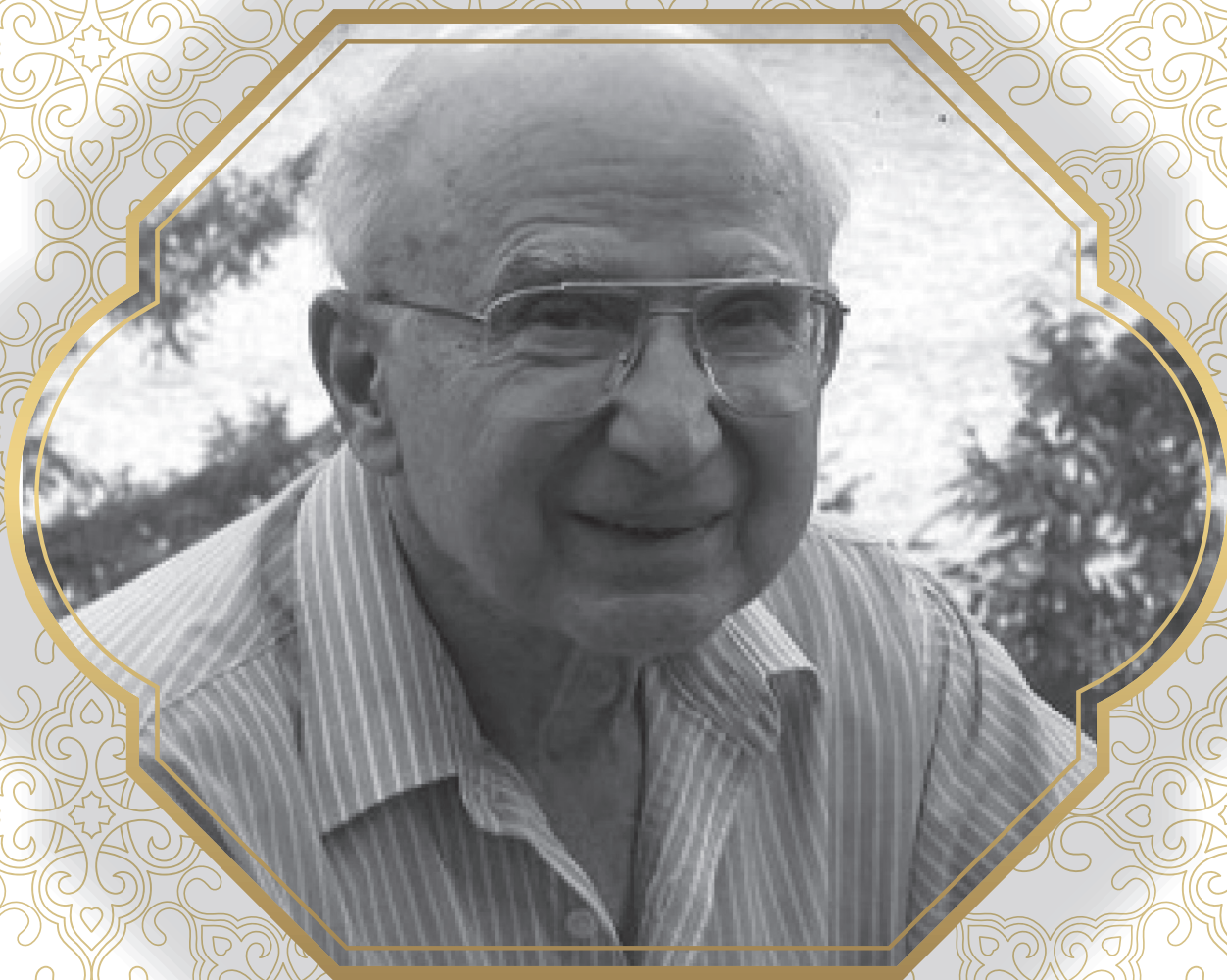




*Established 1964*

# NINEVEH

CULTURAL | EDUCATIONAL | SOCIAL



***In Memory of Dr. Joel J. Elias***  
***1925 - 2017***

Publication of the Assyrian Foundation of America  
Volume 41, Number 3-4, 2017



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# Tribute to a Noble Man

*“A fundamental aspect of human nature is the need to identify with one’s origins. For unless you know where you came from and what you came from, you cannot know who you are or what you are. And if you don’t know that, you cannot reach the fullest level of self-realization of which the human spirit is capable.”*

– Dr. Joe Elias  
(May 1, 1925 – July 21, 2017)

Today, the Assyrian Foundation of America mourns the loss of one of its pillars of intellect, a man with a kind soul and matchless nobility. At the same time, we would like to take this opportunity to celebrate his remarkable life and achievements.

Dr. Joel Elias was a beloved member of the Assyrian Foundation and served in various positions during his decades as an active member, including as editor of Nineveh Magazine. He helped create the Assyrian DNA project, a study that identified the unique aspects of Assyrian genetics, as well as the Assyrian Library at U.C. Berkeley where he received his PhD.

I knew Dr. Elias since 1977 when my family first moved to U.S. and joined AFA. However, I got to know him more personally when I accepted the leadership role at AFA for the first time in 2010. He became my mentor and adviser. During the very early stages of my term, Dr. Elias guided me on the AFA’s origins, values, vision, bi-laws, and future roadmap.

Later, our phone calls turned into regular friendship conversations, where we both shared amusing life stories about work, family, and friends. He never failed to impress me with his knowledge and intellect, all while being so humble. I vividly remember and cherish the many conversations shared between us. One of my fondest memories was when he laughed at some of the “old country” Assyrian expressions that I used, ones that he had never heard before. Then, at the first opportunity, he would use my Assyrian expressions in his conversation, which consequently made me laugh. I often teased him by asking if I was helping to improve his Assyrian vocabulary? His response was, “Oh yes, indeed. I don’t know how I lived without knowing these expressions all these years”.

Dr. Elias held the valiant qualities of goodness, purity, selflessness, intelligence and beauty in his heart. Everyone who met him and became close to him, without exception, was immediately touched by his warm nature. Mere words are insufficient to express the sense of loss felt by our AFA family. As a tribute to his memory, we are determined to continue his legacy to preserve, strengthen, and promote our Assyrian culture and heritage.

Though with heavy heart, it is an honor for us to dedicate this issue of Nineveh Magazine as a tribute to this noble man named Dr. Joel Elias. He will be missed not only by those who knew him, as well as by the nation that he served so proudly and loved so deeply, but also by thousands of men and women that he taught at U.C. San Francisco, ones who are now bettering the lives of others through medicine.

I would like to conclude by thanking God for giving me the opportunity to cross paths with such an honorable man, a true angel. Above all, we all give thanks for the life of such an extraordinary man who we are all proud to have called friend, father, brother, and fellow Assyrian. His dignity and graciousness will never be extinguished from our hearts.

Jackline Yelda, President

# My brother Joel Elias

By Wilbur Elias

In 1943 during World War II, Joel was inducted into the U.S. Navy as a Pharmacist’s Mate (Medic) and served aboard a hospital ship in the South Pacific. Two years later, I also was inducted into the U.S. Navy, as a radar technician, stationed at Treasure Island, in San Francisco Bay. Our parents, at the time were still at our home in Chicago, where we were born and raised.

I would take the “A” Train across the Bay Bridge on a day off, with a buddy of mine. One day from the train, I saw a Navy hospital ship docked at a San Francisco pier. The ship was painted all white, with a large red cross on each side and also on the smoke stack. I looked to see if that was Joe’s ship, the USS Rescue, and it WAS! There, on the bow of the ship was the name, in big black letters! I said to my buddy, I would like to go to the ship and see if my brother is on board, and he said, “okay”. As we were walking toward the ship, there were two sailors walking toward us. As we got closer, I noticed that one of them looked like Joe. I saw him in Chicago in a sailor’s suit when he was on leave but he had never seen me in a sailor’s suit and wasn’t expecting to see me at all, especially in San Francisco. As we got closer, I could see it was Joe and I hollered, “JOE”! He stopped and looking at us, saw that it was me! He hollered, “WILLIE”! We ran toward each other, and hugged like we haven’t seen each other in two years (we hadn’t). Each of our two friends stood in bewilderment. We all went into the City together and had a great time and dinner. That night, back at the base, I wrote home to my parents in Chicago and told them what had happened.

After the war was over and we were back home, our father said that when he read my letter (he got home from work before our mother), he cried like a baby and couldn’t stop, but he put the letter back into the envelope. When our mother came home from work, he handed her the letter and said, “We got a letter from Wilbur”. When she read it, she started to cry and they both cried together. At the time, we couldn’t understand why they cried. Several years later, after we had our own children, we realized that they were tears of joy.

## What’s In a Name?

### Joel Jesse Elias

**Joel** – the name of his father’s brother (“Youel”), who was killed when just a boy by massacring Muslim Turks and Kurds in Urmia, Iran during the Assyrian Genocide (1915-1918) even named first escape (“raca”) in 1918.

**Jesse** – his father’s name (“Eshay”)

**Elias** – his great grandfather’s name (“Eleeya”)

Joel has three grandsons named in his honor:

**Joel Bovey**, Edy Elias’ son, who his grandfather called “bar-shimma”, meaning “named after my name”

**Jesse Elias**, Nathan Elias’ son

**Elias Sinaiko**, Annie Elias’ son



Wilbur Elias, Dr. Joel Elias, JoAnne Elias  
(Joel’s wife) and Elsie Elias (Wilbur’s wife)

Picture taken at the celebration of  
Dr. Elias’s 80th Birthday.

“O death, where is thy sting,  
O grave, thy victory....  
But thanks be to God,  
who gives US the victory  
through Jesus Christ our Lord”

1 Corinthians 15-55





Joel Jesse Elias passed away peacefully on July 21, 2017 at his home in Kensington, California surrounded by his loving family. He was 92.

# Dr. Joel J. Elias

## 1925 - 2017

By Annie Elias

Joel is preceded in death by his parents and by his beloved wife of 63 years, JoAnne Mitchell Elias. He is survived by his adoring family: his children Nathan, Paul, Annie, and Edy; his children's spouses: Sheri, Sarah, David, and Dan; ten grandchildren: Jesse, Joel, Eli, Lydia, Maia, Mitch, Davey, Logan, Asher, and Emily; his brother Wilbur and sister-in-law Elsie; his nieces Debbie and Dorrie, and many close friends.

Joel was born on May 1, 1925 in Chicago, Illinois to Bato Paul Elias--originally of Adah in northwestern Iran--and Jesse Badal Elias--originally of Shemshajian, Iran. Both parents were Assyrian refugees who fled the Assyrian genocide of 1915-17. Joel was named after his father's brother Youel who was killed by Turkish soldiers, along with 4,000 other Assyrian hostages, at age 16. Joel grew up in an Assyrian-American community in Chicago so close knit that he entered school without speaking a word of English. He quickly advanced though, and graduated from Senn High School at the age of 16 having skipped two grades. In 1942 he was drafted into the Navy. He served as a medical corpsman on the hospital ship the U.S.S. Rescue, which transported wounded soldiers from Okinawa to Guam. Writing years later of his experience in the head and neck injuries unit as a 19-year-old medic, Joel wrote, "before this, we had been excited ...to 'see some action.' But I now saw the reality of war clearly for the first time, and I have carried it with me for the rest of my life. It is the most obscene form of human behavior that there is."

When the war ended and Joel was discharged from the Navy he attended the University of Illinois on the GI Bill, receiving his B.S. in Zoology in 1949. He earned his MA, then his PhD., in Zoology from the University of California at Berkeley in 1958. Moving to Berkeley from Chicago was a breath of fresh air for him and he never stopped marveling at the weather in the Bay Area and how free he felt on arriving in his beloved Berkeley where a person could "skip down the street singing and no-one would care." In 1958 he joined the Anatomy Department at the University of California Medical School at San Francisco where he was a professor for thirty-two years and conducted scientific research in breast cancer. He authored and co-authored numerous papers for scientific journals on his mammary gland research. One of his most significant contributions was a breakthrough discovery of a method of growing milk-producing mammary cells under the microscope. He was a devoted teacher who was especially dedicated to helping minority students, who he related to having been a minority student himself. After he retired he continued for many years as a volunteer, helping medical students in the laboratory at UCSF.

Joel was dedicated to the plight of Assyrians in the U.S. and in the Middle East. He served for decades as an officer for the Assyrian Foundation of America, based in San Francisco, including as president and editor of the magazine "Nineveh." He became fascinated by the genetics of Middle Eastern groups and published a paper in 2000 entitled "The Genetics of

Modern Assyrians and their Relationship to Other People of the Middle East." In the paper he described how genetically close many culturally disparate groups of Middle Eastern people are. "Peace through genetics?" Joel wrote.

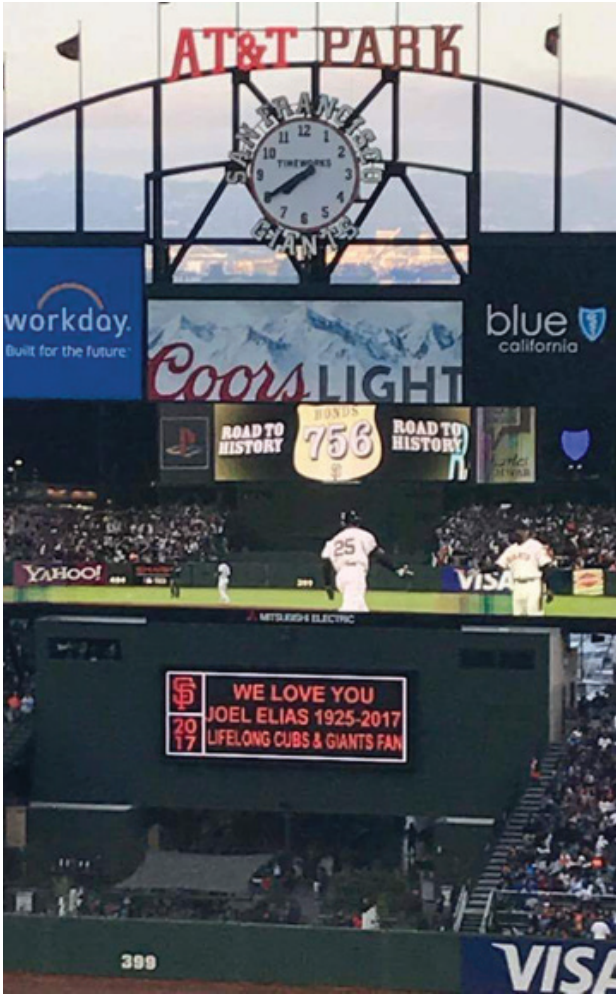
Joel was a loving and devoted husband, brother, uncle, colleague, and friend and was a model father to so many, demonstrating what a gentle, kind, good father can be by listening to young people respectfully, empathetically, compassionately, and without judgment. He was a born storyteller who loved to make his listeners laugh. A history and politics buff and expansive reader with an encyclopedic knowledge, Joel was always hopeful and positive and believed that the world is a beautiful place and that life is good. Having survived the Depression and World War II, he took nothing for granted and took delight in simple things like a perfectly ripe peach, a Rumi poem, or a robin nesting outside the window. He truly lived by the sentiment of one of his favorite authors, William Saroyan: "In the time of your life, live—so that in that wondrous time you shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world, but shall smile to the infinite delight and mystery of it."

*RIGHT: A tribute to the belated Dr. Elias from his children and grand children, the text displayed at Giants game on 8/7/17 (SF Giants vs. Chicago Cubs)*

*Joel and JoAnne Elias*

*Joel Elias at the microphone. A natural borne speaker!*

*BELOW: Elias family Picture at Joel's 80th Birthday Party*





# The Radio

By Dr. Joel J. Elias

To understand this story, you have to know something about my grandfather Badal Elias, known to everyone as Rabee (Teacher) Badal. He was born in 1875 in the tiny village of Shemshajian in a remote part of the world - in northwestern Iran, in the plains west of Lake Urmia. This area was occupied largely by Assyrians, who are Christian, but they were surrounded by large numbers of Moslem people -Kurds, Turks, and Persians. So, life for the Assyrians was always filled with anxiety, for you never knew when you would be attacked, robbed, beaten, women taken by force, etc. My grandfather got married and had three children, one of whom was my father. He was very proud of his title as Teacher, and he was a pillar of the strongly fundamentalist church established there by American Presbyterian missionaries. He had heard about America, how jobs were plentiful and you could have a good life and you were safe in a Christian country.

