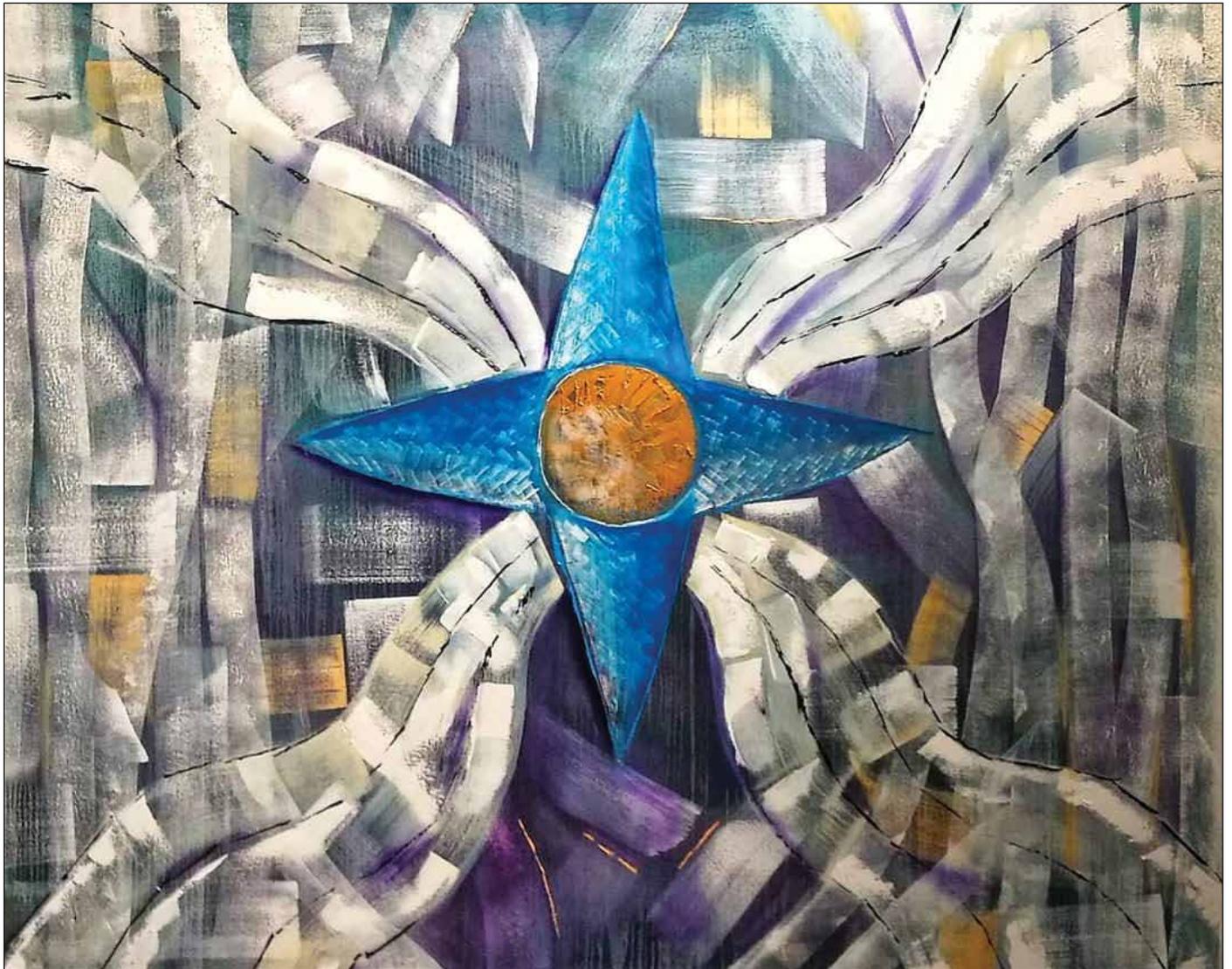




# NINEVEH

CULTURAL | EDUCATIONAL | SOCIAL

*Established 1964*



Publication of the Assyrian Foundation of America  
Volume 42, Number 3, 2018

**Our Assyrian Fathers**  
By Jackline Yelda

As we look at our Assyrian nation, one must wonder how it has withstood the brutal elements and persecutions through its history. Yet still, we have managed to preserve our language, culture, and heritage for thousands of years, all while scattered in a world that would like nothing better than to destroy us. Where did the Assyrian people get their magical wisdom and strength to survive? How can this community, spread across the globe for millennia, follow and preserve the same traditions and language without a common leader?



The answer lies in the crux of our legacy “the emotional faith and harmony” that was passed on by our forefathers, the great Kings of Assyria. These leaders knew that one day their children would become orphans in their own land, overruled by enemies. Thus, they gave us a foundation that would preserve us and become the life’s blood of our people. We learned that a physical land does not make a nation, but that a “united people” does. We do not need physical weapons to survive, but we must have pride and emotional connection to live.

Today, among the modern Assyrians, fathers remain the foundation upon which the entire family unit is built. They lead us with decisiveness and dedication, with integrity, compassion and love of family, community, and nation. They provide us with familial strength, sustenance, and stability. Their presence and rock-like support completes the family, without which we feel lost and bereft. A sense of security suffuses us in their mighty presence. They are the silent support of our lives, the pillars of the family, reserving a key place in our community. This is a tribute to my late father. No matter where I am, I know his spirit will always be with me.

*What Makes a Dad?  
God took the strength of a mountain,  
The majesty of a tree,  
The warmth of a summer sun,  
The calm of a quiet sea,  
The generous soul of nature,  
The comforting arm of night,  
The wisdom of the ages,  
