a very successful businessman and before he passed away he left all his wealth to charity organizations and 6 Assyrian-American Associations. The funds were earmarked to assist Assyrian youth in their college education and to assist new immigrants to the country. His wealth exceeded \$1,12,0000¹⁰
- Shimoon Johny: Deacon Shimoon David of Ada nicknamed Shimoon was a poor man, but he was rich in wisdom and understanding. He was murdered in the Black Winter of 1915, when marauders attacked Ada, and led a campaign of pillage and murder¹¹.
- Malkom Amrikhas DDS (1914-1962). He was born in Ada in 1911. He was raised by his grandfather Shabaz, the headman of the village. He attended school there and then worked as an apprentice in a Hakim Baba's dentist clinic in Tehran. After completing his training in dentistry, he opened his own clinic and trained many in this profession thus enabling them to open their own clinics.
- Youtam Tuma was born in the tumultuous year of 1914 in Ada at the time when the Kurds and the Ottoman Turks had occupied the province of Azerbaijan. His parents were among the Assyrians who fled to Russia. He learned the art of photography in Russia. When he returned to Iran, he opened his photography studio. He was an expert in taking white and black pictures. He was known as Youtam Akkas (Youtam photographer).
- Dr. Lazar Pera was one of the 11 founders and sustainers of the independent and nationalist periodical Kokhva in 1906.XXX

9. Assyrian Star Magaazine. Dec. 1963 10. Nineveh Magazine. 1997. Vol; 20, No. 4. The 6 Associations were: The Assyrian Foundation of America, Berkeley; Assyrian Aid Society of America; Assyrian American National Federation; Assyrian National Council of Ill; Assyrian American Welfare Organization of Chicago; Assyrian American Association of Southern California. 11. Kokhva 1915. #5 .P. 46

Iraq restores Nineveh Wall to include it in World Heritage List



[NinevehArcheology](#)

2024-07-09

Shafaq News/ The Nineveh Antiquities and Heritage Inspectorate announced on Tuesday the commencement of the restoration project for the ancient Nineveh Wall, one of Mosul's historic landmarks.

Ruayd Al-Laila, Director of the Nineveh Antiquities and Heritage Inspectorate, told Shafaq News, "The laying of the foundation stone marks the beginning of the first phase of the project, funded by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The completion of this section will cover a length of 200 meters and a height of seven meters."

Al-Laila explained that "the restoration work on the ancient Nineveh Wall will extend from the Al-Muhandisin neighborhood to the Al-Zera'i neighborhood (eastern Mosul)," noting that the work coincides with the restoration of the ancient Bab Al-Masqa gate within the Nineveh Wall.

He added that the aim is to include the Nineveh Wall on the World Heritage List. The Nineveh Wall is part of the ancient city of Nineveh, the capital of the old Assyrian Empire. It was constructed around 700 BC by order of King Sennacherib, stretching 12 kilometers and featuring 15 main gates. Designed as a solid defensive fortification, it includes carvings and panels depicting stories of kings and gods. The Wall symbolizes Assyrian civilization and is a significant tourist site in Mosul, attracting researchers and visitors worldwide.

Preserving the Assyrian Legacy: Professor Yildiz's Insights on Language and Education

By Elizabeth Mickaily-Huber, Ph.D.

On Friday, August 2, 2024, Professor Efrem Yildiz from the University of Salamanca, Spain, was welcomed to present his important work in Assyrian language preservation and education. Mr. Wilfred Bet-Alkhas, President of the Assyrian American Association of San Jose, gave a brief introduction. In his introduction, Wilfred highlighted that exactly 34 years ago, the United States and its allies commenced WWI—a conflict that dramatically altered the Middle Eastern landscape. For many Assyrians, this marked the beginning of a mass exodus from their ancestral lands in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran. Today, for the first time ever, the Assyrian diaspora outnumbers those remaining in these historic regions.

Wilfred also pointed out that this demographic shift underscores a pressing challenge: the preservation of our language and cultural heritage. Despite our presence in the diaspora, our efforts to safeguard our identity have been limited. We lack Assyrian schools, sufficient educational materials, and a formal academic curriculum for primary and higher education. This absence threatens the transmission of our rich cultural legacy to future generations.