So about 1910 he immigrated to the United States and went to Chicago where other Assyrians had gone ahead and had a community. His plan was to get a job as a house painter, save his money and bring his family over one at a time. In 1913, he brought his oldest child over, his son Jesse (my father). When my grandfather arrived in Chicago he saw so many miraculous things that it was mind boggling to him. Automobiles were starting to be in the streets and competing with horse drawn vehicles. Electric lights were replacing gas lights in houses. Another miracle was the telephone, where you could talk to someone in another part of Chicago. Shortly after, airplanes started to appear in the sky -people were actually flying in the air. Of course, he couldn't comprehend any of this. It just seemed like anything was possible. After my father married my mother, my grandfather lived with them until his death in 1945, so I grew up with him as part of our family. In 1934, when I was nine years old, there appeared in our house the greatest miracle of all - a radio. None of the others could compare to this. This really was a miracle. This box could seemingly take voices out of the air and bring them into your room.

How could this be? How could there be voices and music in the air? A short time after the arrival of the radio, on a Sat-

urday, my mother's cousin, Walter Jacobs, appeared at our house. Walter was a young man who had come to the United States as a young boy, finished high school and had gone on to the University of Illinois in Urbana to study engineering. But, because of the depression, he had to drop out and go to work. On this day, he had a gadget with him which consisted of a microphone and a wire that could be attached to the back of the radio. Then, with the radio on, you could speak into the microphone and your voice would come out of the radio. He told my grandfather that an Assyrian minister from the old country had arrived in Chicago and at 7 pm that evening he would speak on the radio to the Assyrians and preach to them. My grandfather was very excited. What he didn't

know was that everybody else was in on the hoax, that Walter was going to hide in the next room and speak into the microphone. Furthermore, Walter could hear everything that would be said in the room with the radio. Just before seven, Walter was in place and my father turned on the radio, waited for it to warm up, adjusted the volume and set the dial between two stations. Everyone gathered around the radio. My grandfather knelt down in front of the radio and put his ear next to it.

Then the great miracle happened -the voice coming out of the radio was speaking Assyrian. "My beloved Assyrians of the Chicago area, my brothers and sisters, I bring you greetings and good wishes from your fellow Assyrians in Urmia. You have bestowed a great honor upon me to invite me to come to Chicago and preach to you. I have been here several days already and have visited many of you. Your hospitality has been overwhelming. It gives me profound satisfaction to see how the community in Chicago has prospered. What a blessing God has bestowed upon you. I have spoken to your ministers and church leaders and am happy to hear that the churches are filled every Sunday. However, I was also disturbed to hear that there has been some backsliding, that some people who formerly were models of Christian behavior are no longer behaving as one would expect from true and dedicated Christians. For example, in Urmia there was one person who was very highly respected and honored by everyone. He was a teacher, a leader of the church, a man whom everyone looked up to for his Christian behavior. He is in Chicago now, and I made special inquiries about him and

I was truly saddened to hear that his habits have deteriorated to some extent. That man is Rahbee Badal of Shemshajian."

My grandfather sits bolt upright as if an electric shock had hit him. "What are you talking about?" he says.

"What am I talking about?" the radio says. "I'll tell you what I'm talking about. Today, Saturday, instead of reading the Bible and studying, preparing yourself for church services and Sunday School tomorrow, you spent the whole afternoon playing backgammon with your old cronies -Mum (Uncle) Poshoo, Mum Aghakhan, Rahbee Shimmon."

"Well, it was just some innocent fun," says my grandfather. "It wasn't anything bad."

"But you also were drinking wine," says the radio.

"Well, even Saint Paul said that a little wine is good for the

stomach."

"But you drank two glasses. Full. Furthermore, you were smoking cigarettes." Now my grandfather is furious. "Who do you think you are anyway? You were supposed to come here to preach to us and instead you're bawling us out. Go back to where you came from, you hillbilly, and maybe you'll find one or two people dumb enough to listen to you."

With that he gets up, to signal that the dialogue is over. Now Walter completely loses all control. He starts laughing and laughing while still holding the microphone, and it's all coming out on the radio. I am rolling on the floor laughing, the other adults are beside themselves. My poor grandfather is completely confused. He really can't comprehend any of it. Now I really begin to feel sorry for my beloved grandfather. I tell him what happened. Now he understands. He says, "I knew it all the time. I just went along with it to amuse you."

Dr. Joe Elias was an AFA President for several terms between 1967 - 2000. He was also an Assistant Editor of Nineveh Magazine 1980 – 2007 He himself wrote the following two articles for Nineveh magazine:

*"The Assyrian Heritage DNA Project" by Joel Elias and Mary Yonan; Volume 29, Numbers 1-2; First-Second Quarters 2006*

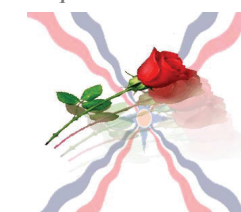
*"The Genetics of Modern Assyrians and Their Relationship to Other People of the Middle East" by Dr. Joel J. Elias; Volume 23; No. 1 & 2, first/second quarter 2000.*



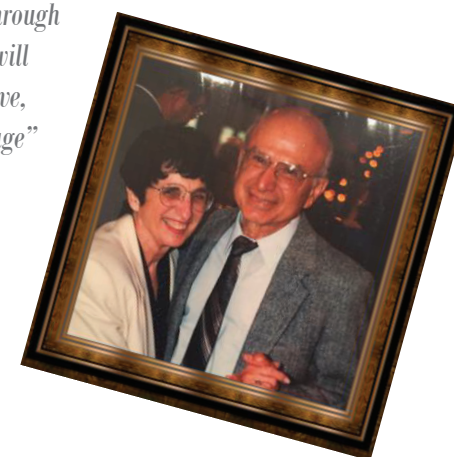
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Assyrian Foundation of America is committed to helping Assyrians in need; promoting education; and preserve the Assyrian history and culture.

*"Despite all the hardship our people are going through around the world today, Assyria is alive and will remain alive as long as we continue to preserve, strengthen and promote our culture and heritage"*



In memory of Dr. Joel Elias ✠  
May 1, 1925 - July 21, 2017







## CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: “Smoke Boat, Make Smoke!”

By Dr. Joel J. Elias

It's April, 1945, and the battle of Okinawa is in full fury. I am a medical corpsman on a hospital ship, the U.S.S. Rescue, and we have been ordered into the harbor to take on the wounded. A hospital ship normally travels alone. It is painted white and has large red crosses on it. At night, it is brightly illuminated so that it can be easily seen and identified by enemy forces. The rules of war are that it is not to be attacked by anyone. We pull into the harbor hoping to get the five hundred or so wounded on quickly and get out. But there are delays, and as night approaches it is obvious that we will have to spend the night in the harbor. We won't be able to turn on our lights because the harbor is filled with warships. Every night, Japanese bombers come over the harbor looking for targets. We will be sitting there tonight with several hundred wounded on board. Because of our precious cargo, with the warning of approaching Japanese planes, the Navy sends a motorized boat, a “smoke boat” to lay down a smokescreen around our ship. The “smoke” is a cloudlike vapor with dispersed diesel fuel. With the first attack, the smoke boat appears and everything works well. We are inside with the wounded in darkened, light proof areas, but we can hear the smoke boat circling our ship. After a while, the “all clear” sounds. We feel very safe and comfortable. With the next attack, the procedure is repeated. We hear the smoke boat around us. Suddenly, there is pandemonium in the deck crew outside. There is running on the deck. An officer is screaming through his megaphone, “smoke boat,

make smoke; smoke boat make smoke!” We learn afterwards what happened. A spark from the smoke boat ignited the diesel vapor, and there we are, sitting in the middle of the darkened harbor, with a fire next to us. We don't know this at the time - our areas are light proof. What we do know is that something has gone wrong. Then, a few seconds later, there is an explosion nearby, and the ship vibrates. A Japanese bomber has dropped a bomb in our direction but has missed, although it lands near us. How close is the subject of much conjecture afterwards? Before this, we had been excited and looking forward to “see some action”. But now, with a ship full of mangled bodies and, with the danger of getting hit while in the harbor very real, war takes on a new meaning for this 19 year old. Fear replaces excitement. And now I see the true face of war. We have about sixty patients in our unit, those with head and neck wounds. They're mostly in their late teens and early twenties. Some have holes in their skulls and you can see the brain. Others have faces shattered by shrapnel. Quite a number are unconscious. I now start to see the reality of war clearly for the first time, and I have carried it with me the rest of my life. It is the obscenest form of human behavior that there is, and it has been with us throughout all of history.

*The realization begins to dawn that underneath the veneer of civilization we are still savages.*



Joel and JoAnne Elias Wedding, 1956



Joel Elias with Assyrian friends  
November 1950 in Chicago

## Wilbur

By Dr. Joel J. Elias

My brother Wilbur is about twenty-one months younger than me. One of the earliest memories of my life involves him. He is about two years old when he develops a severe eczema on his face. The itch is terrible, but scratching it only makes it worse. The treatment for it is to cover the affected area with coal tar ointment, which is black, and prevent him from scratching it. Wilbur is very fair complexioned with bright blue eyes and hair as light blonde as a peroxide blonde. This is the scene I remember since I was four years old. My father is in the kitchen, sawing some boards. Wilbur's arms are then bound to the boards, and the boards are tied to the posts of the crib. His face is now covered with the black coal tar ointment. He is crying almost hysterically from the torment of the eczema's itching, but he can't reach it. My mother is sitting in the corner crying. I am really frightened. I know something scary is going on but can't comprehend it. Relatives come to visit and leave with tears in their eyes. Mercifully, someone remembers me and takes me to my bed. In time, the treatment works and the eczema clears. Wilbur's childhood is marked by getting practically every infectious childhood disease there is. There is no treatment for any of them. He gets diphtheria and almost dies. He gets whooping cough and almost dies. He gets scro-let fever, measles, mumps, chicken pox. It seems like there is always a bright red “Quarantine -Do Not Enter” sign

posted on our front door by the Public Health Department. But he beats them all. He is now healthy but remains very small for his age. My behavior toward him is that of the older brother picking on his younger brother, including hitting him. Why is this so common in the oldest sibling? I have carried a heavy load of guilt about it all my life.

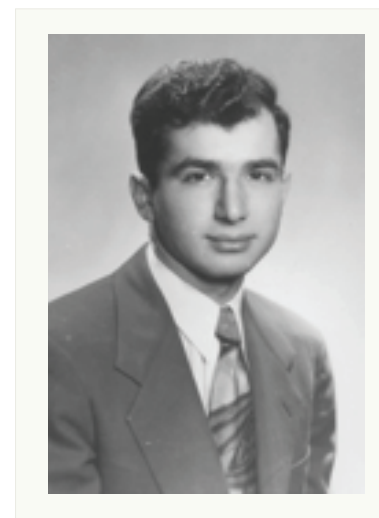
One day when I am about nine years old I happen to look out from our third story flat's window overlooking Wells Street. Across the street, a boy much bigger than Wilbur is hitting him and making him cry. Something happens then that I remember to this day. My head seems to explode. I go flying down the three flights of stairs, race across Wells Street and, running at full speed, hurl myself at the boy in a rage. He is bigger than I am, but I am like one possessed. We fall to the sidewalk and I have my hands around his throat strangling him and bashing his head on the sidewalk. He is terrified and manages to get loose and scream for help. I let up and he runs, screaming and crying hysterically, to his home. Wilbur is still crying. I take him by the hand, we cross the street and go up to our flat. After these emotions subside in a few days, I go right back to the same stupid behavior pattern I had before. The incident causes me to think about this question even as a boy - why was it all right for me to hit him but if someone else did it I became very angry?



Joel Elias as a baby



Joel Elias in Middle School



Joel Elias, 1940



# New Haven Connecticut

By Dr. Joel J. Elias

I start my research program for my Ph.D. at U.C. Berkeley in the Fall of 1953. My project is to grow mouse mammary gland in tissue culture (in glass laboratory dishes) and to study the effects of hormones on them in this isolated state. I have just gotten married and working as a teaching assistant, while JoAnne is a graduate student in English. We are living on a shoestring. The average time for completing a Ph.D. program is four years, and I am really anxious to finish by 1957 and get a job. Adult mouse mammary tissues have not been grown before in the system that I want to use, a system that will yield unequivocal results on the direct action of hormones on them.

Therefore, I begin by using the standard culture systems. The tissues die. I try enriching the nutrient medium in every conceivable way that has worked for other tissues. Nothing works. It's now one year later and all I have to show for it is a series of experiments that have consistently produced dead tissue, a notebook of negative results. I consult with experts in the field of tissue culture, others in the effects of hormones. They have many suggestions which I test but none of them works -the tissue dies in all cases. Two years have gone by and panic is setting in, a sinking feeling of failure. We discuss changing my thesis to something that is not such a high risk, but would be less significant. It is now 1955 and all thoughts of finishing by 1957 are gone. In the next experiment, I decide to add an unusual combination of hormones to the culture medium and to use mammary gland from mice in early pregnancy before it has begun to secrete. At the end of the experiment the tissues are processed by the technician as usual. Two days later, at the end of the day she hands me the slides for microscopic examination. It is dinner time, so I go home but come back late in the evening to examine the slides under the microscope.

I look at the control tissues first, that were cultured without hormones. The usual sickening sight of dead tissue. Then I put on the first slide from the hormone-treated tissues. I look in the microscope and my heart stops. An electric shock goes through me. I close my eyes and sit back in the chair. Now my heart is pounding and I am breathing rapidly. I wait at least a full minute before I look again. There under my very eyes is a sight that has never been seen by anyone before. The tissues are not only alive but they are actively secreting milk. They are swollen with secretion. When I had put them in culture there was no secretion, they were inactive. My head is spinning in disbelief. My hands are shaking when I put on a slide from an-

other tissue -same thing. And the next, and the next. In every one of them the breast cells are extremely active making milk.

This is a historic moment. Because of what I have just done, it will be possible to study how hormones control breast cells in a far more precise way than has ever been possible before. Now there are many experiments to do. I have to define the specific hormones, the times of exposure, the concentrations, etc. I have lost two years so I have to work hard to finish in 1958. I am working at a furious pace and it looks like we're going to make it, even with two babies -Nathan in 1956 and Paul in 1957. In 1957 Prof. Howard Bern begins to make inquiries about a faculty job for me. It turns out that it is not a good year for hiring. He keeps looking.

The best prospect is Yale. In fact, the chairman outright offers me the job. I am disappointed, because if my work had gone well I could take this job now for the fall of 1957. A few months later, however, Howard learns something earthshaking. The medical school class of U.C. San Francisco has always taken its first-year courses at Berkeley, where space is limited. This has restricted the size of the incoming class to 75, and therefore only that number of doctors can be produced a year. But in 1958 a brand new fourteen story science building will open, which will allow the first-year class at UCSF to increase to 100. Because of this, the first-year departments will greatly expand their faculties. The Anatomy Department will add five new faculty members, two of them to teach Histology - my field. I apply for the job and am interviewed by the chairman. It will be some unknown time before I hear the answer. The wait is almost unbearable. Our whole future is at stake - will we spend the rest of our lives in New Haven or in the San Francisco area.

About two weeks later I hear -I am one of the two candidates selected for the Histology faculty. Euphoria reigns, we all celebrate; but at the same time, I realize that, once again, at a pivotal point in my life, I experience a twist of fate where it was the consequences resulting from a failure that led to a far better life for us - this best of all jobs that allowed our family to live in the Bay Area we love so much. The opening of the new building in 1958 meant that in that year, and that year only, the Anatomy faculty would expand. If my experiments had been successful from the beginning, I would have graduated in 1957 when the UCSF job did not exist but the Yale job did. Then it would have been off to New Haven, Connecticut, for my career.