The power of the eagle’s flight,  
The joy of a morning in spring,  
The faith of a mustard seed,  
The patience of eternity,  
The depth of a family need,  
Then God combined these qualities,  
When there was nothing more to add,  
He knew His masterpiece was complete,  
And so, He called it ... Dad*

Author Unknown

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**Crew:**

Dr. Ninwe Maraha (Editor)  
Dr. Robert Karoukian  
Dr. Elizabeth Mickailly-Huber  
Tamara Odisho Benjamin

Sargon Shabbas, Circulation  
Donatella Yelda  
George Bet-Shlimon  
Heather Bou (Layout Designer)

**Address letters to:**

The Editor  
NINWE MARAHA  
NINEVEH MAGAZINE  
P.O. Box 2660  
Berkeley, California 94702  
[editor@assyrianfoundation.org](mailto:editor@assyrianfoundation.org)

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SATURDAY

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**AAASJ SATELLITE CENTER at Almaden Winery**

The Assyrian American Association of San Jose has acquired a operation agreement from the city of San Jose that allows for a satellite center of the association near our community in Almaden & Blossom Hill. AAASJ will continue to occupy our headquarters in Willow Glen while expanding our community services to the new satellite center at Almaden Winery.

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## 8th Annual AFA Member Appreciation Event

Best Western Grosvenor Hotel, South San Francisco

May 6, 2018

In the future, this event will be referred to as the Dr. Joel Elias Memorial Lecture Series in honor of one of the Assyrian Foundation of America founding members, the late Dr. Joel Elias, whose children have donated to the AFA to support future educational lecture events.

Guest Speaker: Joseph Hermiz

Joseph is a PhD Student in History at the University of Chicago. His studies have been supported in part by the Assyrian Foundation of America and focus primarily on the Pre-Ottoman to WWII period, with a special emphasis on Modern Assyrian History. Joseph was born in Texas, but grew up in Arizona. He speaks multiple languages fluently including English, Assyrian, Turkish, Ottoman Turkish, Persian, and Arabic.