In this context, Mr. Wilfred Bet-Alkhas welcomed Professor Yildiz, whose lifelong dedication to the Assyrian language and culture provides a beacon of hope to the Assyrian people. Born in the village of Harbule in the Hakari region of the land of Ashur (modern-day Turkey), Professor Yildiz embarked on his academic journey at the age of 13, leaving his homeland for Germany. He is now a distinguished professor of Hebrew and Aramaic languages at the University of Salamanca in Spain.

Professor Yildiz's remarkable work includes a comprehensive grammar book that is widely

acclaimed as the finest of its kind. His expertise extends beyond the study of Assyrian; he is deeply engaged in preserving and promoting our language within the broader context of Semitic languages.

Professor Yildiz's presentation, titled "The Modern Assyrian Language: Its Role in the Semitic Language Family and Contemporary Higher Education Teaching Practices," delved into the origins of our language and outlined essential steps for its systematic preservation. He explored various aspects of Assyrian and its relationship with other Semitic languages, including the historical influences of Assyrian expansion and deportation policies.

The historical context of Assyrian expansion and its impact on language and culture was a central theme. Professor Yildiz highlighted how the mingling of Assyrians with Babylonians and other foreign groups led to significant changes in the linguistic and cultural landscape. His discussion extended to the evolution of the Assyrian language from its ancient roots to its various Aramaic dialects—Imperial, Middle, Late, and Modern.

The modern study of Assyrian and Semitic languages has evolved considerably, with prominent Old-World universities such as Bologna, Paris, Salamanca, and Oxford playing crucial roles. At the University of Salamanca, the **Nineveh Academic Chair** supports this endeavor by promoting the study and preservation of Assyrian language and culture. This initiative aims to offer scholarships, develop online courses, and establish a scientific research journal dedicated to Assyrian studies.

The Nineveh Academic Chair seeks to create a robust academic framework, including face-to-face and virtual courses on Assyrian language,

literature, and history. This initiative also supports the creation of an academy for Assyrian sciences and the development of projects that contribute to the reconstruction of Assyrian society both abroad and within its ancestral territory.

Professor Yildiz asks us to recognize the urgency of preserving our linguistic and cultural heritage. Supporting initiatives like the Nineveh Academic Chair is vital to ensuring that future generations of Assyrians remain connected to their roots. For those interested in contributing to this cause, donations can be made through the Mesopotamian Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting Assyrian academic and cultural projects.

To support the Nineveh Chair and its vital work, donations can also be made via the following bank account:

Bank account:
Caixabank **IBAN:** ES88 2100 1263 2502 0037 4933
BIC/SWIFT Code: CAIXESBBXXX

Alternatively, donations can be made online at:
<http://paypal.me/ninevehchair>

**AN EVENING WITH
PROFESSOR EFREM YILDIZ**

Professor in the Department of Hebrew and Aramaic Studies at the University of Salamanca, Spain

TOPIC

**Modern Assyrian Language:
Its Role in the Semitic Language Family and
Contemporary Higher Education Teaching
Practices.**

**Friday, August 2
7:00–8:00 PM**

Almaden Winery Community
Center, San Jose

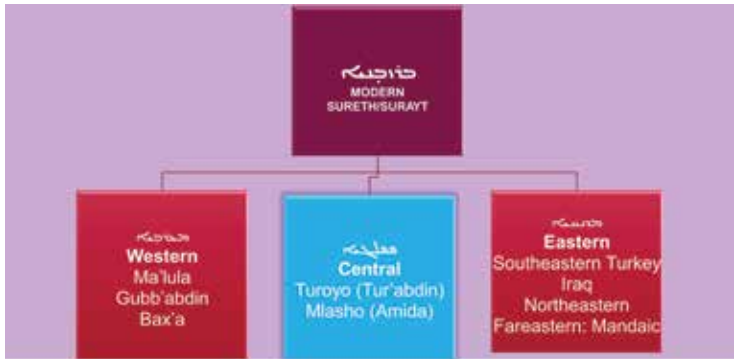
Refreshments will be served

THE MODERN ASSYRIAN LANGUAGE: ITS ROLE IN THE SEMITIC LANGUAGE FAMILY AND CONTEMPORARY HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING PRACTICES