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# Dr. Joel Elias

By Martin Jacob

"When a friendship is cherished for 47 years, that friendship is a priceless gift..." - Martin I met Dr. Elias in 1970, when I joined the Assyrian Foundation of America, which was located in San Francisco. He was the residing president at that time. As we began to get to know each other, we found out that we worked within a few blocks of one another. He was a professor of Resident medical students at UCSF, and a breast cancer researcher. I was the owner of Curleys TV Store on Cole St., just down the hill from UCSF. He used to stop by about 4 times a week to have coffee with me and chat about life. Although we had completely different backgrounds, and he was my senior by 19 years, Joel (or Doctor Joe, as I came to call him) and I shared an intense interest in our Assyrian language and culture. Joel told me stories about growing up with Assyrian parents in Chicago, Illinois, and later Turlock, California. I shared what it was like growing up with Assyrian parents and family in Kermanshah, Iran. He liked to practice his Assyrian with me, as he wasn't able to use it frequently in his everyday life. Even though both of us married Americans, we retained our Assyrian culture. After work, we joined Daniel and other Assyrian fellows across the street at Jacob's Cole St. Liquor store and stayed out late, sometimes into

the wee hours of the morning, sharing jokes and stories in our native tongue, as our friendship grew, our wives Jo Anne and Gail and our children became close as well. As time went on, we called each other Brother Joe, Brother Marty, Sister JoAnne and Sister Gail. Joel and I shared our family ups and downs with an understanding and nonjudgmental attitude. I relied on Joel's wisdom, intelligence and his amazing insights to situations, filled with his characteristic humor. Likewise, he enjoyed my outlook on life, derived from my childhood experiences growing up in Iran, and later by being on my own in S.F., trying to get an education in the US, without family here and with meager funds. Joel valued relationships with people, education, and culture of all types over material possessions. I was extremely impressed by his empathy to his family and many other people for whom he cared. If anyone felt pain he would share their sadness, and if they were happy he would express joy. He could relate to people of any age. He was the best kind of counselor a person could have. Anytime we conversed, I felt happy and energized ready to look at things with a new perspective. Joel was delighted to hear that our grandson was born on his birthday, May 1st,



From Left to right: Martin Jacob, Julius Shabbas, Yoel Baba and Dr. Joel Elias  
All previous Presidents of the Assyrian Foundation of America



# Meet the forgotten queen

## protected by a curse and crowned with gold

*Courtesy of USAToday.com by Traci Watson*

In a crumbling Middle Eastern palace, a woman's coffin lay undisturbed for millennia, her remains surrounded by treasure and protected by an ancient curse. Now scientific sleuthing has revealed her identity: she was Hama, queen of an empire.

Hama died young, and perhaps suddenly, hinting at why she was interred in a bronze coffin rather than the usual stone sarcophagus. She was no more than 20, but the gold crowns and other riches in her grave signal her power and wealth. "She was so young when she died, and we don't know how," says Tracy Spurrier of the University of Toronto in Canada, author of a recent study identifying Hama. But "she was clearly an important person, and she deserves to be remembered."

Hama was queen of Assyria, an empire based in what is now Iraq and

stretching as far as Egypt. Hama probably left politics to her husband, King Shalmaneser IV, who ruled during the mid 8th-century BC. But Assyrian queens were "the

holders of the wealth of the household," controlling the royal residence and property, says Mark Altaweel of Britain's University College London, who was not part of the study.

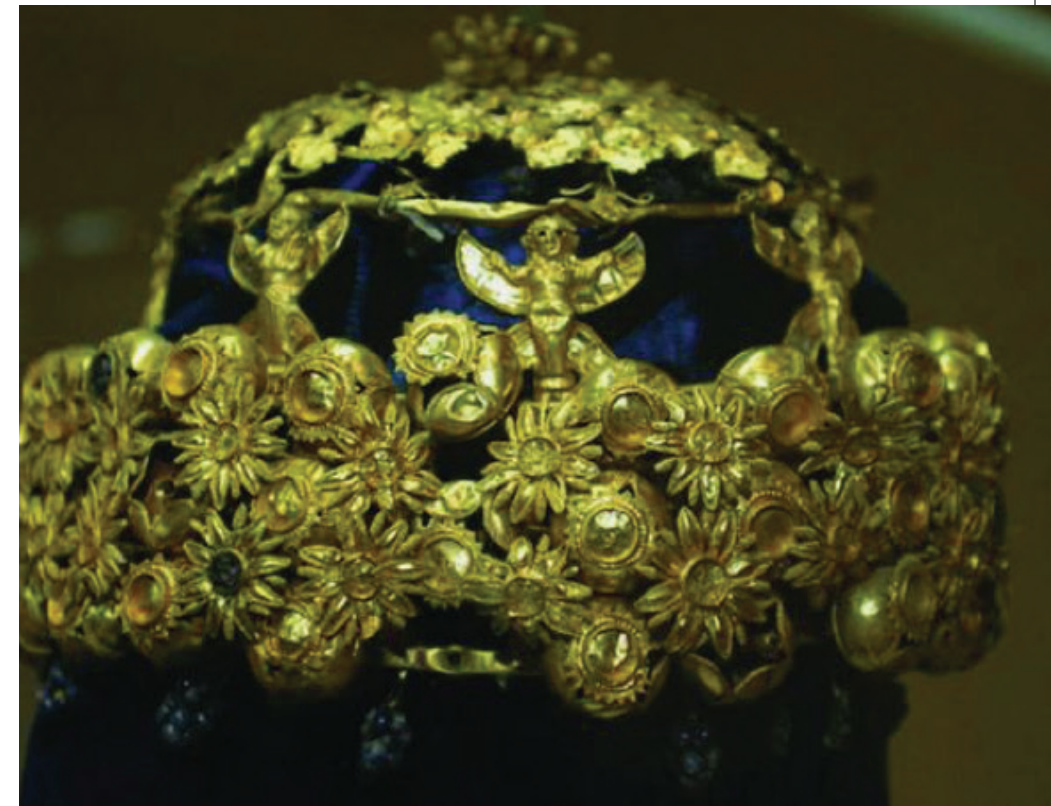
Hama was entombed near other queens at the sprawling Northwest Palace in the Assyrian capital of Nimrud, near present-day Mosul. Discovered by Iraqi archaeologists nearly 30 years ago, Hama's coffin held a breathtaking array of riches, including chunky gold anklets, a beautifully worked gold jug and jeweled rings. Amid the hoard was the nearly complete skeleton of a short, slender woman. On her head was a delicate gold crown depicting pomegranates, flowers and female winged genies. By her side was a gold stamp seal like those used to stamp documents. The script on it read in part, "Belonging to Hama, queen of Shalmaneser."



*Photo: Sgt Noreen L. Feeney, 318th Public Affairs Operation Center (PAOC), US Army*

But scholars missed the connection between the stamp and the skeleton. There was also a mistaken belief that the coffin, like two others found close to Hama's, held only jumbled remains, says the study in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*. Poring over documents about the Nimrud burials, Spurrier realized the seal had been near the young woman's neck, suggesting it had been worn as a pendant. A seal is a deeply personal item, and its presence implies the woman found with it was Hama herself, Spurrier argues. The seal's inscription was translated years ago, says McGuire Gibson of the University of Chicago, who was not part of the study, but "its importance had not been noticed... Ms. Spurrier was clever in seeing what had been ignored by others."

It will be difficult to prove that the woman is Hama, but Spurrier's arguments are "quite convincing," says David Kertai of the Martin Buber Society of Fellows in Jerusalem, also not part of the study. Though little is known of Hama herself, Assyrian queens "had huge estates and households. ... (and) were actually quite powerful in their own way." That power supposedly extended after death. Near Hama's coffin was a tablet written with a curse warning, "Anyone later who removes my throne ... may his spirit receive no bread!" But the curse, which was installed for another queen, didn't stop Islamic State fighters. They blew up part of the Northwest Palace with barrel bombs in 2015 and wrecked Mosul's museum, which held Hama's bronze coffin. Hama's skeleton, at least, was in Baghdad's museum, and Spurrier hopes it still is. "I feel very close to her now, if you can say that about someone long dead," she says. "She was prominent in life. Let's remember her."



*The jeweled gold crown found on Hama's head depicts pomegranates, grapes, leaves, flowers and female genies.*

*Photo: Sgt Noreen L. Feeney, 318th Public Affairs Operation Center (PAOC), US Army*



*The cuneiform inscription around Hama's seal reads, "Belonging to Hama, queen of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, daughter-in-law of Adad-nerari."*

*Photo: Sgt Noreen L. Feeney, 318th Public Affairs Operation Center (PAOC), US Army*



# Assyrian Arts Institute

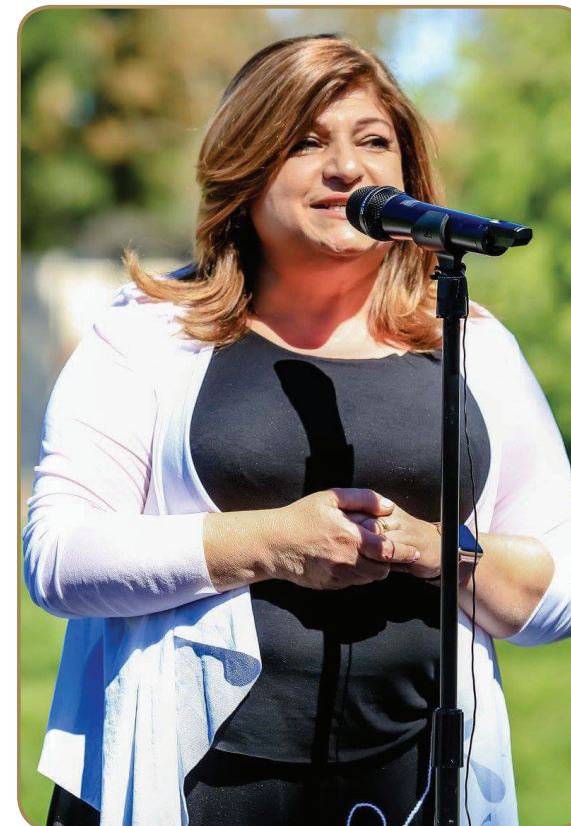
April 1st, 2017 (Kha B'Neesan 6767) was the inauguration day for the Assyrian Arts Institute (AAI), a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, focused and dedicated to showcasing the vast array of Assyrian arts - from ancient to modern time.

The inauguration ceremony for AAI was attended by an outpouring of Assyrians and non-Assyrians at Lincoln Park, Los Altos, California. The event also featured the unveiling of an Assyrian public monument, entitled "Shlama," an 8 ft x 5 ft x 3 ft bronze sculpture, bearing a calligraphic representation of the word "Peace" in Aramaic. Shlama was commissioned by AAI and sculpted by Fred Parhad, an Assyrian artist and renowned contributor to the Assyrian arts. The statue was gifted to the city of Los Altos, CA by the Assyrian Arts Institute as a significant Assyrian symbol of peace and solidarity. Numerous illustrious guests were

in attendance such as His Grace Bishop Mar Awa Royel and Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo.

Inhabiting a geographic region in north Mesopotamia, now spanning parts of Iran, Turkey, Syria and Iraq, the Assyrian people have experienced the types of geopolitical and social extremes that often result in the loss of cultural identity. Dark periods of persecution, genocide, and religious turmoil have left the original boundaries of the Assyrian nation in tatters. Consequently, AAI is looking to rebuild the Assyrian culture through the promotion of its arts.

Scholars suggest that art and architecture uniquely identified as Assyrian began to emerge around 1500 B.C. during the first Golden Age of Assyria (2400 B.C. to 612 B.C.). These early works often contain visual references to hunting, war and human suffer-

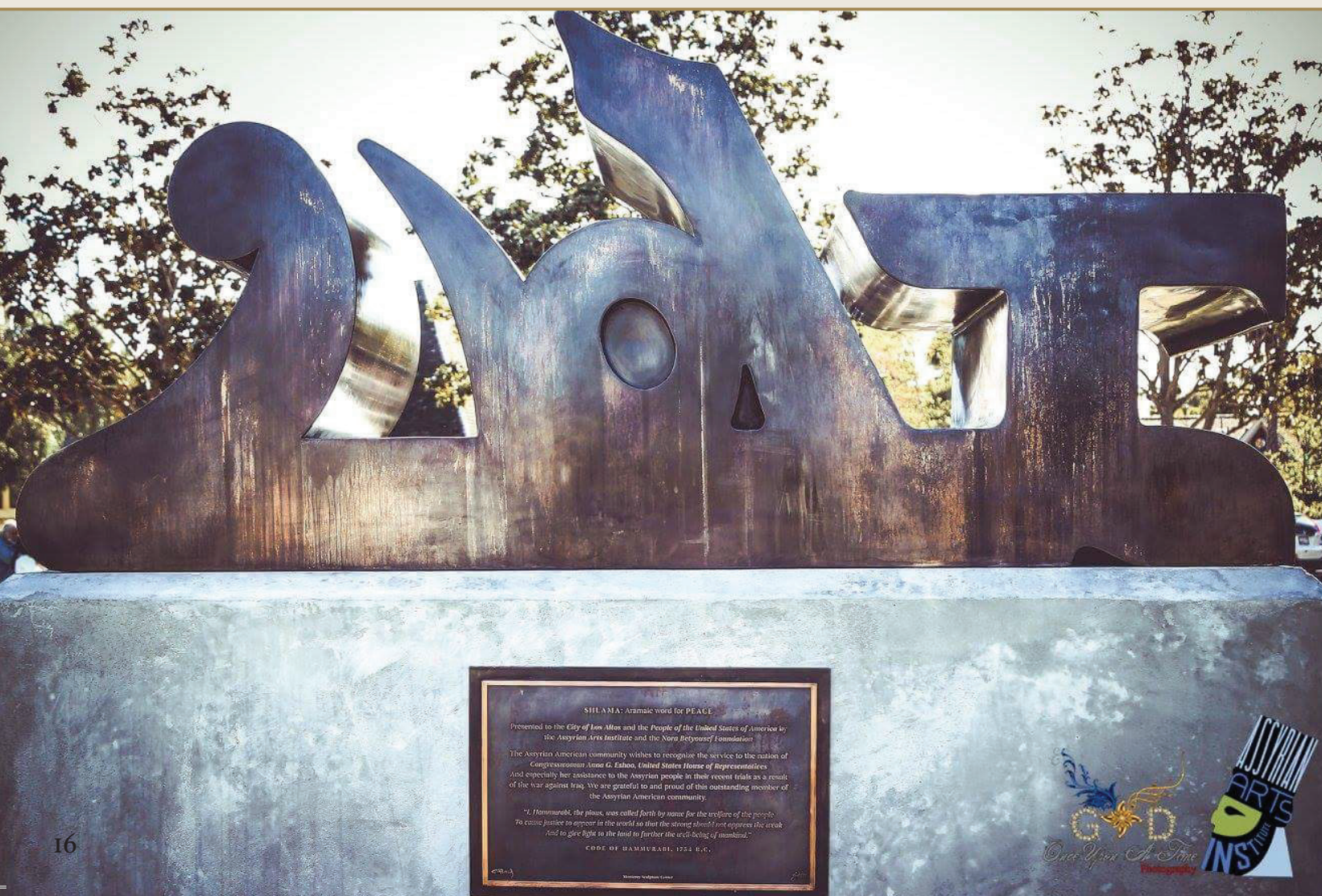


ing, reflecting the times and military dominance of the Assyrian nation. Many of these ancient artifacts were re-discovered by archaeologists in modern times, with well-documented collections of stone carvings, pottery, sculpture and other art forms housed today in museums throughout the world.

AAI intends to use Assyrian arts as a means to avoid cultural extinction when today's Assyrians no longer control their ancestral home lands, have dissipated to various regions around the globe, and face a future of struggle as they try to keep their Assyrian culture and traditions alive. AAI believes it is precisely this struggle that results in the rich and important mix of artistic styles that continues to define Assyrian arts today.

With recent attacks by ISIS on Christian Assyrians in Iraq and Syria, and with the destruction of churches and ancient artifacts, AAI kicked off its inauguration by providing the Shlama monument as a symbolic gesture of goodwill and sanguinity, and to display its commitment to preserving Assyrian arts.

Please check AAI's website, <http://assyrianartsinstitute.org/> and Assyrian Arts Institute Facebook page to learn more about the Assyrian Arts Institute.





# 1918

## Van Assyrians Final Escape

*by Solomon (Sawa) Solomon*

In March 1915, the governor of Van ordered the Turkish army and the Kurdish tribes to murder the entire Christian population of Eastern Turkey. One million Armenians and 150,000 Assyrians were massacred; What was left of the Christian population took refuge in the Armenian sector of the city of Van for about one month, until Russian army troops arrived and raised the siege.

For the next three years, the Assyrians of the Van area would escape to Armenia (at that time under Russian rule) to save themselves whenever Turkish troops would advance in Eastern Turkey. This happened several times before 1918 when finally, they came home from Russia following the Bolshevik revolution.

In early 1918, the Turkish army conducted a great offensive in the east. Here, the Armenians and Van Assyrians tried to escape to Russian Armenia. However, they discovered that their path was blocked by Turkish troops. Thus, the Armenian commander, Levon Pasha Bayramian ordered a retreat to the city of Van.