**Presentation Title: Origins of the Assyrian Homeland: Assyrian American Delegations of the Paris Peace Conference**

*Background: The Paris Peace Conference took place in 1919. The goal of the meeting was to establish the terms of peace following World War I. A few years later, in 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne was drawn up to formally conclude the war and is responsible for the current boundaries of the modern state of Turkey. Although the Armenians, Assyrians, Kurds and other ethnic groups requested self-autonomy, Armenia did not obtain its statehood until 1936, and the Assyrians and others continue to hope and vie for autonomy.*

Joseph's lecture begins with a discussion of a clash in Chicago in 1919. Indeed, 600 Assyrians staged a battle over the outcome of the the delegates of the League of Nations at the Paris Peace Conference who were unable to ensure autonomy for the Assyrian nation. It is important to note that the League of Nations was the predecessor of today's United Nations. President Woodrow Wilson believed that the creation of a League of Nations would prevent a second world war. He issued a 14 Point speech where he stated his hope for future world peace and eventual autonomy for Turkey's minorities who had suffered significantly during WWI.

During this time period there were already pockets of Assyrian immigrants in the U.S. living in Chicago, New Britton (CT), and Yonkers (NY). In 1916, the first Assyrian families settled in California, in the small city of Turlock, then merely a town. Most of these new immigrants were Assyrians from Iran and a smaller number were Jacobites from Turkey. Ironically, the Assyrians of the time were substantially more united and willing to communicate with one another than those of today. As a representation of this unity was the old Assyrian flag composed of a red stripe, a white stripe and 3 stars representing the Assyrian Church of the East, the Assyrian Chaldean Catholic Church, and the Orthodox Assyrian Church.

Of these early Assyrian immigrants, Youel Warda and Captain Abraham Yoseph founded the Assyrian National Organizations of America. Numerous Assyrian news publications were also in circulation, such as the Assyrian American Herald and the New Assyria. These journals helped to pioneer the Assyrian National identity. Nevertheless, the publications slowly began revealing diverging attitudes on the political trajectory of the Assyrian Nation.

The Reverend Paul Newey, founder of the Assyrian Congregational Church in Chicago, and Professor Abraham Yohannan, author of "The Death of a Nation" and Chairman/Founder of the Oriental Studies Department of Columbia University, began envisioning the future of the Assyrian Nation that would include liberation and autonomy from Iran and Turkey. Rev. Newey contended that the official representatives of the Assyrian Nation and of the Assyrian people should be limited to people living in the homeland and that the greatest help that Assyrian Americans could provide to their brethren was financial. Ironically, the ultimate request at the time was not for an Assyrian country, but rather for reparations and return of persons to their homes. Sadly, many Assyrian women and children who were taken by the Ottomans as slaves were never seen or heard from again.

Contrarily, Joel Werda, author of "The Dove of Peace above the Battlefields," felt that the only way the Assyrian people could find peace and healing was through the acquisition of an autonomous region of approximately 70,000 square miles of land bounded by Niyarbakir to the north, the the border of Urmia (Iran) to the south, Mount Sinjar to the west and Mosul province to the east. This land was to be under U.S. protection.

Although the dream of an independent Assyria did not come to fruition, the dream was born in the minds of these Assyrian American immigrants and remains in the hearts and minds of Assyrians world wide to this day.

Joseph Hermis expresses his thanks to the Assyrian Foundation of America for supporting his doctoral studies as well as the website AssyrianArchive.org (MARA) that houses a vast array of historical photos and information about Assyrians.