ܟܘܠܗ ܕܚܘܒܐ ܕܚܘܒܐ ܕܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܪܝܢܐ
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PROF. DR. EFREM YILDIZ
ܟܘܠܗ ܕܚܘܒܐ ܕܚܘܒܐ ܕܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܪܝܢܐ
UNIVERSITY OF SALAMANCA



NINEVEH ACADEMIC CHAIR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SALAMANCA
catedraniveveh.com

- Specific Nineveh Academic Chair Purpose and activities**
- The purpose of the Nineveh Chair is to support people, companies, and institutions related to the Assyrian cause through the transfer of knowledge generated in recognized universities and education centers.
 - For the fulfillment of the described purposes, the following activities are being carried out:
 - Promote the study of the **Assyrian language and culture** worldwide.
 - Promote all kinds of activities conducive to **promoting the development** of the artistic, historical, linguistic and socio-cultural heritage of Assyrian society.
 - Promote the research of comparative studies in **language, literature and history** of the Assyrian people.
 - Support and develop academic activities to make known the **historical and cultural wealth** of the Assyrian people.
 - Support the dissemination of the modern Assyrian Aramaic.

NINEVEH ACADEMIC CHAIR ACTIVITIES

- Seek economic means to offer **scholarships** to offer the new Assyrian generation the opportunity to train in its historical, linguistic and socio-cultural legacy.
- Find the means to create at the **University of Salamanca** the chair of Nineveh that must offer all kinds of **academic activities**, face-to-face, and virtual courses on the language, literature and history of Assyria.
- Encourage the creation of the **academy of the Assyrian sciences** to develop and create the different working groups that should watch over the conservation and development of the language, history, and Assyrian culture.
- Promote the creation of a **scientific research journal** of the Assyrian language and culture.
- Support the development of **projects that the Assyrian intellectuals** or those related to the Assyrian cause intend to carry out for the reconstruction of the Assyrian society abroad and within their ancestral territory.
- And, in a generic way, carry out as many actions as are conducive to the best achievement of their purposes.

ASSYRIAN INVESTMENT FOR NINEVEH ACADEMIC CHAIR

To continue keeping the Nineveh Chair at the University of Salamanca in a serious way, we need Assyrian investments. If we have the funds, the Nineveh chair will offer several scholarships for Assyrian talents to begin studying at the University of Salamanca, preferably for the degree or the Doctoral Dissertation in Assyrian language, history or literature. These scholarships will be awarded through a contract and conditions of commitment so that the candidate must contribute to the Assyrian cause after further training.

The Nineveh chair is commissioning at least 3 experts to prepare two online courses of the modern Assyrian Aramaic. The structure is still done but the platform needs to be launched.

In May 2023 and September 2023, the chair convened the Assyrian intellectuals for the first and second International Congress to deal with the national identity, language, and history of Assyria. The third Congress is going to take place in Paris October 15-17th, 2024.

To facilitate the possible donations, we have created the non-profit Association Mesopotamian Alliance that already has an official register and a bank account and Paypal.

Bank account: CaixaBank
IBAN: ES88 2100 1363 2503 0037 4933
BIC/SWIFT Code: CAIXES88XXX
<http://paypal.me/ninevehchair>

List of Assyrian Foundation of America Donors

The below list includes donations received from June 1, 2024 - August 31, 2024 only!
Any donations received after 8/31/2024 will be included in the next issue of the Nineveh Magazine.

Thank you for your generosity and support.