At this point, I would like to mention that when the Assyrian town of Sara was attacked in 1915, some Sara Assyrians escaped to the village of Hoshesor because Deacon Gabriel was married to Myriam Polus, a niece of Malik Sappar of Sara. Sara was close to the Persian border, so my father Sliwo Solomon (age 20 at the time) asked the group from Sara to take the Christians across the mountains into Persia. Hence, they



Sliwo Solomon

passed into Persia via the town of Kottar. My father then went to find the Armenians in the group of Levon Pasha and told them about the Sara Assyrians. This group seemed to have told the Armenian Commander who consequently ordered the Christians to move toward Persia by way of Sara, especially in light of the fact that the troops of the fifth Turkish Division under Mustapha Izet Bek as well as the troops of the twelfth division under Ali Refaat Bek started attacking the Armenian forces.

The Assyrian/Armenian refugees rested in Sara, then headed toward the Kottar Pass. On the pass, Simco the Kurd had blocked the road. However, the Christians were able to dislodge Simco the Assassin, and to cross into Persia. From the

border, the new refugees joined their brethren, the great tribes from Hakkari who had moved to Persia in 1915 and were fighting the Turkish Army with the help of the Czarist Russians. Three months later, they moved from Salamas to Urmia.

After a few months, the entire nation moved to the city of Hamadan (in Persia) where the British army was stationed. The commander of the British forces in Mesopotamia, General William Marshall, ordered that the refugees be housed in a camp at Baquba. This was the end of a chapter in modern Assyrian history. What followed would be a new chapter for the Assyrian people.



Simco (Ismael Agha)



Malik Marogil of Timar



# Assyrian Foundation of America

## 7th Annual Appreciation Event

### “The Assyrian Global Governance Mandate”

by Elizabeth Mickaily-Huber, Ph.D.

May 21, 2017 was the date of the Assyrian Foundation of America's 7th Annual Appreciation Event. AFA's president Ms. Jackie Yelda prefaced the day's presentation by explaining that Assyrians are currently in “survival mode” in the Middle East. She expressed the need for Assyrians to have a plan not only to survive, but to thrive. She suggested that one possible solution is self-reliance. Indeed, this statement segued to the topic of the key-note speaker, Mr. Michael Youash.

Michael is a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto, in Canada. He specializes in constitutional design broadly with a particular focus on parliamentary transformation. His goal is to help the Assyrian community to grow and to move forward through innovations in the way Assyrians organize themselves globally. This said, he stressed that the first step in achieving this goal is for Assyrians to accept an undesirable truth; specifically, that the model by which Assyrians have organized and acted as a nation has led to over a century of victimization and genocide.

He expounded that, until now, the “Assyrian Question” focused on foreign determination (Assyrian dependence on other nations for help). This dependency has led to nothing more than deception, betrayal or abandonment and disregard on the part of our so-called allies ranging from the British to the French to the Russians to the Americans. This dependency on foreign powers has been especially damaging given the absence of Assyrian capacities focused on internal empowerment.

He expressed the need to create a new Assyrian paradigm, one focused instead on self-determination. He stated in no uncertain terms, “No one has saved us until now, no one will save us from here on. Only we can save ourselves.”

As an example of the futility of foreign determination, he provided a modern historical account. He explained that in August of 2014, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) declared the atrocities committed by ISIS as genocide. Normally, this declaration should have triggered an immediate response from the UN. However, in March 2015, the UNHRC simply said that the claims of genocide would have to be investigated, but no help to the victims would be forthcoming. In fact, helping the victims was not even discussed. Furthermore, in 2013, renowned Law professor Hannibal Travis noted the UN's “muted response”, pointing out that the fundamental system of the UN would need to be changed before any help to the victims could be offered. Finally, in March of 2016, U.S. Secretary of State Kerry formally recognized the ongoing genocide of Christians in Iraq and Syria at the hands of ISIS, yet this declaration imposed no bona fide changes in policy nor any real help to the victims.

Michael used this series of events to drive home the point that foreign determination of the “Assyrian Question” is a failed model. But what is behind this failure? He claims that Assyrian needs are in clear conflict with the policies of the ruling nations of the world. In essence, France, England, the U.S., Russia, and other powerful coun-

tries are out to see to their own requisites. The hardships and demands of the Assyrian people have no import on the world scene despite the sincere efforts of Assyrian advocates and lobbyists. Although these endeavors have resulted in significant pro-Assyrian legislation, nothing concrete has ever occurred to “save Assyrians”, who continue to advocate from an ever-weaker material and demographic position in the Middle East while failing to develop their strengths and resources in diaspora with a view to directly supporting themselves.

Over the past century of Assyrian victimization based on foreign determination, Michael describes common myths that plague the Assyrian nation: “If we climb the political ladder, we will succeed”, “If we unite, we will succeed”, “If we lobby like Armenians, Jews and Kurds, we will succeed”. The first myth highlights how each new wave of Assyrian Diaspora nationalist activism operates in the belief that the Assyrians preceding them were the problem leading to failure instead of ever questioning political systems created by foreigners designed to thwart Assyrian success. The second myth operates with profound influence but ignores all the peoples throughout history who are more (violently) divided than Assyrians, such as the present Syrian opposition or the Kurds in Iraq since 1991, but receive support from powerful western states regardless. The third myth ignores the reality that Armenians, Jews and Kurds invested completely in developing their self-help/self-reliance capacity and use lobbying to supplement and support their own efforts as opposed to investing everything in lobbying. Michael says that we need to absolve ourselves of these myths and recognize one truth: self-reliance is our only solution for survival and ultimate success. This truth can easily be observed in the case of other threatened nations that have survived. While external engagement is necessary, it can be only be beneficial (as opposed to either meaningless or actively harmful) to Assyrians if they approach it from a position of internal strength as opposed to the weakness

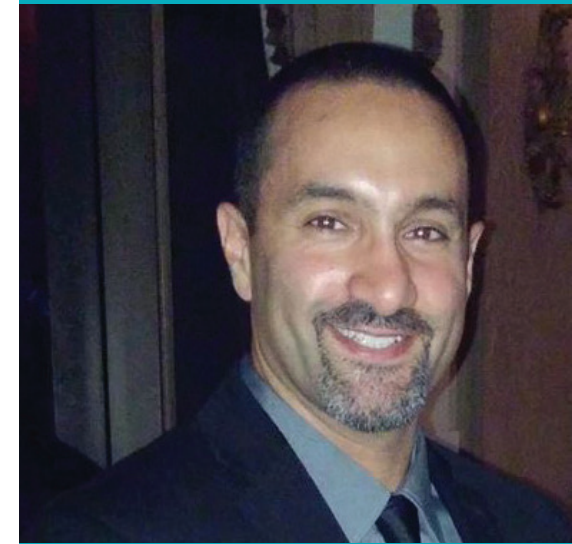
and dependency that has so far characterized them.

Obviously, Assyrians face serious challenges because we are in diaspora all over the world and risk total assimilation within our host countries. As a way to confront these challenges, Michael presented the concept of “The Assyrian Global Governance Mandate”. This mandate is being presented to Assyrian cultural and educational organizations in the diaspora and seeks to acquire their consent for the exploration of ideas, practices and structures aiming to orientate the Assyrian people towards self-reliance and self-empowerment.

He likens this Assyrian Global Governance Mandate to that of the origins of the United States, when individual states in crisis declared the Articles of the Confederation as a failed model and mandated a group of men, now known as “the founding fathers”, to deliberate and develop a constitution that would represent all of the then confederated states.

Michael stressed the importance of Assyrian investment in their own future on a global level in order to put an end to the days of victimhood and build capacities and institutions founded on self-help. The Assyrian Question as Foreign Determination is so deeply embedded in the consciousness of Assyrians that challenging it is a necessary step towards a new model, but is insufficient in and of itself. Michael emphasized that those involved in Assyrian Global Governance believe it essential to incentivize Assyrian organizations into the gradual process of building institutional capacities by garnering their consent and presenting expanded possibilities for their operations at every stage. Gone are the days of Assyrian victimhood and in with the days of Assyrian empowerment, self-help and self-reliance.

Michael Youash ended his lecture by thanking the Assyrian Foundation of America for its financial contribution to his doctoral studies, an investment in him that he hopes to repay by representing his beloved Assyrian identity through the Global Governance Mandate.



*“No one has saved us until now, no one will save us from here on. Only we can save ourselves.”*



# Why You Should Eat Like the Ancient Assyrians Ate

Assyrian Kitchen's founder shares lessons from the world's oldest cookbook and other stories from ancient Mesopotamia.

*Courtesy of Chicagomag.com*

*Atorina Zomaya, the spirited founder of Assyrian Kitchen, is making ancient foods a modern phenomenon. As part of the Chicago-based interactive cooking project, Zomaya hosts popular cooking classes with Assyriologists from the University of Chicago to share 6,000 years of Assyrian culinary tradition with her students. Zomaya's site also features ancient (and updated) recipes, and her store Buried Cheese will open in the North Shore this summer.*

*This Chicago native wants the local culinary scene to know that Assyrians, descendants of one of the oldest civilizations in the world dating back to 2500 BC in Mesopotamia, still exist, and their food is both ancient and delicious.*

Zomaya sat down with *Chicago* to discuss what we can learn from the past and how she makes the ancient new again.

**What sparked your dive into researching the world of ancient recipes?**

Assyrian Kitchen began with just a genuine desire to know how to prepare our culture's food while living the professional city life. Growing up it was always grandma and mom in the kitchen, and cooking wasn't something I was encouraged to learn. My piqued interest in cooking was met with, "Don't you want to be a doctor, an engineer, or a lawyer?" In a way, I've fallen down the rabbit hole on this path of investigating our ancient foods, and I've become so fascinated with the idea that there is a huge connection between meals eaten by Assyrians 6,000 years ago and the meals enjoyed in modern Assyrian homes today. I never thought people would be interested in learning how to cook authentic ancient foods that Assyrian families enjoy daily. But I've found that sharing our food is one of the best gateways into saying, here are the fun, delicious things about my culture.

**The Yale Tablets are the world's oldest cookbook. What have these three clay tablets taught the world about ancient diets?**

Assyrian kings recorded details of their lives on tablets that would often be

found on the walls of an entrance to a palace. These very self-absorbed kings, through their vanity, preserved a window into the history of food and its preparation in ancient Mesopotamia.

The Yale Tablets, which are housed at Yale University, include Akkadian cuneiform [an ancient writing system] that describes 40 recipes dating back to 1700 BC. The recipes were for master chefs in the royal court—mere lists of ingredients with minimal instruction.

Today, we often look back at the ancient world and wonder, were the ancients really as evolved as we are in terms of diet? Jean Bottero, a French Assyriologist who was also an accomplished gourmet chef, says the answer is yes. Their advancement in combining refined flavors and elements into rich dishes was unique, and they had an obsessive love of onions that continues to this day in Assyrians.

**Describe to us the connection between the old and the new in Assyrian food.**

Throughout my culinary journey, I became fascinated with how little Assyrian food has changed over 6,000 years. The ancient Assyrians' cooking still resonates today in our meat pies, kibbeh in its many forms, kipteh (meatball stew), dokhwa (dried yogurt and meat soup), girdu (sour yogurt & rice pudding), hareesa (boiled wheat with meat), flat breads, and many more dishes. You can say it is a cultural food heritage with a



Atorina Zomaya PHOTO: ASSYRIAN KITCHEN

natural, healthy focus on vegetables and grains, such as barley, once an ancient form of currency, as well as herbs, fermented dairy products, and pickles.

**What are some examples of these ancient foods that you could find Assyrians enjoying today?**

We can see the influence our people picked up as they fled to countries like Iran, Syria, or even America to escape persecution. The meat pie, similar to the popular Turkish pide, was at the time made with fowl, shallots, roasted dill seeds, and other ingredients. Though it's been adapted, Assyrians eat this even today.

Another favorite of the ancients was kibbeh. Whether it is cooked in a tomato stew, as a fried meat-stuffed torpedo, or a flat pie filled with meat and pine nuts, kibbeh was enjoyed by the ancient Assyrians. Kibbeh pots were used by ancient Assyrians, and the word kibbeh itself is an ancient Akkadian word that was introduced into Aramaic, two of the root languages for modern day Assyrian.

**Where in Chicago can diners find authentic Assyrian food?**

For Assyrian food, like other Middle East cuisines, you have limited options in the city, and they don't serve the traditional dishes that we cherish as families. There is Zaytune Mediterranean Grill,

or Larsa's in Skokie, where you can find some unique dishes.

I hope one day I see an authentic Assyrian restaurant in Chicago, so I have one place I can point to, to say this is us, this is our culinary heritage on a plate. But to really taste our food, you need to make your way into the heart of an Assyrian family, which is the dining table.

**You have a sold-out Ancient Cooking class with the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute on April 1 at the Lakeview Whole Foods—with more to come this summer. What can people expect to learn?**

An Assyriologist will be on board to explain ingredients and tools, as well as pickling and fermentation in the ancient world. I'm in charge of cooking and instructing on how to prepare various ancient foods.

But, Ancient Cooking classes aren't just about making a dish. It's almost like recreating the experience of entering an Assyrian home. Tea is always on, and the table has pots stuffed with figs, dates, and walnuts. If you come to my parent's home, you will find exactly the same thing. There is food everywhere. Guests are literally attacked by food, and that's the generosity of our culture, we want you to feel love through food. You will be overfed, you will be loved, and if you don't eat the food, it is an insult.

**ISIS and other extremist groups in Iraq and Syria have caused the mass displacement of Assyrians since 2014. How do Assyrian Americans provide hope to people back in the homeland?**

I have a cousin who runs an Assyrian food truck in Washington and the lamassu [a deity with a human head and animal body], which is a really significant cultural icon, is a part of their branding. You know, the Assyrian people are scattered throughout the world and often in sad situations, like what is happening in Iraq. Our ancient relics, like lamassu and Nimrud [an ancient Assyrian city], are being destroyed by people with no respect for anything. So when you see any Assyrian relic celebrated, people who are enduring a genocide back home still feel that somewhere in the world our culture is continuing on.

I hope Assyrian Kitchen can give hope and strength to Assyrians facing war and displacement today. If you know our story as a people, we have always had the short end of the stick with genocides. Even today, there is a genocide going on, and it is falling on deaf ears once again. But you can't give up hope, and I feel that sharing our culinary history is just one way that our people can still feel that love and warmth in their lives.



# Andreas Haddad of Assyriskä

by Elizabeth Mickaily-Huber, Ph.D.

Andreas Haddad is a player (striker position) of the famed Assyrian football (soccer) team Assyriskä in Södertälje, Sweden. Popular and respected, he is seen as a cult hero to many. Andreas kindly accorded Nineveh Magazine time for an interview saying, "I love people who work for their nationality. We need everyone who can get our history out."



*Superettan is a professional league and the second highest league in the system of Swedish men's football. Contested by 16 clubs, it operates on a system of promotion and relegation with Allsvenskan and Division 1.*

*Seasons run from April to October, with teams playing 30 matches each, totaling 240 matches in the season.*



**Can you tell us how the team got started and when?**

Assyriskä FF started 1974. It was formed by a group of Assyrian immigrants.

**How important is Assyriskä on the international soccer scene?**

I think Assyriskä is very important because we show the world that some immigrants can make it from the lowest division to the big scene in the highest division. We represent the Assyrian people around the world. People feel connected to the team and follow it with passion.

**How many of its players are Assyrian?**

The season starts in April so now we don't know exactly how many players we will have. But for now we are 8 Assyrian players.

**What motivates you to play for Assyriskä?**

I play in Assyriskä because i want to play for my "country" and for our "national" team.

**Can you give me a few interesting statistics on Assyriskä?**

We have the most points and most player games in the Superettan

**Thanks for answering our questions Andreas.**

# Swimming in the Bay

by Era Osibe



When I was, a young girl growing up in Iran, my father would take our family on an annual trip to the Caspian Sea. I loved it: the cool water and the fresh air. All year long, I would wait for that special time when I could swim once again.

Not long after finishing school in September of 1976, life brought me to San Francisco. One day, I went to see Christopher Columbus on his namesakes' day parade, observing his ornate regalia. He came ashore at the Aquatic Park in a row boat, but I was more intrigued by the orange caps I saw bobbing about in the cove behind him.