*This summary was written by Elizabeth Mickaily-Huber, Ph.D.*

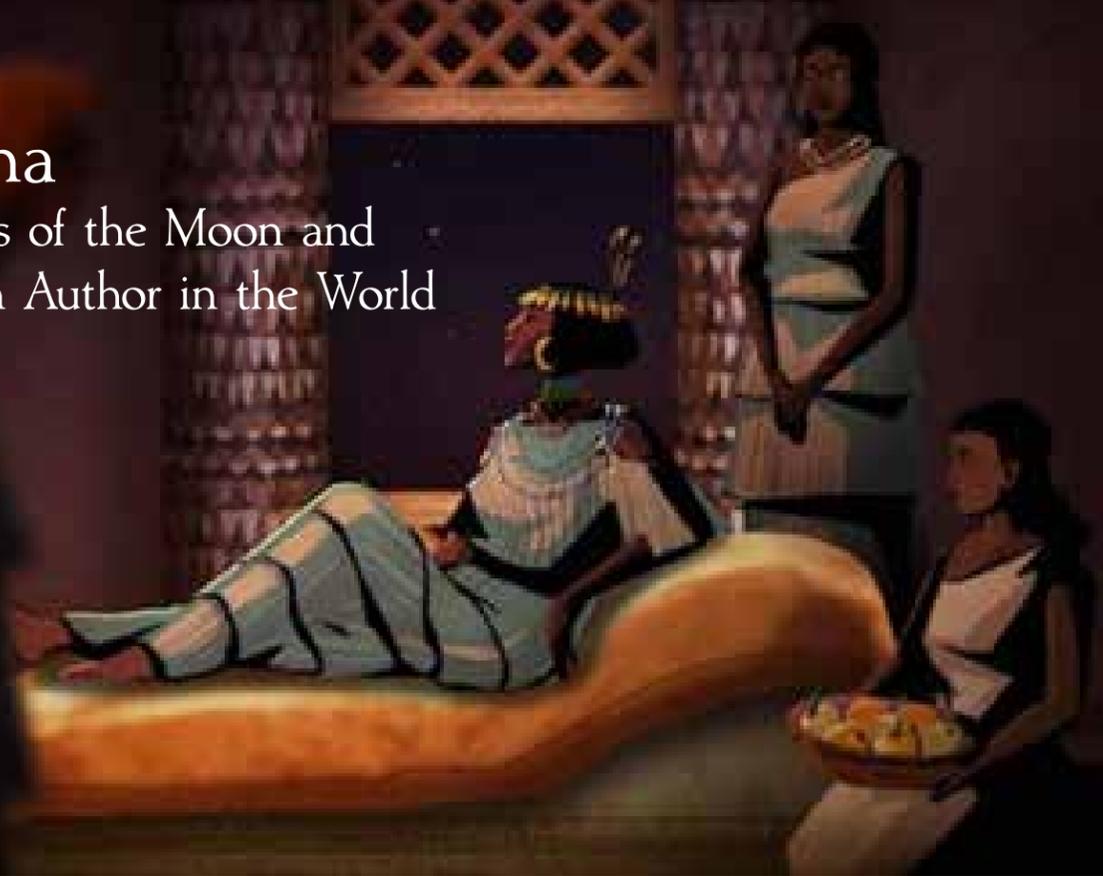
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# Enheduanna

A High Priestess of the Moon and the First Known Author in the World



The ancient Sumerian poet Enheduanna has a unique claim to fame: she was the first author in the world known by name. While there were previous instances of poems and stories written down, Enheduanna was the first to sign a name to her work. And what a work it was! Her text was so significant that it influenced hymns for centuries.

## The Life of a Priestess

Living in the 23rd century BC (approximately 2285 – 2250 BC), Enheduanna was the high priestess of the Temple of Sumer. She was a daughter of Sargon of Akkad (Sargon the Great) and Queen Tashlultum. Today, it is known that Sargon was the son of a priestess and Queen Tashlultum may have also been a priestess. Religion played a very important role in those tumultuous times, serving as a check against any intention of the populace to rebel (either against an established overlord or a newcomer). The Akkadians were Semitic-speaking people from Mesopotamia. Under Sargon the Great, the Akkadian Empire absorbed several Sumerian city-states, some say as many as 34. One of Sargon's greatest conquests was the Sumerian city of Ur. As a coastal city at the mouth of the Euphrates River, Ur had easy access to trade and transportation, as well as great fertile plains.