Donation	Needy	Nineveh	Membership	Education	Memorial	Other	
Youssef & Mariam Abraham		\$200				In Memory of Dr. Shamoun & Dr Evelyn	
Raman Adam			\$130				
Frederick Aprim			\$100				
Misha & Leili Ashoorian	\$200.00						
Attiye Aziz		\$40					
Nahrian Babilla				\$100.00		In Recognition of Alice Youkana	
Florence Bet George	\$150.00	\$50.00		\$100.00			
Kurosh & Karmella Borashan	\$500						
Nina Charbakhs hi		\$100					
Maryann Cristofi Cristofi			\$127				
David Farhad	\$40.00	\$40.00					
David Farhad	\$80						
John & Julia Hallisy			\$130.00				
Chris Ann Hamzaeff			\$100				
Sweetlana Jamal	\$1,000.00					In Memory of Doris Yaldaie	
Sammy Joseph	\$100						
Jacob & Ramouz Malikzadeh			\$130				
Elizabeth Mickaily Huber		\$40					
Elizabeth Mickaily Huber	\$40						
William & Marianne Miner	\$200						
Ashoorbeli & Sheli Moradkhan				\$130			
Ashoorbeli & Sheli Moradkhan			\$120				
Ramona Moradkhan	\$100						
Beth Ohan			\$100				
Robert Oshana			\$100				
Rober & Martha Paulissian		\$100					
Sarkez & Arjovik Ray					\$100	In Memory of Sargon	
Violet Sayad	\$40.00						
David & Anne Elias Sinaiko			\$130				
Anne Tamrazi					\$1,000	In Memory of Anne Tamrazi	
Ronald Thomaz-Zadeh	\$100.00	\$100.00					
Rev Jameel & Nadia Wardah	\$100.00						
Flora & Sharukin Yalda		\$40					
Elizabeth & Sharukin Yalda	\$10,000					In Memory of Dr. Sharoukin Yalda	
Flora & Sharukin Yalda				\$10,000		In Memory of Dr. Sharoukin Yalda	
Fidelity Charitable	\$300.00					In honor of Joseph Demery, Shmuni & David Perly	
Picnic						\$1,475	
Ninway Magazin of France		\$40					
Total	\$10,640	\$2,310	\$870	\$1,177	\$10,200	\$1,100	\$1,475

In Memory of
Dr. Shamoun

July 14, 1935 - May 2, 2024



A Brief Eulogy to Dr. Shamoun Emmanuel Shamoun was born in Habaniya, Iraq, the son of Rabi Emmanuel Shamoun, a deacon of our church and a renowned scholar, a pillar of the Assyrian community in Habaniya and Iraq. He was the husband of Dr. Evelyn, father of Jenan, Dalal, and Emmanuel, and brother of Khanna and Aida of Chicago, and the late Panna and Anna of England, UK.

He attended primary school in Habaniya and later secondary school in Ramadi Province, after which he entered medical college and graduated as a doctor.

Dr. Shamoun worked in various teaching hospitals in Baghdad and Basrah before pursuing specialization in surgery in England, where he obtained the FRCS degree (Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of London) in a remarkably short time compared to his peers.

Returning to Iraq, he became an accomplished specialist surgeon, pioneering Laparoscopic (keyhole) Surgery and other advanced procedures, more than 50 years ago, which were new to Iraq at the time. He later returned to London in the early 1970s to continue his specialized surgical work in a teaching hospital.

Beyond his professional achievements, Dr. Shamoun was a dedicated husband and father. He faced adversity with grace and determination, teaching us the power of resilience and perseverance. Devoted to his family, he always strove to provide the best education and life for his children, playing a central role in their lives.

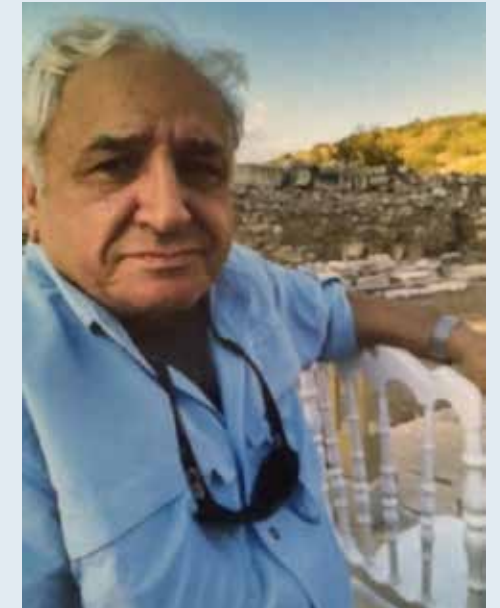
He was known for his generosity, offering wisdom and assistance to those in need, and for his direct and principled character, earning respect from friends and colleagues. In his youth, he earned a medal of valor for bravery during his service as an army doctor, risking his life to save a wounded soldier under enemy fire.