The next day I returned to that location. Dawning my swimsuit in the dilapidated changing room under the bleachers, I plunged into the cold water. Although I could barely swim, I could not resist returning day after day and got to know a group of friendly female swimmers. One of them told me about the Dolphin Club, a swimmers' club that they weren't allowed to join because of their gender. They said something about "suing," but I couldn't even

find this word in my Persian/English dictionary. Nevertheless, whatever it was, I was prepared to support them.

In September of 1977, once the case was settled, I joined the famed Dolphin Club. I felt welcome, got lessons to improve my swimming, and one year later swam from the Golden Gate to Alcatraz.

Unfortunately, in 1979, criticisms eventually came from some of the older members of the club who took out on me their anger regarding the Iranian Hostage Crisis, despite the fact that I am an Assyrian-Christian. "It's your fault, go back to your country," they cried out. Fortunately, despite my diminutive size, I refused to play the role of a shrinking violet. I stood up to them and continued my swimming endeavors.

Today, I am proud to be one of the first women to be a member of the Dolphin Club since 1977, one hundred years after its inception during which women were not allowed to join. I received many thanks from



the ladies of the club for my support, helping them to enjoy and be a part of this wonderful society.

I have enjoyed many challenges such as the New Year Day Alcatraz swim, as well as the Golden Gate to Fisherman's Wharf crossing. Through it all, I have great memories, have enjoyed myself immensely, and am grateful to have been able to participate in such a wonderful group, swimming in beautiful San Francisco bay.



## LET THEM NOT RETURN

Sayfo – The Genocide Against the Assyrian, Syriac, and Chaldean Christians in the Ottoman Empire

Edited by David Gaunt, Naures Atto, and Soner O. Barthoma  
Volume 26, War and Genocide

*“With a list of top-notch contributors, this is an excellent addition to what little is currently available on this under-researched genocide. The organization of the contributions and the volume’s breadth of scope are particularly impressive.”*

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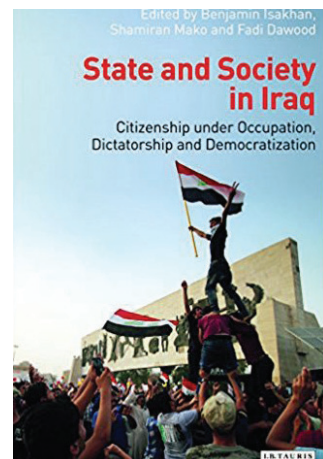
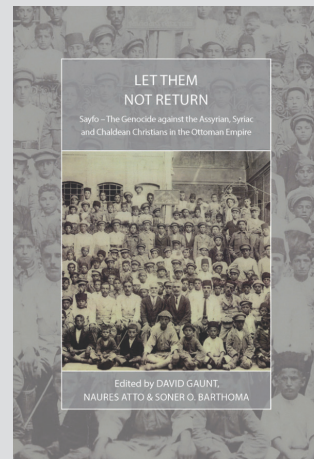
The mass killing of Ottoman Armenians is today widely recognized, both within and outside scholarly circles, as an act of genocide. What is less well known, however, is that it took place within a broader context of Ottoman violence against minority groups during and after the First World War. Among those populations decimated were the indigenous Christian Assyrians (also known as Syriacs or Chaldeans) who lived in the borderlands of present-day Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. This volume is the first scholarly edited collection focused on the Assyrian genocide, or “Sayfo” (literally, “sword” in Aramaic), presenting historical, psychological, anthropological, and political perspectives that shed much-needed light on a neglected historical atrocity.

David Gaunt is Professor of History at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies, Södertörn University, and a member of the European Academy.

Naures Atto is a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in World Christianities and their Diaspora in the European Context and Principal Investigator in the Aramaic Online Project at the University of Cambridge.

Soner O. Barthoma is an independent researcher in the field of Political Science and co-coordinator of the Erasmus+ Aramaic Online Project at Freie Universität Berlin.

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## State and Society in Iraq: Citizenship under Occupation, Dictatorship and Democratization

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The relentless advance of ISIS in 2014/2015 has brought back to centre stage a series of questions about the nature, and even viability, of the Iraqi state. Since the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, much scholarly attention has been given to the Iraqi state’s early formation and the impact of colonial and post-colonial policies on its development. State and Society in Iraq shifts the focus to state-society relations and assesses how critical junctures in the country’s history have affected successive and contemporary interactions. Leading experts offer a range of interdisciplinary perspectives to demonstrate the evolving nature of state-society relations, from the British colonial rule until after the fall of the Ba’athist regime. The in-depth historical analysis documents the nature of the Republican

period that followed the 1958 military coup, authoritarianism, and Ba’athist ideology—particularly under the leadership of Saddam Hussein—and the later state building initiatives that included the development of social movements and democratic engagement. Emerging most strongly are the complex ways in which Iraqis of different backgrounds subverted official doctrine and, after the US-led intervention, resisted top-down democratization. The research therefore builds on current historiography to interrogate the complex matrix of consent, negotiation, resistance, and counter-discourse that constitute state-society relations. The book addresses some of the most significant problems Iraq experiences as a post-colonial state and recommends how the challenges facing Iraq’s state-society relations can be overcome.

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Dispatch No. 3, August 2017

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### BOOK RELEASE ‘ASSYRIA AND THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE’

We would like to announce the release of our newly published book: ‘Assyria and the Paris Peace Conference’, by Dr. Abraham K. Yoosuf.

This book collects the known writings of the late Dr. Abraham K. Yoosuf (1866–1924). Despite his short lifetime (58 years), Dr. Yoosuf managed to accomplish many things. He is best known for his work as Assyrian delegate at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919–1920, where he fought for the rights of the Assyrians and their right to self-determination of Assyria.

★

“Perhaps the most significant contribution in the following pages is the collection of the personal notes of Dr. Yoosuf at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Imaginably most telling is the previously un-observed inter-Assyrian relationships during the conference articulated as observed by one of the attendees. The work will create a framework for new discussions of Assyrian politics in the wake of World War I and hopefully, a more nuanced discussion of the type(s) of agency wielded by an indigenous minority in the Middle East as well as in a relatively recent diasporic context, especially in the United States. Perchance this edited collection and future academic inquiry will open the eyes of scholarship to the diverse elements and individuals which made and make up the Assyrian people, and perhaps, in the only case of its kind in the Middle East, go beyond sectarian religious divides, national, linguistic, and economic boundaries, to find common case in an unaccepted, ridiculed, and often reviled heritage.”

– From the foreword by Sargon George Donabed.

Tomas Beth-Avdalla is Project Manager for Modern Assyrian Research Archive (MARA) and Sargon George Donabed is Associate Professor of History and American Studies at Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island.

### BOOK DETAILS

**TITLE:** Assyria and the Paris Peace Conference | **AUTHOR:** Abraham K. Yoosuf | **EDITED BY:** Tomas Beth-Avdalla | **FOREWORD BY:** Sargon George Donabed, Ph.D. | **PUBLISHED BY:** Nineveh Press | **PRINTED BY:** Lulu, Raleigh, NC, USA 2017 | **SERIES:** MARA Collected Texts 2 | 6 x 9 in (15.2 cm x 22.9 cm), 246 pages, illustrations, index | **PUBLICATION DATE:** August 2017 | **ISBN:** 978-91-984100-6-8 | **PRICE:** \$29.99

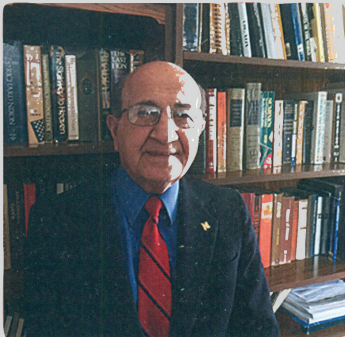
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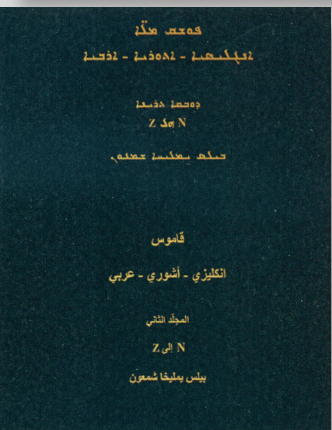
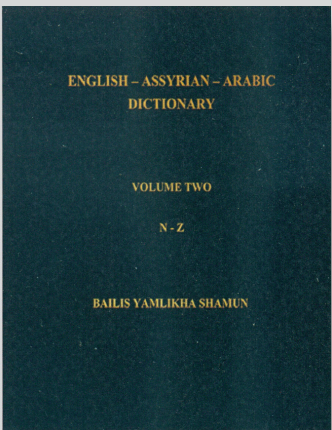


About the author:

**Bailis** was born in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1942. His parents were Rabi Yamlikha Shamun and Lapyia Zkharia, both of the village of Ada, in Urmia, Iran. As a young boy, he attended the Assyrian School of Qasha Khando in Baghdad, then, Baghdad College, a high school conducted by the American Catholic Jesuits. After graduation, he entered the University of Baghdad, and after two years he had to interrupt his studies as the political conditions in the Country were deteriorating. In 1965 he migrated to the United States, and in 1968 graduated with a bachelor's degree from Campbell University of North Carolina.

From a young age, Bailis has been passionate about the mother tongue. He has always believed that, under the prevailing conditions of the Assyrian Nation, retention of our language is the only means that could prevent assimilation and guarantee our survival as a distinct entity. Hence, he has made it a point to participate in, and support, any effort intended to

promote or extend the life of this important element of our existence. For years he has taught the language in Chicago. He was a close friend of the late writer and composer Rabi William Daniel, and the two have worked together on linguistic and artistic projects. Bailis was one of the founders and the first secretary of the Assyrian Academic Society of Chicago, and one of the main contributors to its publication. The last 25 years have been diligently devoted to compiling an English-Assyrian-Arabic dictionary, a reference useful for the future of our language in these western societies. You may visit the website: [www.khudata.com](http://www.khudata.com) to purchase the book.



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## Sophia Mickaily (née d'Mar Shimun)

Sophia Mickaily, a long time member of the Mar Narsai Church of the East of San Francisco, passed away on April 1, 2016.

Sophia was born in 1935 on the island of Cyprus, at that time a territory of the Commonwealth of Great Britain. She was the second to the last child of Elishwa d'bait Kelaita and Zaya d'Bait Mar Shimun, brother of the martyred Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun XXI.

She attended and graduated from the American Academy of Cyprus, after which, at age 17, her family moved to London, England. While living in England, she worked for the Bible House Printing Company as well as for an architect's office.

In 1957, she was the first of her side of the family to immigrate to the United States. She completed secretarial school in San Francisco and began working for Wells Fargo Bank, where she worked for a total of 35 years, initially as an administrative assistant, and subsequently as an insurance specialist.

In 1960, she married Alfred D. Mickaily, son of David Michael and Selbi Sarkis Simon of Ourmia, Iran and nephew of the notable Turlock businessman John (Ewan) Simon at the Mar Addai Assyrian Church in Turlock. Their first and only child, Elizabeth, was born in 1964.

Sadly, Sophia's husband passed away in 1995. However, God blessed her with her first grandson Mathieu in 1997, followed by her second grandson David in 1998.

Sophia was a loving and attentive wife, mother, and grandmother. She was a regular church goer and truly loved the Mar Narsai Church in San Francisco. She will be remembered for her kind and gentle nature that touched everyone who met her. Her funeral took place on April 9, 2016 at the Turlock Memorial Park Chapel, and she was laid to rest next to her husband Alfred in the Turlock Memorial Park Cemetery.

She leaves behind her daughter Elizabeth Mickaily-Huber, her grandsons Mathieu and David Huber, her sole surviving sister Sulte Walker in Gloucester, England, as well as, her son-in-law Florian Huber.

## Alfred Tatar David

by Solomon (Sawa) Solomon

I regret to report the death of my first cousin Alfred Tatar in Australia on May 24, 2017 following a coronary a few days earlier. Alfred was born in 1938 in Habbania, Iraq. The funeral services were held in the Rabban Hormis Church on May 27 with Reverend Ashour Lazar officiating. Interment was at the Pangrove Cemetery.

Alfred was the son of Tatar and Sona David. He is survived by his wife Janet, his son Andrew and his two daughters Cynthia and Faye. He also leaves behind his brother William and his sister Shamiran and their families, all of his survivors are in Australia.

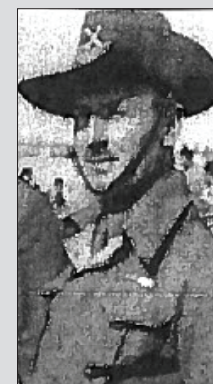
May Almighty God give Alfred a resting place in paradise.



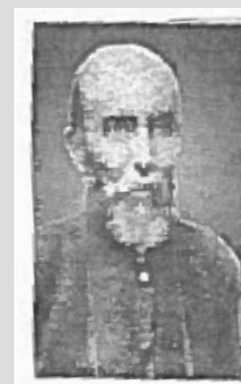
Almas & Sargon Aboona, Skokie



Deacon Guliad



RaB-Tremma Yacu Aboona



Mar Elia Aboona

## Sargon Aboona

by Solomon (Sawa) Solomon

Sargon Yacu Aboona of the Chicago area passed away of old age at home on April 25, 2017. He was laid to rest in Montrose Cemetery following funeral services officiated by Bishop Mar Paulus and eight priests.

Sargon, who was born in Alqosh, Iraq in 1921, was the grand-nephew of Bishop Mar Elia of Alqosh. His father (d. 1984) served in the Assyrian Levies with the rank of Rab-Tremma.

During his life, Sargon worked mainly in oil companies. In 1958, he was married to Almas, the daughter of Deacon Guliad Antar, who was instrumental in building the Church of Mar Qardagh in Baghdad in 1949.

Sargon is survived by his wife Almas, son Emil and daughter Nadia. May he Rest in Peace.

Sargon is survived by his wife Almas, his son Emil and his daughter Nadia. May he rest in peace.

## John S. Arslen Veteran 1931 - 2017

John S. Arslen, beloved husband, brother, uncle, friend and neighbor, passed away on April 10, 2017, after a brief illness. He was 85.

Six months earlier, John was predeceased by his wife of 47 years, Louise (Donoian), the love of his life. During her last years, she had been confined to a nursing facility where John cared for her devotedly and tirelessly.

Born to Simon and Rachel (Samuel) Arslen on December 28, 1931, John came from a proud Assyrian heritage: his grandfather was an Assyrian priest credited with saving many Armenian lives during the early 20th century; an esteemed traditional musician and vocalist, John's father worked as a local cobbler.

John lived his entire life in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he attended Classical High School before serving in the Navy aboard the USS Briareus in the early 1950s. He later received a degree in business administration from Northeastern University while working for his father and attending night school. He worked in acquisitions at U Mass Medical Center until his retirement. A gentle, inquisitive man who thought things through, John's notable intellect was matched by a kind and generous spirit. He had a lifelong passion for literature, art and especially jazz - and was a fan of classic movies. A favorite uncle, he was legendary for his pastime, airplane model-making.

John will be deeply missed and remembered by his sister,



Jane (William) Chapman of Little Egg Harbor, NJ; nephews George (Janet) Tashji, David (Susan) Tashji, Peter (Tracey) Tashji, Michael (Judy) Tashji, and Oscar Derderian; niece Jaymie Babaian; sister-in-law Shake Derderian; long-time friend John Namey; and numerous cousins including Phyllis Arslen Saffer and Pamela Saffer and Leslie Saffer who were devoted to him in his later years.

Calling hours will be held Friday, April 21, 4:00 to 6:00pm, at Callahan Fay & Caswell Funeral Home, 61 Myrtle Street, Worcester. In lieu of flowers, donations in John's memory may be made in support of refugees to: the Assyrian Foundation of America. Interment with Navy Funeral Honors will be held at Hope Cemetery.



## Marlyne Odah-Soro: 1947-2016

Marlyne Odah-Soro passed away peacefully in Chicago, surrounded by loved ones, family, and friends, on October 9, 2016, after a short illness.

Marlyne was born on May 2, 1947 in Kirkuk to Paulus and Seranoush Odah. She graduated from Baghdad University with a bachelor's degree in English and French, and later received a master's degree in interior design from the Harrington Institute of Interior Design in Chicago. She worked as an interior designer in California, handling both commercial and residential projects. In 1986, she married Oshana Soro, and thereafter lived in Chicago, joining his accounting practice and occasionally providing consultation in residential interior design.