The "Disk of Enheduanna" at the Penn Museum in Philadelphia. (Public Domain)

Sargon must have had enormous trust in his daughter to place her in charge of the Sumerian Temple at such a politically delicate time. Enheduanna most likely was born with a different, Semitic name. However, "on moving to Ur, the

Enheduanna was charged with the task of reconciling the gods of the Akkadians with the gods of the Sumerians so that the important city of Ur would acquiesce to Sargon's rule. Not only did she succeed in that difficult task, but she also established standards of poetry and prayer that would profoundly influence the Hebrew Bible and Homeric hymns.

very heartland of Sumerian culture, she took a Sumerian official title: Enheduanna - 'En' (Chief Priest or Priestess); 'hedu' (ornament); 'Ana' (of heaven)" (Kriwaczek quoted in Mark, 2014).

Despite living over 4300 years ago, Enheduanna's historical existence is well-established. Not only are there historic records speaking of her, but a great disk bearing her image was excavated from Ur.

## Creating an All-Powerful Goddess that Lasted

Enheduanna was the priestess for the moon goddess. In Semitic, this goddess' name was Sin; in Sumerian, she was called Nanna or Inanna. Nanna is perhaps best known as the deity to whom the famed Ziggurat of Ur is dedicated. Later, Nanna/Sin would be identified as Ishtar and, still later, as Aphrodite.

Enheduanna's monumental task was to combine two deities into a single, all-powerful goddess. She accomplished this through her spiritual writings. According to historian Paul Kriwaczek, Enheduanna "is credited with creating the paradigms of poetry, psalms, and prayers used throughout the ancient world... Her compositions, though only rediscovered in modern times, remained models of petitionary prayer for



A modern reconstruction of the Ziggurat of Ur behind the ruins of the Giparu - the temple complex where Enheduanna lived and was buried in Ur. (M. Lubinski/CC BY SA 2.0)



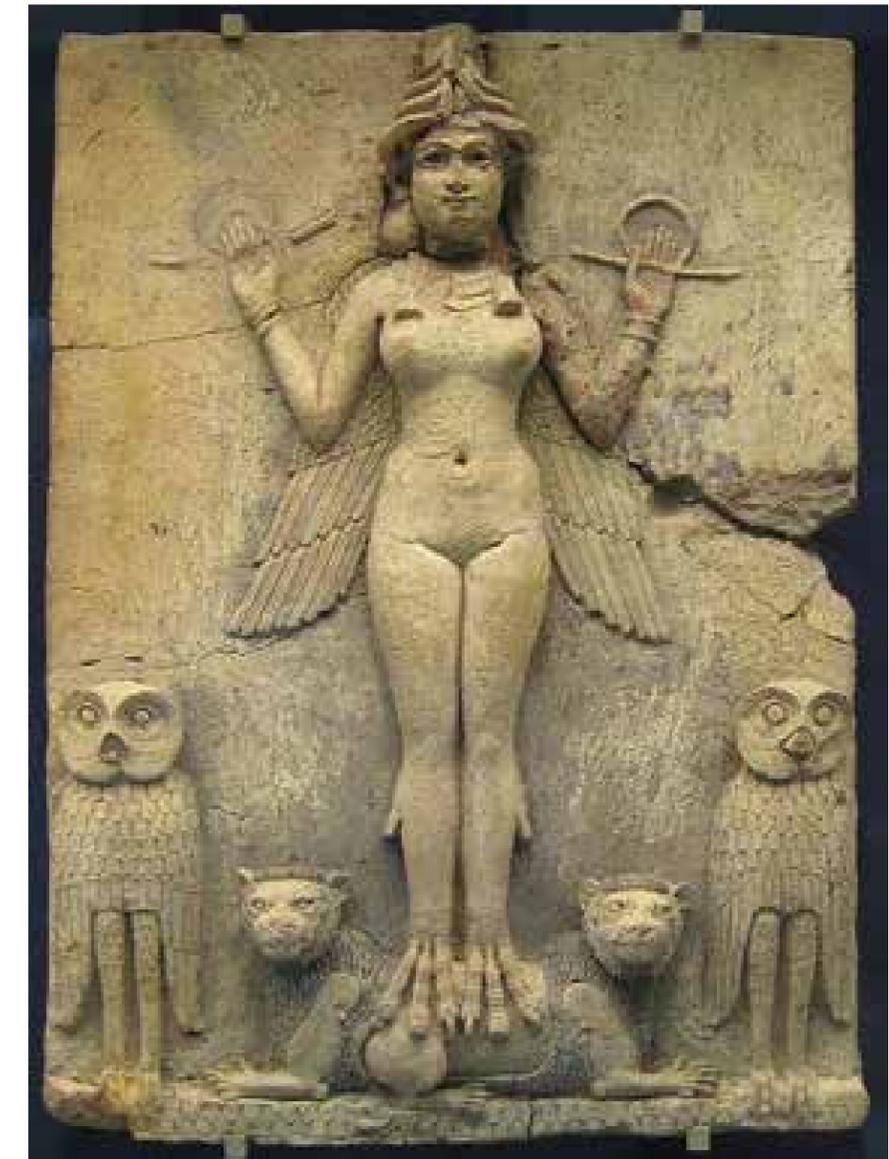
Part of the front of Inanna's temple. (Marcus Cyron/CC BY-SA 3.0)