In recent years, despite battling illness, Dr. Shamoun continued to be supported with love and extraordinary care by his children. He will be deeply missed by his family and all who knew him, but his legacy will live on in our hearts and minds.

May he rest in peace.

In Memory of
Dr. Sharukin (Rami) Yelda

1941-2023



Dr. Sharukin (Rami) Yelda, a distinguished orthopedic surgeon known for his work at Swedish Covenant, St. Mary of Nazareth, Children's Memorial, and Cook County hospitals, passed away on December 8, 2023.

Dr. Yelda was passionate about travel, literature, and languages, and he had a notable talent for cooking. His contributions extended beyond medicine; he played a significant role in financing the statue of the great Assyrian king Ashurbanipal, which stands proudly in front of the main library in San Francisco. Ashurbanipal is celebrated for creating one of the ancient world's most significant libraries in Nineveh.

In 2005, Dr. Yelda published "A Persian Odyssey: Iran Revisited," sharing his personal experiences and insights from his journey through Iran. He was also the author of numerous articles.

Dr. Yelda is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Yelda, and his sister, Flora Yelda. He was preceded in death by his sister, Laura Yelda, and his mother, Jeanette Yelda.

The Assyrian Foundation of America wishes to thank Dr. Yelda's wife Elizabeth and his sister Flora for their generous and significant donations made in memory of Dr. Sharukin (Rami) Yelda specifically to help pay for the education of Assyrian youth.

In Memory of
Dr. Evelyn Murad Younathan

(October 24, 1938 - June 2, 2024)

We mourn the sad loss of Dr. Evelyn, the retired anesthesiologist, wife of the late Dr. Shamoun, mother of Jenan, Dalal, and Emmanuel, and sister of the late Younan, Sargon, the late Isha, Roumi, and Layla. She was also the grandmother of Leah, Joseph, Elizabeth, Simon, and Sam.

Dr. Evelyn was born in Iraq in October 1938 and grew up in Habbaniya and Baghdad. She attended the main secondary school for girls there, then proceeded to Medical School, graduating with an MD in 1963. After her residency at the main hospitals in Iraq, she married Dr. Shamoun in August 1965. The couple moved to Basrah, in southern Iraq, to work at the main hospital there. In 1976, they relocated to London, England, where she specialized in anesthesiology and earned a higher specialist degree in Cardiothoracic Anesthesia, while Dr. Shamoun practiced abdominal surgery at a teaching hospital in London.

After some years in Basrah, they moved to Baghdad, working at the main teaching hospitals. Evelyn also worked at Ibn AL Nafees Hospital, specializing in Cardiothoracic surgery. In 1981, they moved to Kuwait, working at the main royal hospital for several years before finally immigrating to Chicago.

Evelyn was admired as a young lady, noted for her elegance and diligent work as a top student. She was the first Assyrian female specialist doctor in Iraq in the late 60s and the first Assyrian female anesthesiologist specialist in the early 70s. This was a unique achievement in the Assyrian Community in Iraq, reflecting her determination to advance her profession.

Beyond her professional zeal, Evelyn was known for her warmth, kindness, and unwavering love for her family. She was always there with a listening ear, a comforting hug, or wise advice, dedicated to caring for her young family and guiding them to their current successful lives. She was also generous to friends and relatives, known for her decisive actions and opinions on family matters.

To her husband, Dr. Shamoun, she was not just a wife but a true partner in every sense. Their love and commitment were evident to all who knew them. Together, they built a life filled with love and mutual respect, inspiring those around them. After Dr. Shamoun's passing just over four weeks ago, Evelyn could not bear his absence after over 58 years together. She has now joined him, finding peace together.

She will be deeply missed by her family and friends, especially by her daughters Jenan and Dalal, her son Emmanuel, and her grandchildren. They spared no effort in caring for her, just as they did for their father, Dr. Shamoun, before her.