Marlyne's accomplishments were exceeded only by her profound love of life. If we could describe Marlyne in one word, we would choose "beauty," as beauty lit up both her soul and mind, was infused into everything she touched physically or emotionally. Elegance and grace were natural, integral parts of her being. She routinely transformed the ordinary into simple but beautiful things. She created beauty through design and her exquisite baking and cooking. Beauty shone through her fierce love of family, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Assyrian nation. It manifested in her passion to defend the underserved, to right whatever was wrong,



and most of all in her transparency and honesty. We could always count on Marlyne to tell it as it was; she was a woman of unquestioned integrity and unparalleled moral standards.

Marlyne's untimely passing is deeply mourned by her husband, brothers, sister, and many other family members and friends. She was a beacon and a blessing in all our lives. Her passing has left a void in our hearts. We pray that the beautiful memories she created in our lives will console us.

Marlyne was preceded in death by her parents and her brother, Emmanuel. She is survived by her husband, Oshana, as well as by her siblings, Wilson, Martin, Dolphine, and Paul, in addition to the many nieces and nephews to whom she was a beloved aunt. We know that she will also be missed by the many members of the Chicago community whose lives she touched.

# ASSYRIAN IDENTITY IN ANCIENT TIMES AND TODAY

## Professor Simo Parpola, Helsinki

Continued from previous issue, page 63 (Volume 41, Number 1-2)...

A few centuries later, the descendants of these people had been so completely absorbed into the Assyrian society that no trace of their Hurrian ancestry, except for a few garbled personal names, remains in the Neo-Assyrian sources (Rollig 1996). They now were in every respect ethnic Assyrians, indistinguishable from their fellow citizens.

By the end of the seventh century BC, all provinces and dependencies of Assyria including the Levant had been Assyrian territory for more than a hundred years, most of them for hundreds of years (see Table I). Keeping in mind that ethnic identities in multiethnic societies universally start declining already in the second generation, it is absolutely unthinkable that the average Assyrian citizen living in the late seventh century could have regarded himself (or herself) as anything but Assyrian.<sup>15</sup>

His cultural milieu was pluralistic and often cosmopolitan but nonetheless thoroughly uniform and Assyrian wherever he went. Assyria was the only world he knew; any memory of the ethnic roots of his ancestors had long since faded out or become irrelevant as a result of mixed interethnic marriages in several generations. True, people in different parts of the country practiced different customs, dressed differently, spoke different local languages, and venerated different local gods; but all of them pledged allegiance to the same king, worshipped the same national gods, and spoke the same national language, Imperial Aramaic. This was not the language spoken by ethnic Arameans but a creation of the Empire, a lingua franca born from the interaction of numerous ethnic groups and therefore serving as a unifying rather than separating factor.

The common religion, culture, world-view and value system, and above all, the common unifying language (Aramaic) effectively set Assyria apart from the rest of the world and created a feeling of unity and solidarity within the country (cf. Alba 1990, 17-18). The inherent notion of "us" against "all the others" that came with this dichotomy-Aramaic was effectively not spoken outside the Empire-agreed well with the dualistic ideology of the Empire, which saw Assyria as the kingdom of God commissioned to spread the light of civilization to the world surrounding it (Oded 1992).

The shaping of Assyria and its national identity has an obvious parallel in ancient Rome, which likewise expanded from a city to a world empire. The analogy of Rome is instructive also in showing how deeply the national identity of the Empire could become rooted even in areas far removed from its original core. The Antonine constitution of AD 212, which granted full Roman citizenship to the entire Roman Empire, is generally recognised to have "promoted in both east and west a consciousness of being Roman that lasted until the fall of the Empire, and sometimes beyond it" (Honore 1996). Centuries after the collapse of the West Roman Empire, the Byzantines still identified themselves as Rhōmaioi and were known as Romans to all nations of the Near East (Kazhdan 1991, 1793 and 1809-1810).<sup>16</sup>

### 3. The Continuity of Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times

In this context it is important to draw attention to the fact that the Aramaic-speaking peoples of the Near East have since ancient times identified themselves as Assyrians and still continue to do so. The self-designations of modern Syrians and Assyrians, Sūryōyō<sup>17</sup> and Sūrāyā,<sup>18</sup> are both derived from the ancient Assyrian word for "Assyrian", Aššūrāyu, as can be easily established from a closer look at the relevant words.

ian", Aššūrāyu, as can be easily established from a closer look at the relevant words.

### 3.1 The Neo Assyrian Origin of Syriac and Modern Assyrian Sūryōyō/ Sūrāyā

The word Aššūrāyu is an adjective derived from the geographical and divine name Aššur with the gentilic suffix -āyu. The name was originally pronounced [Aššūr], with a palato-alveolar fricative, but owing to a sound shift, its pronunciation was turned to [A ūr] in the early second millennium BC.<sup>19</sup> The common Aramaic word for Assyria, Ā ūr, reflects this pronunciation and in all probability dates back to the twelfth century BC, when the Aramean tribes first came into contact with the Assyrians. Towards the end of the second millennium, another sound shift took place in Assyrian, turning the pronunciation of the name into [Assūr] (Parpola 1974; Fales 1986, 61-66). Since unstressed vowels were often dropped in Neo-Assyrian at the beginning of words (Hameen-Anttila 2000, 37), this name form later also had a shorter variant, Sūr, attested in alphabetic writings of personal names containing the element Aššur in late seventh century BC Aramaic documents from Assyria.<sup>20</sup> The word Assūrāyu, "Assyrian", thus also had a variant Sūrāyu in late Assyrian times.

This variant is hidden behind standard orthography in Assyrian cuneiform texts, but its existence is confirmed by the classical Greek words for Assyrians and Assyria, which display a corresponding variation between forms with initial A- (Assūrios/Assuria) and ones without it (Sūrios/Sūros/Suria; see Table II). The Greeks, who were in frequent contact with Assyria in the eighth and seventh centuries BC (Rollinger 2001), would not have borrowed the word without the initial A-, had the Assyrians themselves not omitted it, since omission of initial vowel-

## In Memory of Bob D. Kingsbury

Written by Flora Ashuri Kingsbury

When Bob and I first met, I told him I was born in Iran but am Assyrian. He said, "Assyrians? But they are only in books and museums." He soon learned that Assyrians were not only alive and well, but maintain a long-celebrated culture that became a part of his everyday life. He embraced everything about the Assyrian culture – from the language I taught to our children, to the food we ate, to the events we attended.

Bob was a great American, a great husband, a great father, a great grandfather, and a great supporter of the Assyrian Foundation of America. He attended meetings, picnics, and dances. He sold tickets at events, loaded boxes of food into the car for picnics, took the bus to Reno and drove hundreds of miles in support of all things Assyrian. He embraced our culture from the moment we met to the moment he passed.

Bob leaves behind his wife Flora, his son Ben Ashuri Kingsbury, his daughter Lisa May Kingsbury, his daughter-in-law Juli Y. Kingsbury, his grandson Kai Cole Kingsbury, and his granddaughter Hana Lourel Kingsbury.

The Kingsbury family is honored to give this donation to the Assyrian Foundation of America to support efforts in education, as well as needy Assyrians.





els is not a feature of classical Greek phonology.

Phonologically, Modern Assyrian Sūrāyā perfectly agrees with Neo-Assyrian Sūrāyu, while Syriac Sūryōyō displays an intrusive yod, which it shares with Greek Súríos and Suría. This intrusive yod surely is due to Greek influence, since in classical Syriac the word also occurs in the form Sūrōyō, in perfect agreement with the Modern Assyrian Sūrāyā.<sup>23</sup> It is worth noting that Sūrāyā is reported to have a variant with initial A-, but this is avoided in careful speech, since it instinctively sounds incorrect in view of the classical Syriac Sūryōyō (Yildiz 1999, 24; Frye 1997).<sup>24</sup> Since omission of initial vowels is not a feature of Aramaic phonology, the lack of the initial A- in Sūrāyā/Sūr(y) ōyō cannot be due to internal Aramaic development but must go back directly to Neo-Assyrian.

The phonology of Sūrāyā (Sūrōyō) thus implies that this term, which is crucial to the identity of the present-day Aramaic-speaking peoples, entered the Aramaic language in the seventh century BC, when the Arameans already were a fully integrated part of the Assyrian nation. In contrast to the word Ā ūr, which was borrowed into Aramaic when Assyria still was an alien society, it cannot be regarded as a loanword but as an indigenous selfdesignation, which the Aramaic-speaking Assyrians shared with their Akkadian-speaking fellow citizens.

3.2 The Continuity of Assyrian Culture under the Achaemenid Empire

With the fall of Nineveh, the Empire was split in two, the western half falling in the hands of a Chaldean dynasty, the eastern one in the hands of Median kings. In 539 BC, both became incorporated in the Achaemenid Empire, the western one as the megasatrapy of Assyria (A ūra), the eastern one as the satrapy of Media (Māda) (Parpola 2000b, 4-5).

The political power of Assyria was gone, but its people, culture and religion lived on. The Achaemenids preferred not to interfere in the internal affairs of their satrapies as long as the flow of tribute and taxes continued undisturbed (Dandamayev and Lukonin 1989, 104). This was no problem in Assyria, whose population continued to venerate the Great King as the source of peace and security. The Aramaic Sayings of Ahiqar, a popular collection of wisdom composed in the Neo-Assyrian period, praised fear of

God and King as the highest moral virtue; at the same time, being set at the Assyrian royal court, they continued to boost the Assyrian identity of the population (Dalley 2001; Parpola n.d.). The Achaemenids, who themselves were significantly Assyrianized (Dandamayev 1997; Parpola 2002), felt no need to change the existing realities (Eph'al 1978, 87). Thus everything went on just as before. Imperial Aramaic continued as the lingua franca of the Empire, the Aramaic script-now called the Assyrian script (Steiner 1993)-was the everyday writing system, local religion and cults were tolerated, and the judicial system, calendar and imperial standards imposed by the Assyrians remained in force everywhere (Eph'al 1988, 147-161; Grelot 1972).

The 210 years of Achaemenid rule thus helped preserve the Assyrian identity of the Aramaic-speaking peoples. Although the times of Assyrian hegemony were over, the satrapy of A ūra kept Assyria on the map as a political entity and its inhabitants as Assyrians in the eyes of the contemporary world. Paradoxically, the period of massacres and persecutions following the fall of Nineveh seems to have strengthened their national and ethnic identity. The last king of Babylon, Nabonidus, who was of Assyrian extraction, reverted to Assyrian royal titula-ture and style in his inscriptions and openly promoted Assyrian religion and culture, evidently as a chauvinistic reaction against the Chaldean dynasty from which he had usurped power (Mayer 1998). No wonder the Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon remembered him as an Assyrian king.<sup>25</sup>

3.3 Assyrian Identity in Hellenistic and Roman Times

Under the successors of Alexander the Great, Assyria became the power base of the Seleucid Empire,<sup>26</sup> which at its largest covered much the same area as the Assyrian Empire previously. Even though the Seleucid kings pursued an active policy of Hellenization and laid great stress on their Macedonian origins, they adopted the administrative methods of the Achaemenids and on the whole respected the local traditions; in due course, they inevitably began to assimilate to the local population. To the contemporaries, their kingdom was a continuation of the Assyrian Empire. It is called "Assyria" (Ašūr) in the Dead Sea Scrolls<sup>27</sup> and in the Babylonian Talmud (Steiner 1993), and "the kingdom of the Assyrians" (Assuriōn basileía) in the Antiquities of Josephus.<sup>28</sup>

When the Seleucid Empire disintegrated at the end of the second century BC, its western remnants were annexed to Rome, while several semi-independent kingdoms of decidedly Assyrian identity (Osrhoene, Adiabene, Hatra, Assur) popped up in the east under Parthian overlordship. These kingdoms preserved Assyrian cultural and religious traditions (Al-Salihi, W. 1983; cf. Table III) but were also receptive to Christianity, whose central ideas were in line with the central tenets of Assyrian religion and ideology, and which was felt as intrinsically Assyrian because of the Aramaic affinity of Jesus and the disciples.

The Roman West likewise preserved Assyrian traditions, and Assyrian religion persisted alongside Christianity in all its major cities until late Antiquity.

In the second century AD, two prominent writers from Roman Syria, Lucian and Tatian, ostentatiously identify themselves as Assyrians (Assúrios). This self-identification is commonly misinterpreted to imply nothing more than that these writers were ethnic Syrians (in the modern sense) speaking Aramaic as their mother tongue (Millar 1993, 460). It is perfectly clear from the contexts, however, that they were specifically referring to their native identity and cultural heritage, which they proudly and defiantly contrasted with the Greek culture.<sup>29</sup> That heritage was Assyrian. It is worth emphasizing that while Assúrios in Roman times could refer to an inhabitant of the Roman province of Syria, it basically meant "Assyrian", nothing else. No "Syria" in the modern sense existed in antiquity. In Armenian, Parthian and Egyptian sources of the Roman period, Roman Syria is consistently and unmistakably referred to as "Assyria" (Asorik', 'swry'; 'Išr; see Frye 1992; Steiner 1993).

4. The Assyrian Identity Today

From the third century AD on, the Assyrians embraced Christianity in increasing numbers, even though the Assyrian religion persisted in places like Harran at least until the tenth, in Mardin even until the 18th century AD (Chwolsohn 1856, 151-156). The single-minded adherence to the Christian faith from late antiquity until the present time has made Christianity an indelible part of Assyrian identity, but it has also subjected the Assyrians to endless persecutions and massacres, first in the hands of the Romans, then in the hands of the Sasanian Persians,

and last in the hands of Arabs, Kurds and Turks. These persecutions and massacres have reduced the total number of Assyrians from an estimated 20 million or more in antiquity to well under two million today.

They have decimated the Assyrian nation, but they have also helped it survive through the millennia. While innumerable Assyrians have been forced to change identity in order to survive, others have rather chosen martyrdom than denied their Assyrian identity and faith. Hagiographic sources such as the Syriac Acta Martyrum show that the Assyrians of the Parthian period took pride in their glorious past, many nobles tracing their ancestry to the Assyrian royal house (Crone and Cook 1977, 55-56 and 189-193; Novak and Younansardaroud 2002).

15. A telling example is the author of SAA 16 126-129, Itti-Šamaš-balātu, a loyal Assyrian official in Phoenicia under Assurbanipal. He writes in fluent Neo-Assyrian, but his name and several Babylonianisms in his language show that he was originally a Babylonian. He is almost certainly identical with the author of the Babylonian letter SAA 18 80

16. It should be noted, however, that the average Syrian Monophysite was not so much moved by imperial doctrines and identity as by "his loyalty to own Church, his own bishop and the holy men of his neighbourhood" (Mango 1980, 30). In classical Syriac, Rhūmōyō continued to mean "Roman" or "Latin", and only rarely "a Greek, i.e. a citizen of the Eastern Roman Empire" (Payne Smith 1903, 531b). In modern literary Arabic, by contrast, Rūmī still means both "Roman" and "Byzantine".

17. "A Syrian, Palestinian" (Payne Smith 1903, 371 s.v.). Note that in classical Syriac, the toponym Sūrīya also covered Mesopotamia and Assyria (= Sūrīya barōytō, "Farther Syria", ibid. 370).x

18. "This is the ordinary name by which the E. Syrians call themselves, though they also apply it to the W. Syrians or Jacobites" (Maclean 1901, 223).

19. The shift [š] - [ ] was an internal Assyrian phonetic development leading to the merger of /š/ and / /, as evidenced by the use of a single set of cuneiform graphemes (ŠA, SI, ŠU) for both /š/ and / / in Old Assyrian (Hecker 1968, § 40a). That the merger resulted in / / not /š/ is proved by variant spellings like OA I-ri-tim (= [Iri im]) for normal I-ri-SI-im (genitive of Irišum, Hecker 1968, § 40i), or MA ti-ru (= [ iru]) for \* šīru "flesh" and ut-ra-a-aq for \*ušrāq "he will thresh" (Mayer 1971, § 17), where / / (< \*/š/) is rendered with graphemes normally used for writing the alveolar stop /t/ (and its fricative variant [ ]).

20. srslmh = Aššūr-šallim-ahi, KAI 234:2; srsrd = Aššūr-(a) šarēd, Y-41 236 r. 4; srgnr = Aššūr-gārū'a- nēre, AECT 58:4 (taking srsrd for a spelling of \*Šarru-(a)šarēd is not possible, since the name in question is not attested in NeoAssyrian). The dropping of the initial vowel in [Assūr] [Sūr] has a perfect parallel in the Neo-Assyrian variants of the divine name Ištar ([Iššār] [Šār], see Zadok 1984, 4; the short form [Šār] is already attested in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III, see PNA 2/1569 s.v. Issār-dūrī 4).