even longer. Through the Babylonians, they influenced and inspired the prayers and psalms of the Hebrew Bible and the Homeric hymns of Greece. Through them, faint echoes of Enheduanna, the first named literary author in history, can even be heard in the hymnody of the early Christian church." (Kriwaczek quoted in Mark, 2014).

## Her Famous Hymns

Some of Enheduanna's best-known hymns are Inninsagurra (The Great-Hearted Mistress), Ninmesarra (The Exaltation of Inanna), and Innimhusha (The Goddess of the Fear-some Powers). "These hymns re-defined the gods for the people of the Akkadian Empire under Sargon's rule and helped provide the underlying religious homogeneity sought by the king" (Kriwaczek quoted in Mark, 2014). Enheduanna also wrote a number of non-devotional poems in which she reflected upon her own personal hopes and fears as well as her thoughts about the world.

Enheduanna held the office of high priestess for over forty years. At one point, she was thrown out in a coup attempt by a man named Lugal-Ane. However, after pleading for help from the goddess Nanna, the gods seemingly interceded on Enheduanna's behalf and restored her to her proper place in the temple. From historic records, it would seem that Enheduanna was the first woman to serve such a prominent position in Ur. This not only elevated the status of Nanna but also set an example for future priestesses.



Rectangular, baked clay relief panel known as the "Burney Relief" or the "Queen of the Night." (Public Domain) There is debate whether this relief depicts Inanna/Ishtar, Lilitu, or Ereshkigal.

# Forgotten women in science:

## Tapputi-Belatekallim

By HÉLÈNE BAUM

*In the final of a three-part series, Zing Tsjeng looks at the neglected contributions of female scientists through history.*

The history of women in science doesn't just go back to tales of female scientists and philosophers such as Hypatia of Alexandria; it also extends some 6,000 years back to ancient empires in Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilisation.

Many of these women's names have since been lost in time and all that remains of them are depictions of their likenesses in stone carvings. But one of the first women whose name we do know belongs to that of a Babylonian chemist: Tapputi-Belatekallim (c.1200 BCE).

Archaeologists found a record of her work in clay cuneiform texts dating back to 1200 BCE. In ancient Babylon, perfumes were not just cosmetic scents for beauty purposes: they were fragrant substances that were required for medicinal purposes and religious rituals alike.