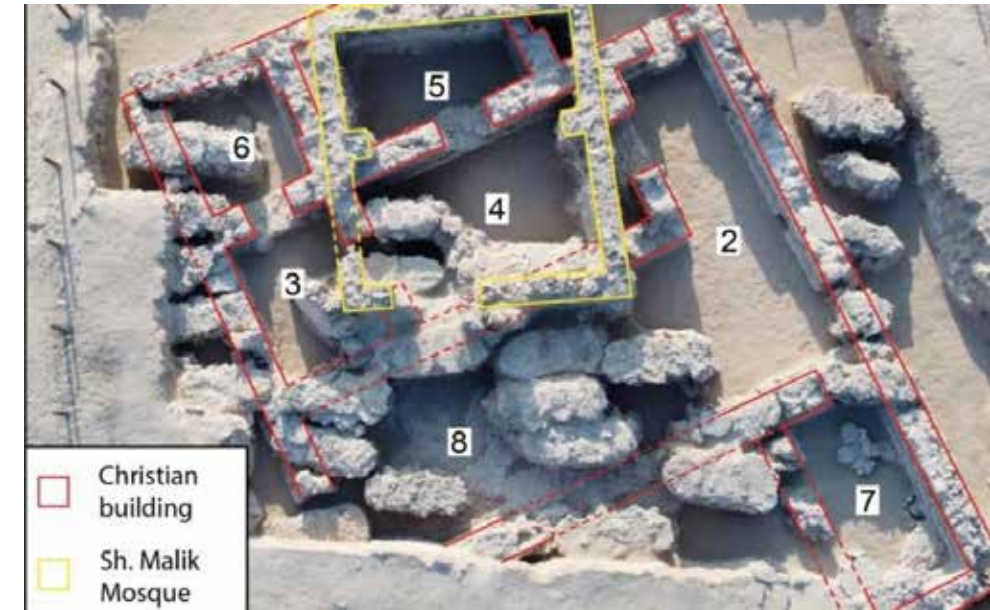
May her soul rest in peace.



Evidence of a 1,300-year-old Christian Community found on the Arabian Gulf

Archaeologists make groundbreaking discovery of settlement 300 years before Muslim conquest of Bahrain

By Telegraph Reporters



The structure in Samahij was once used as the palace for a local bishop, scientists say

British archaeologists have discovered one of the earliest Christian buildings in the Arabian Gulf. They say the groundbreaking find is over 1,300 years old. It has been uncovered in Samahij, Bahrain, and dates back to the 4th century AD.

The British-led team found that the excavation was part of the Nestorian Church, the first Christian church in the world. This is the first evidence that the Nestorian Church was present in modern-day Bahrain.

Researchers believe the structure was once the palace of a local bishop before the region converted en masse to Islam around 300 years later. The building has a kitchen, a refectory, a dining room, a workroom, and three living rooms.

Three plaster crucifixes and graffiti of Christian symbols helped the researchers work out that the stone-walled excavation is a former religious site. The site is due to reopen to the public in 2015.

Archaeologists also found evidence that the occupants drank wine and ate pork: two practices that were forbidden after Islam became the dominant religion. Records show that the area had a rocky relationship with church authorities as a bishop in Samahij was excommunicated in 410 AD. The building in the village, on Bahrain's northern coast, survived after a mosque was placed on the same site.

Among the finds were copper coins minted by the Sasanian Empire, a powerhouse in the region until the Muslim conquest of Persia in the seventh and eighth centuries. Various crops found in the dig are currently being analyzed to help uncover more mysteries about Christianity in Bahrain.

Trade with India

The community based in the building also appears to have traded with India after excavators found carnelian stone beads and broken pieces of pottery, which originated in South Asia.

A small number of churches, monasteries, and residences have been found in the Gulf in the past, though most have been dated much later than the Bahraini excavation. Professor Insoll of the university's Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies said: "We were amused to find someone had also drawn part of a face on a pearl shell in bitumen, perhaps for a child who lived in the building."

The British-Bahraini collaboration, which took place between 2019 and 2023, was led by Prof Tim Insoll of the University of Exeter.