21. Including Babylonia and Cappadocia.

22. Corresponding to the Roman province of Syria.

23. Syriac /ō/ goes back to Old Aramaic /ā/.

24. According to Yildiz, writings of Sūryōyō and Sūrāyā are occasionally preceded by the vowel sign alap with a linea occultans above indicating that this alap is not to be pronounced

25. Herodotus 1.188.1; Xenophon, Cyr. 1.5.2, and passim (see Parpola 2003a, 343-344).

26. Cf. Livy XXXV 49.8 (citing Titus Flaminius), "The armies of Antiochus III [the Great, 222-187 BC] were all Syrians".

27. 1 QM 1:2 and 6 (The War Scroll).

28. "170 years of the kingdom of the Assyrians, which was after Seleucus, who was called Nicator, got the dominion over Syria", Ant. 13.6.6.

29. Note Hall 1999, 38: "The fundamental (even primordial) motive of self-preservation will ... ensure that individuals will come fully to the defense of the collective identity that they see as fundamentally constitutive of their selves, when they feel that collective identity to be endangered" (my emphasis).

The Nestorian church of the seventh century AD, which had cloisters and bishoprics all over the ancient homeland, including Nineveh in the eparchy of Atur, chauvinistically asserted its Assyrian identity (Vööbus 1970, 94-101, 333; Gewargis 2002, 81- 85).

Today, the Assyrian nation largely lives in diaspora, split into rivaling churches and political factions. The fortunes of the people that constitute it have gone different ways over the millennia, and their identities have changed accordingly. The Syriacs in the west have absorbed many influences from the Greeks, while the Assyrians in the east have since ancient times been under Iranian cultural influence. Ironically, as members of the Chaldean Catholic Church (established in 1553 but effectively only in 1830), many

modern Assyrians originating from central Assyria now identify with "Chaldeans", a term associated with the Syriac language in the 16th century but ultimately derived from the name of the dynasty that destroyed Nineveh and the Assyrian Empire!

Disunited, dispersed in exile, and as dwindling minorities without full civil rights in their homelands, the Assyrians of today are in grave danger of total assimilation and extinction (Aprim 2003). In order to survive as a nation, they must now unite under the Assyrian identity of their ancestors. It is the only identity that can help them to transcend the differences between them, speak with one voice again, catch the attention of the world, and regain their place among the nations.



TABLE I. Provinces of the Neo-Assyrian Empire

Name of province or equivalent*	Location in conventional terms	Province since at least (BC)	Time under Assyrian rule	
			in years	in generations
1. Aššur	Assyria	c. 2300	1500	50
2. Nimruwa (Nineveh)	Assyria	c. 1360	750	25
3. Kilizi	Assyria	c.1330	720	24
4. Kalhu	Assyria	c.1310	700	23
5. Halahhu	Assyria	c.1310	700	23
6. Apku	Assyria	c.1310	700	23
7. Arbail (Arbela)	Assyria	c. 1310	700	23
8. Šibanība	Assyria	c. 1310	700	23
9. Šimū	Assyria	c.1310	700	23
10. Talmūša	Assyria	c. 1310	700	23
11. Habrūri	Assyria	c. 930 (already MA)	315	10.5
12. Arrapha (Kerkuk)	Assyria	c. 900 (already MA)	285	9.5
13. Dēru	Assyria	c. 900 (already MA)	285	9.5
14. Lahūru	Assyria	c. 900 (already MA)	285	9.5
15. Lubda	Assyria	c. 900 (already MA)	285	9.5
16. Katmuhī/Šahuppa	Assyria	c.900	290	9.5
17. Raqmatu	Syria	899	290	9.5
18. Našībina (Nisibin)	Assyria	896	285	9.5
19. Gūzāna / Hanigalbat	Syria	894	285	9.5
20. Tušhan/Nairi	Assyria	879 (already MA)	270	9
21. Šinābu	Assyria	879	270	9
22. Būrāti	Assyria	879?	270	9
23. Til-Barsib/Tarbusibi	Syria	856	250	8.5
24. Meturna	Assyria	851	245	8.2
25. Rašappa	Syria	849	240	8
26. Nēmed-Issār	Syria	842	230	7.5
27. Arzūhina	Assyria	839 (already MA)	225	7.5
28. Kipšūna	Assyria	833	225	7.5
29. Isāna	Syria	830	220	7.5
30. Harrān	Syria	814	205	7
31. Haurīna	Syria	810?	200	6.7
32. Māzamma/Lullumū	Assyria	810	200	6.7
33. Balāta	Assyria	c. 810	200	6.7
34. Halzu	Assyria	c. 810	200	6.7
35. Hindānu	Syria	803	195	6.5
36. Lāqē*	Syria	803 (already MA)	195	6.5
37. Sūhu*	Syria	803	195	6.5
38. Dūr-Issār	Syria	803?	195	6.5
39. Ašidu/Bīt-Zarātai	Assyria	799	190	6.5
40. Tille	Syria	792	180	6
41. Šīmmē/Šibhīnā	Syria	791	180	6
42. Barhadza	Assyria	c. 790?	180	6
43. Halzi-atbāri	Assyria	c. 790?	180	6
44. Tannūna	Assyria	785	175	6
45. Kurbaīl	Assyria	784	175	6
46. Nīkkur/Parsua	Syromedia	744	130	4.5
47. Arpadā	Syria	743	135	4.5
48. Aššūr-iqīša/Ulluba	Assyria	739	130	4.5
49. Hatarikka	Syria	738	130	4.5
50. Kār-Adad	Syria	738	130	4.5
51. Kullanta	Syria	738	130	4.5
52. Nuqudina	Syria	738	130	4.5
53. Šimira	Syria	738	130	4.5
54. Tūšmu	Syria	738	130	4.5
55. Dāru (Dor)	Palestine	734	125	4
56. Gaḏad (Gilead)	Palestine	733	125	4
57. Maḡidū (Megiddo)	Palestine	733	125	4
58. Dimasqa (Damascus)	Syria	732	125	4
59. Maḡullū (Masʿat)	Syria	732	125	4
60. Šēpat (Zobah)	Syria	732	125	4
61. Haurāni	Syria	732	125	4
62. Qarnāna (Qarnaim)	Palestine	732	125	4
63. Šāmertna (Samaria)	Palestine	722	110	3.7
64. Hamāt (Hamah)	Syria	720	110	3.7
65. Garganta (Carchemix)	Syria	717	110	3.7
66. Bīt-Hamban	Syromedia	716	100	3.5
67. Bīt-Kari	Media	716?	100	3.5
68. Bīt-Singibutū	Media	716	100	3.5
69. Harhār/Kār-Šarrukīn	Syromedia	716	100	3.5
70. Kīlāšim/Kār-Nergal	Syromedia	716	100	3.5
71. Quwē (Coa)	Anatolia	713	105	3.5
72. Marqāna (Marʿat)	Anatolia	711	105	3.5
73. Meliḡ (Melitane)	Anatolia	711	105	3.5
74. Samʿalla	Anatolia	711	105	3.5
75. Dūr-Albāḡra/Gambūlu	Babylonia	710	85	3
76. Dūr-Šarrukīn	Babylonia	710	85	3
77. Šamaš-nāḡir	Babylonia	710	85	3
78. Bābīlī (Akkad (Babylon))	Babylonia	710	105	3.5
79. Hatalla (Hatra?)	Assyria	c.710	90	3
80. Kummuhī	Anatolia	708	100	3.2
81. Dūr-Šarrukīn	Assyria	706	750	25
82. Kār-Šm-ahhē-rīha/Eleznas	Media	702	85	3
83. Dūr-Šm-ahhē-rīha/Alihu	?	c.700?	85	3
84. Mīt Tīmī	Babylonia	680	55	2
85. Ūru (Ur)	Babylonia	680	55	2
86. Šidnu (Sidon)	Phoenicia	676	65	2.2
87. Kulimneri	Armenia	674	65	2.2
88. Ūppūnu (Ptois)	Armenia	674	65	2.2
89. Šuru (Tyre)	Phoenicia	671	60	2
90. Elam	Persia	645	15?	0.5

TABLE II. Terms for "Assyria" and "Syria" in Greek and Roman literature (based on Noldeke 1871)

Author	Date	Meaning		
		Assyria(ns) <sup>21</sup>	"Syria(ns)" <sup>22</sup>	Mesopotamia
Aeschylus	525-456 BC	Suria, Sūrios		
Pindar	518-438 BC	Sūrios		
Xanthus	fl. 450 BC	Suria, Sūrios		
Herodotus	c. 480-420	Suriē, Sūrioi (Asszirioi)		
Sophocles	496-406 BC	Sūros		
Scylax	5th c. BC	Assuria		
Panyassis	5th c. BC	Assuria		
Ctesias	5th c. BC	Assuria, Suria		
Thucydides	c.455-400	Suria		
Xenophon	c.430-354	Assuria	Suria	Suria
Aristoxenus	c. 370 BC	Sūroi		
Aristotle	384-322 BC	Suria		
Hecataeus	c.360-290	Suria		
Cleitarchus	c. 310 BC	Suria		
Callimachus	c. 280-245	Assuria, Assūrioi		
Apollonius Rhodius	3rd c. BC	Assuria		
Polybius	200-118 BC	Suria	Suria	
Meleager	fl. 100 BC	Assuria, Sūros		
Cicero	106-43 BC	Assyria/Syria	Asyria/Syria	
Diodorus	c. 90-30 BC	Sūros		
Catullus	c. 85-54 BC	Assyria	Assyria	
Virgil	70-19 BC	Assyrius		
Horace	65-8 BC	Assyria		
Strabo	64 BC-AD 21	Assuria/Aturia (Suria)	Suria	
Livy	59 BC-AD 12		Syria	
Ovid	43 BC-AD 17	Assyria		
Seneca	c. AD 1-65	Assyria		
Pomponius Mela	fl. AD 50	Syria		
Pliny the Elder	AD 23-79	Syria, Assyria		
Lucanus	AD 39-65	Assyria		
Josephus	AD 37-94	Sūroi	Sūroi, Assūrioi	
Cornutus	1st c. AD	Assūrioi		
Arrian	AD 86-160	Assuria, Assūrioi	Suria kollē	Suria
Curtius	c. AD 100	Syria		
Lucian	c. AD 120-180	Assūrios		
Apuleius	c. AD 125-170	Assyria, Syria		
Ptolemy	fl. 146-170	Assuria		
Achilles Tatius	fl. AD 150	Assuria		
Pausanias	fl. AD 150	Sūros		
Tatian	fl. AD 172	Assūrioi		
Clement	c. AD 150-215	Sūros		
Dio Cassius	AD 164-229+	Aturia		
Hippolytus	c.170-236	Assyrii		
Hyginus	2nd c. AD	Syria		
Oppian	2nd c. AD	Assūrios, Sūros		
Justinus	3rd c. AD	Syri (< Assyrii)		
Philostratus	3rd. c. AD	Assūrioi		
Ammianus	AD 330-395	Assyria	Assyria	
Macrobius	fl AD 430	Assyrii		
Nonnus	fl. 450-470	Assūrios (Sūros)		

38 (cf. obv. 5-7 and rev. 2-3 of this letter with SAA 16 126:19-20 and 127 r.15-16), and had thus started his career as “prelate” (šatammu) of Uruk under Esarhaddon.



TABLE III. *Assyrian theophoric personal names from Parthian Assur, Hatra and Tūr ʿAbdīn* (Beyer1998)

Deity	Parthian period name	Meaning	Site	Year	NA equivalent
<b>Addu</b>	Addu-nūr	Addu is my light	Hatra		Addu-nūrī
<b>Allāya</b>	ʿAbd-Allāya	Servant of Allaya	Hatra		Urdu-Allāya
<b>Allāt</b>	Garam-Allāt	Allat decided	Hatra	AD 235	
	ʿAwid-Allāt	Client of Allat	Hatra		Ubru-Allāti
	Tēm-Allāt	Slave of Allat	Hatra		Urdu-Allāti
<b>Aššūr</b>	Ahī-Assur	Aššur is my brother	Assur	AD 221	Ahī-Aššūr
	Assur-ah-iddin	Aššur gave a brother	Assur		Aššūr-ahu-iddin
	Assur-amar	Aššur commanded	Assur		Aššūr-iqbi
	Assur-dayyān	Aššur is (my) judge	Assur	AD 200	Aššūr-daʿan
	Assur-hananī	Aššur was merciful to me	Assur		Cf. Aššūr-rēmanni
	Assur-hēl	Aššur is (my) strength	Assur		Emūqī- Aššūr
	Assur-šamaʿ	Aššur heard	Assur	AD 184	Išme- Aššūr
	Assur-ʿa ab	Aššur protected	Assur	AD 221	Aššūr -iṣṣur
	Assur-natan	Aššur gave	Assur	AD 184	Aššūr-iddin
	Assur-tariṣ	Aššur is right	Assur	AD 200	Cf. Nabū-tariṣ
	ʿAqīb-Assur	Protégé of Aššur	Assur	AD 220	Kidin- Aššūr
	ʿĒnī-ʿal-Assur	My eye is upon Aššur	Assur		Ēnī- Aššūr
	Reʿūt-Assur	Grace of Aššur	Assur, Takrit	AD 112	Rēmūt- Aššūr
<b>Aššūr-Bēl</b>	Assur-Bēl-dayyān	Aššur-Bel is (my) judge	Assur	AD 222	Aššūr-Bēl-daʿan
<b>Bēl</b>	Bēl-abī	Bel is my father	Assur	AD 192	Bēl-abīa/abūʿa
	Bēl-barak	Bel blessed	Hatra		Bēl-barakki
	Bēl-ʿaqab	Bel protected	Hatra	AD 97	Bēl-iṣṣur
	Malā-Bēl	Bel filled	Assur	AD 221	
	Sattar-Bēl	Bel covered	Tūr ʿAbdīn	AD 195	
	Šōzib-Bēl	Save (me), Bel!	Hatra		Cf. Šūzib-il
<b>Issār</b>	ʿAbed-Iššār	Servant of Ištar	Hatra		Urdu-Issār
	Natun-Iššār	Gift of Ištar	Hatra		Taddin-Issār
	ʿAwid-Iššār	Client of Ištar	Gaddala	AD 141	Ubru-Issār
<b>Nabū</b>	Ba-Nabū-ehdet	I adhere to Nabū	Assur	AD 112	Ana-Nabū-taklāk
	Bar-Nabū	Son of Nabū	Hatra		Cf. Mār-Aššūr/Issār
	Nabū-banā	Nabū created	Hatra		Nabū-ibni
	Nabū-dayyān	Nabū is (my) judge	Assur, Hatra	AD 188	Nabū-dayyān
	Nabū-yāb	Nabū gave	Hatra		Nabū-iddin
	Nabū-gabbār	Nabū is strong	Hatra		Nabū-dān
	Nabū-kātōb	Nabū is scribe	Hatra	AD 235	
	Nabū-ʿaqab	Nabū protected	Assur		Nabū-iṣṣur
	ʿAbed-Nabū	Servant of Nabū	Tūr ʿAbdīn	AD 195	Urdu-Nabū
<b>Nanāia</b>	Bar-Nanāya	Son of Nanaya	Hatra, Tūr ʿA.	AD 195	Ban-Nanāya
<b>Nērgal</b>	Bar-Nērgol	Son of Nergal	Hatra	AD 108	
	Nērgol-dammar	Nergal amazed	Tūr ʿAbdīn	AD 195	
	ʿAbed-Nērgol	Servant of Nergal	Hatra		Urdu-Nērgal
<b>Salmānu</b>	ʿAbed-Šalmā(n)	Servant of Salman	Hatra	AD 235	
<b>Šamaš</b>	ʿAqab-Šameš	Šameš protected	Hatra, Tūr ʿA.	AD 217	Cf. Sē-aqaba
	Han-Šameš	Šameš was merciful	Hatra		Cf. Hana-Sē
	Ilāh-Šameš	(My) god is Šameš	Hatra		Samsi-ilāṯ

	Meqūm-Šameš	Šameš is establisher	Hatra		Mušallim- Šamaš
	Natūn-Šameš	Gift of Šameš	Tūr ʿAbdīn	AD 195	
	Rapā-Šameš	Šameš healed	Hatra		Cf. Sē-rapā
	Šamšāy	Belonging to Šameš	Hatra		Šamšāya
	Šameš-ʿaqab	Šameš protected	Hatra	AD 205	Cf. Sē-aqaba
	Šameš-barak	Šameš blessed	Hatra	AD 237	Cf. Sē-barakka
	Šameš-yāb	Šameš gave	Hatra, Tūr ʿA.	AD 162	Samsi-yābi
	Šameš-zabad	Šameš bestowed	Hatra, Tūr ʿA.	AD 128	
<b>Serua</b>	Ba-Serū	(I adhere) to Serua	Assur	AD 217	
	Serū-mallī	Serua fulfilled	Assur		

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# ܐܰܠܰܕܰܝܰܐ ܐܰܠܰܡܰܝܰܐ ܐܰܠܰܥܰܠܰܝܰܐ ܐܰܠܰܬܰܝܰܐ

## Assyrian American Association of Chicago

### 100 Years

#### A HISTORICAL EXCURSUS

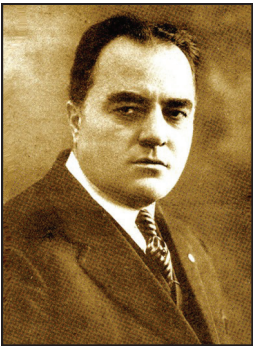
*Vasili Shoumanov, M.A.*

Not many things exist for 100 years. So when they do, we celebrate! Hundred years ago, in 1917 the Assyrian American Association was founded in Chicago. Most of the Assyrians came to the city as a result of the Christian massacres in Turkey and Iran. Some of them came to city through the Presbyterian missionaries. The first wave started coming at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century.