As a royal perfume-maker, Tapputi wasn't just the head of her own household (which is what "Belatekallim" means); she is spoken of as being an authority in her field and the official overseer of perfumery in the royal palace.

As any modern-day perfumer will tell you, the creation of perfumes – even for cosmetic reasons alone – doesn't just entail mixing up scents to see what smells nicest. It requires an intimate knowledge of chemistry and an understanding of technical processes such as extraction and sublimation. Tapputi wielded these skills well over a millennia ago.

We know little of Tapputi's background or personal life, but history has left us with one of her recipes: a fragrant salve for the Babylonian king. In this fascinating relic, Tapputi takes the reader through the step-by-step routine necessary to produce a royal ointment containing water, flowers, oil and calamus, which may either refer to lemongrass or a reedlike plant that is still used in perfumes today.



She describes the process of refining the ingredients in her 'still': a chemical apparatus for distilling and filtering liquids. Advanced versions of such equipment remain in use in labs today, but Tapputi's reference to a still is the oldest in human history. That makes her one of the earliest chemical engineers that we know of.

Tapputi is not the only woman mentioned in the cuneiform tablets about perfumery. Another female chemist is noted in these records, though the first half of her name has been lost. We only know her as "[–]ninu", though she is described as the author of a text on perfume manufacturing.

It's not surprising that women were so intimately involved with chemistry. The list of equipment used seems to be co-opted straight from

a Babylonian kitchen or adapted and modified from everyday utensils and cookware. This appears to suggest that women were chemistry's earliest adopters and innovators, and that there is a lot less separating the art of cuisine from the science of chemistry than many people may think.



## Sacred Music From Syria

Courtesy of [www.aina.org](http://www.aina.org)

**There is little awareness in the West of the presence of important Christian communities in the Arab world. If today there is a bit more awareness, this is due to the very embattled position of Christian minorities in Iraq, Syria and, to a lesser degree, Egypt. The horrific violence of the present has given added momentum the notion that Muslims harbor an inherent hostility to Christians, and that what we witness today is simply the latest in a series of acts of hostility and violence of Muslims against Christians that goes back centuries. This story, of course, does not square with the fact that Christianity has persisted in the region of its birth, and that Christians have thrived and co-existed with Muslims here since the rise of Islam in the 7th century.**

Erik Hillestad of the Norwegian record label KKV, in an attempt to highlight the diversity of religious faiths in the Arab world, traveled to Lebanon and made a series of recordings of Christian and Muslim vocalists, including Syrian and Iraqi refugees now living in Lebanon, as well as Lebanese nationals. The singers represent a broad range of religious traditions, all with deep roots in this region, known in Arabic as Bilad al-Sham (in English, the Levant, encompassing Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan). On this recording, we hear a sampling of just a few of the many Christian churches in the region: Armenian Apostolic (Orthodox), Maronite, Syriac Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Chaldean Catholic, and the Assyrian Church of the East. We also hear from Muslim vocalists representing the two main branches of Islam, Sunni and

Shi'ite. A hear a range of languages as well: Arabic, Armenian, varieties of Eastern Aramaic (Syriac, Assyrian, Chaldean), and Greek.

Church choirs, some of them quite professional, are present as well. The Mt. Lebanon Orthodox Byzantine Choir, led Joseph Yazbeck and based at the School of Ecclesiastic Byzantine Music, has put out a number of recordings of Byzantine music. Here the choir presents two recordings from the liturgy of the Greek Orthodox Church, sung in Greek. The Choir of the Antonine School of Music is affiliated to the Maronite church, whose history dates to the fourth century CE. The Antonine Fathers School of Music is based at Lebanon's Antonine University and is devoted to professional and theoretical music training in both Eastern and Western music. The choir's two recordings here feature a choir, singing selections from the Maronite liturgy, in unison, in Arabic and Syriac (the Maronite liturgical language, a dialect of Aramaic), to organ accompaniment, in a manner that will not sound unfamiliar to Western ears. What will sound remarkable on the other hand are the vocals of the soloist, Nohra Azar, who improvises melismatically, in a style similar to the improvisations of the Muslim chanters like Zayter and Kallas who appear on the album.