"This is the first physical evidence found of the Nestorian Church in Bahrain and gives a fascinating insight into how people lived, worked, and worshipped." The site is now being turned into a museum to preserve this vital piece of history. The historical landmark is expected to reopen to the public in 2025.



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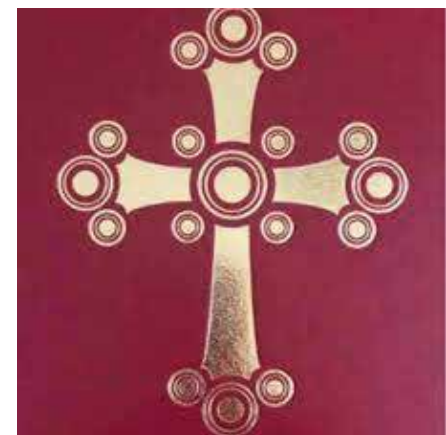


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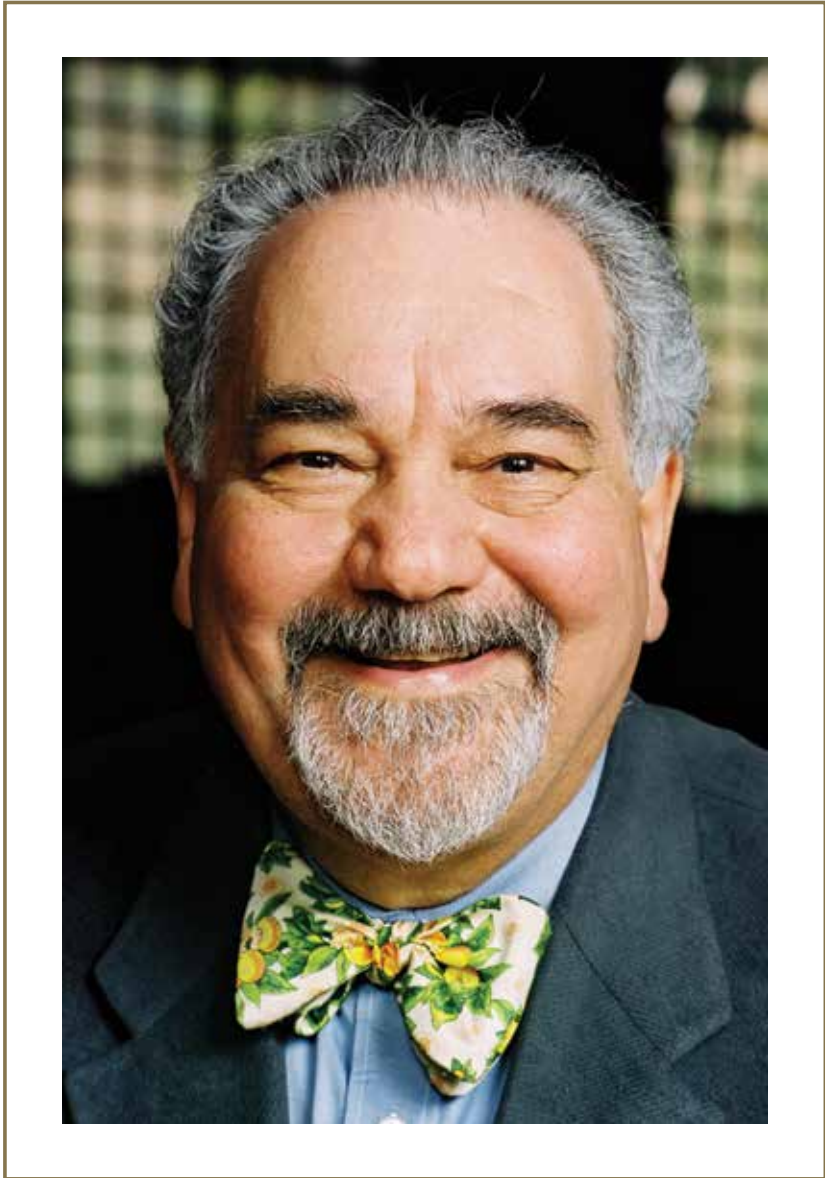


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