The social organizations established by Assyrians tended to have a narrow focus, uniting immigrants from a region, subregion, or even a single village. The main group of Assyrians was of Persian origin from Urmia's villages: Geogtapa, Taka Ardishai, Seiri, Spurgan, Charbash, Gulpashan, Alwach, and some of them from Turkey: Tkhume, Tyare and Jeloo villages. Assyrian periodicals of that time estimated several organizations and clubs: Ardishay Society, Society of Geogtapa, Seiri Society, Sepurgan Association.

In 1916, "Assyrian American Courier" ("Izgadda") stated that Assyrians of Chicago formed a new organization called Assyrian National Association (A.N.A.) but it was officially registered by Secretary of State of Illinois only in October 2, 1917. The idea of unity came up when Rev. Joel Warda visited Chicago. He asked Mr. Pera S. Benjamin his assistant editor of "Courier" to work among the Assyrians for the purpose of arranging the Assyrian National Association. Rev. Warda explained the advantage and benefits of a national harmony in the Association. A.N.A. founded by Rev. Joel Warda, Pera Benjamin and Chicago inventor David Yadgar. The first A.N.A. president was Sargis Baba, successful businessman, born in village of Golpatalikhan, Iran. The Assyrian National Association of Chicago became a branch of Assyrian National Association of America (established in New York City, 1915). Assyrians called it Shotaputa (Association).



In 1917, the U.S. joined the World War I and declared war on Germany. The U.S. played a major role until victory was achieved on November 11, 1918. Two thirds of the American soldiers participating in the war had returned back home. Among them were many Assyrian soldiers and officers. In December 20, 1918 A.A.A. held a sumptuous banquet celebrating the Victory. In 1919, Joel Warda participated in the Paris



Conference as the representative of the Assyrian people. In December 18, 1919, he made a report about this conference at the 4th Annual Convention of the Assyrian National Association of America in New Britain, Connecticut. At the Convention presented two delegates from Chicago - Jonathan S. Colia (president) and bishop Mar Yawalaha. Jonathan was chosen to be a Chairman at this Convention. Chicago branch contributed \$1,414 to the Convention. The next A.N.A. of America convention was held in Chicago in 1920.



Living in Chicago, Assyrians never lost touch with their fellow countrymen in Iran and Turkey. They supported them morally and financially. In year of 1919, 110 Assyrian men were arrested in Sharafkhaneh Port, Lake Urmia and killed by Islamists. The Association members sent a note of protest to Iranian Government. Members of the A.N.A. raised money for a monument dedicated to 110 Assyrian Martyrs. It was erected in Tabriz, Iran in 1920.

In 1923, Jonathan S. Colia, A.N.A. president sent a Petition urging an increase in the Assyrian Immigration quota to the House of Representatives of the United States, the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, Illinois. The newly elected officers of the Association rented office space for organizational meetings on 1805 Hammond Street, Chicago.

In 1928, ANA participated at a banquet in honor of Lady Surma Khanum, the sister of the Catholics Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East Mar Shimun Benyamin. After his assassination, she was a counselor and advisor of her nephew, a young patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun.

Twentieth-century life in Chicago describes a period of great change within the culture. For years Assyrians have placed strong emphasis on the importance of art. It was a way to feel a sense of belonging in a strange place, to understand life in a new world, and to preserve the culture of the homeland. They have been involved in the local theater as writers and actors. In a broad range of styles, from lively musical folk plays to intellectual theatrical performances, the Assyrian theater was a center of community life for many Assyrian immigrants. Their popular players were Bob Bacus, Sarah Benjamin, Mary Lazar, Bob Benjamin, Joel Pera, Murassa Georges, Bob Sargis, David Karalary and many other actors came shortly afterward. In 1929, Murassa Georges released the first Assyrian vinyl record of her songs.



In the late 1930s the Association made a plan to erect a new building. A groundbreaking ceremony



was held at 2108 N. Halsted Street, Chicago where the new home was to be built. In 1933 the Association affiliated with Assyrian American Federation. Along with school, home and charity activities, the Association was active supporter of American Assyrian women. In 1936 A.N.A. established the Ladies Auxiliary. The Ladies Auxiliary of the A.N.A. was chartered to aid, assist, and promote welfare, social and patriotic work of

the Association, its members and their families. List of the past Ladies Auxiliary Presidents: Mera Warda (1st president), Anno Shabaz, Anna Odishoo, Aksana Azra Michael, Murassa Georges, Sophia Daniel, Helen Sargis, Dorothy Pears, Katryn Nicolas, Germaine Malik, Nellie Ganja, Sarah Benjamin.

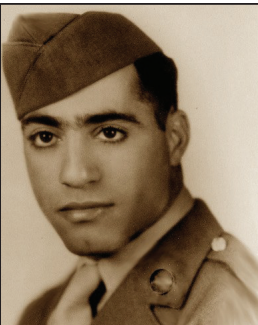
A.A.A. continued to serve Assyrians in many fields. One of them was Sports which was important method of easing the transition to American style of life. In 1931, a soccer team was established. In 1936, Sam Sayad started a basketball group; among them was Senator John Nimrod, a member of the Association and basketball team player. In 1937 Sam Sayad organized a baseball team "All-Assyrian Stars", sponsored by the Parkway Cleaners, 1202 N. State St., proprietor Joe Abraham. The players in the team were: Bob Abraham, John Abraham, Joe Malik, Bob Benjamin, Dave Yonan, Ray Benjamin, John Lazar, George Moorad, William Murad, William Elias and George George.



According to Edward Nadirshah, current A.A.A. vice president, Assyrians always had a close ties with their mother church - the Assyrian Church of the East, officially the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, in 1940, His Holiness Mar Eshai Shimun Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East visited Chicago. The testimonial banquet was given in his honor in October 20 at the new building, 2108 N. Halsted Street, Chicago.

In 1948, Lily and Sargis Khanbaba, past president of A.N.A., created a theatre drama "Scheherazade d'Azerbaijan", a mythical storyteller of "Thousand and One Night".

Assyrian Americans have served in the United States armed forces. Many of the Assyrians from Chicago fought during World War II and the Korean War in 1940s-1950s, they have gained fame due to their military service, and many have received awards and decorations for distinguished service, valor, or heroism. One of them was Saul Joseph, president of the Association of 1953. He joined the National Guard and served in the World War II. He was a member of the 131st Infantry Regiment and promoted to Sergeant. Joseph's most recognized achievement in his military career was his service in the Battle





of the Bulge; this was after recovering from an injury for which he received a Purple Heart. Sgt. Saul Joseph was also later awarded the Silver Star and the Bronze Star before being honorably discharged in May of 1945. In order to honor Sgt. Joseph's service, Chicago authority installed an honorary street sign bearing his name. The sign was unveiled on Sunday, June 23, 2013, at the northwest corner of Ashland and Lawrence Avenues, Chicago.

In 1960, A.N.A. published the First Assyrian National Directory in the USA by Robert Eramia, president and Chairman of the Publication Committee of the Association. Committee members: John Israel, Agnes Israel, David Perley, Edward Mazejy, Arthur Dartley, William S. Daniel. It was sponsored by Assyrian American Federation of America.



In 1963, the Association under the leadership of President John Israel initiated to buy a new house. They purchased New Devon Theater building on 1618 W. Devon Ave, Chicago. In March 9, 1963 the Association invited His Excellency Mar Dachtou, Archbishop of Urmia and bishop of Salamas, Iran. The honorary banquet was given in the new building of the Association. In 1964, Assyrian National Association was renamed to the Assyrian American Association of Chicago (A.A.A.) under the presidency of Gabriel Sargis.



According to Emanuel Ishoo, current A.A.A. board of directors and radio host, in July of 1965, Shotaputa established the Voice of the Assyrian American Association (Qala d'Shotaputa) at WEAW 1330 AM at the station aired ethnic and religious programs, Evanston, Illinois. The program was broadcasting on Saturday from 2:00 to 3:00 PM under the programming of Paul George well known as Uncle Paul) and Clames Ganji. Later, this program was broadcasting by many talented journalists and speakers such as Tony Azzo, legendary poet Ninos Aho, Sargon Isaac, Ivan Giwargis, Alfred Daniel, Pnuel Hormizd, Shimon Khammo, Ben Daniel, Jonson Sargis, Maureen Moshe, Rumel Rasho, Nariman Rasho, Lida Hormizd, Rabi Warda Daniel Sliwo (Patriarch Mar Giwargis Sliwo), Emannuel Ishoo, Sarah Benjamin, and many others.



According to Giliana Younan, current A.A.A president, the large wave of Assyrian immigrants came in 1970s from Iraq as a result of the Kurdo-Iraqi war and during the Iran–Iraq War of the 1980s. New immigrants easily joined the Association and become very active members. They had indoor gathering every Sunday. In 1971, A.A.A. published its first literary organ "Zahrera", edited by Ben Daniel (editor-in-Chief), Emmanuel Esho (managing editor), Deacon Shmoel Younan (Assyrian editor), Piere Shamon (designer and Assyrian and Arabic editor).

Emanuel Isho stated, that in 1970s, at A.A.A. stage song many famous singers, such as Ashur Sargis, Garmen Tamraz, Sargon Gabriel and George Chaharbakhshi , then later Linda George, Sargon Yukhanna and many others. In 1971, Hanny Talya, Roman Oshana, Edwin Talya, Fred Deiel, Tony Ibrahim, formed a band "East Bird". At this stage, for the first time in 1971, Ashur Sargis sang his legendary song "Bet-Nahrain".



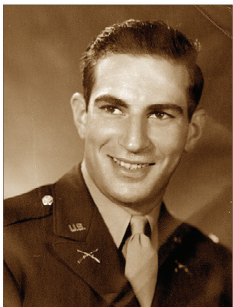
According to Ramon Oushana, current A.A.A. sport director, in 1971 a new soccer team "Lioness" was established by Ramon Oushana, Steve Yonan, Fredy Deil, Hanny Baba. In 2 years later they renamed it to "Winged Bull". "Winged Bull" became a member of National Soccer League of Chicago. In 1976 Winged Bull won a National Soccer League Championship in Chicago. The Winged Bull Committee Members of 1977 were: Gilbet Eshaya (head Coach), Albert Rasho, manager (A.A.A. president of 1977), Hormis Gewargis, Ewan Gewargis, Nnos Yokhanis, Ramon Sargon, Slivo S. Yonan.

In 1993, A.A.A. of Chicago published a book "ASSYRIAN AMERICANS WHO SERVED IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES". Since the birth of the organization in 1917 till today Shotaputa has promoted Assyrian cultural heritage and language by educating our people about history through lectures, social events, like indoor and outdoor picnics, bingo games and many other activities.

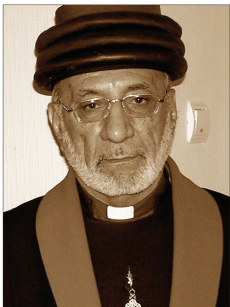
Is there is any one among us whose bosom did not swell with pride in the realization that he is an active member of the Association which has had as honored members such as writer Rev. Joel Warda, president Jonathan S. Colia, president Sargis Khanbaba, president Saul Joseph, the Ladies Auxiliary president Sarah Benjamin, Mar Gewargis III (Warda Daniel Sliwa), Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, attorney Paul Newey, Senator John Nimrod, journalist Bob Benjamin, filmmaker from Hollywood Henri Charr, and many, many others.



SARAH BENJAMIN



SEN. JOHN NIMROD



HIS HOLINESS MAR GEWARGIS III



HENRI CHARR



PAUL NEWEY

This year 2017 marks a century of the existence of the Assyrian American Association of Chicago and we are filled with enthusiasm as we host a three day celebration. The celebration will include drama play, exhibition, anniversary dinner, dancing, ruffle, and awards. Emanuel Isho is appointed as a chairman of the 100 years Anniversary.





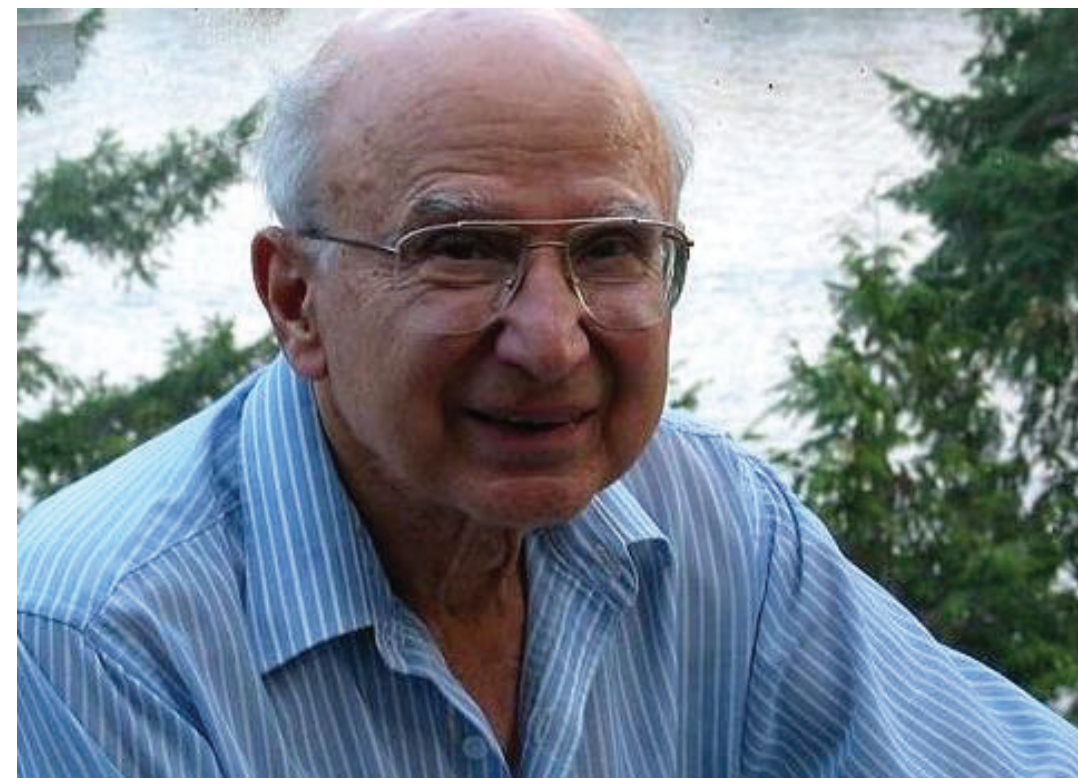


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## ج. حملہ زدہ

## 2017–1925

**تذکرہ: فی سبب ۲۱**

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Established 1964

# سلسلہ

تاریخ و ادب | فلسفہ و فاضلہ | ادبیات و فنون



**In Memory of Dr. Joel J. Elias**  
**1925 - 2017**

مجلد 41، نمبر 3-4، سال 2017ء

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