At the more amateur, less-polished, end of the spectrum are refugee outfits. A group simply identified as "Syrian refugee children in the Assyrian tradition" are young Assyrians displaced by the Islamic State's bloody takeover of northeastern Syria. They and their families continue

to speak the dialect of Aramaic known as Assyrian Neo-Aramaic, and to use it in their liturgical traditions that date back to the first century. These children gather at an established Assyrian church in Beirut each week to learn and practice old songs from their tradition. Here they sing "Oshanna," which Western Christians will recognize as "Hossana," from the Aramaic (and Hebrew) spoken by Jesus. The St. Joseph Chaldean Choir are youth refugees from Iraq, who belong to a congregation that has no permanent worship space that depends on the largesse of established churches to hold their services. They are speakers of Chaldean Neo-Aramaic, which is closely related to Assyrian Neo-Aramaic. The Chaldean choir offers here a traditional hymn to Jesus put in a modernized setting, accompanied by violin and synthesized organ.

These are just a few of the vital recordings on this invaluable album, which manages to present a fine sample of the varied, rich, evolving, and deeply-embedded traditions of religious music in Bilad al-Sham. The recording is testament to the region's multi-confessional nature, the complex interconnections between musical practices of Christian and Muslim traditions that go back centuries, and the willingness of current practitioners to develop, innovate and adopt new instruments and styles. The region may be beset by horrible conflict, but the practitioners of religious music, Christian and Muslim, continue to reside together, at least in Lebanon, and to labor mightily, against all odds, to keep their invaluable traditions alive. - Ted Swedenburg

# Why LA's Citadel looks like an ancient Assyrian palace



The facade of the Citadel Outlets in Commerce, California is modeled after an Assyrian palace. The building was originally a tire and rubber factory.

ANDREW CULLEN FOR KPCC

On Interstate 5, near the City of Commerce, a regal building flanks the congested road. Complete with concrete battlements and tall and winged figures, it's the Citadel — L.A.'s only outlet mall. And it makes quite a statement.

According to Adrian Scott Fine, director of advocacy for the Los Angeles Conservancy, that kind of architectural grandeur was taking off in the 1920s, when the Citadel's wall was first built.

Adrian Scott Fine: *Being a place of film-making and movie-making, it was also about fantasy... Places like the Mayan Theatre, the Chinese Theatre and other places that were evoking a style from an ancient past, but kind of doing their own twist on it. Very much an L.A. way of doing things.*

Proliferating that Hollywood feel were architecture firms like Morgan, Walls & Clements. They built some of L.A.'s most historic structures, including the Mayan and El Capitan theaters. And yes, that original Citadel wall.

In those early days, Commerce wasn't a city yet. The area was industrial, unlike

downtown L.A. or Hollywood. Commerce, Vernon, Bell Gardens and their surrounding areas were all about manufacturing, production and jobs.



A carving of King Sargon II representing him in front of a dignitary, v. 716-713 BC. From the Louvre, Oriental Antiquities, room 4.

There's a reason such a spectacular structure was built in an industrial place. Adolph Schleicher, founder of the Samson Tire & Rubber Company, had the

idea for the building's construction.

In 1929, just before the stock market crash, Schleicher didn't just decide to build a factory in L.A. He wanted to go big.

### Palace big.

Like the kind built for the Assyrian King, Sargon II. Never mind that Sargon's reign ended a long time ago, in 705 B.C. He was an ancient ruler whose style coincided with the Samson theme Schleicher was going for.

Samson, before he was associated with tires, was a biblical figure known for his great strength. Fine, of the L.A. Conservancy, said there may have been correlations between Samson as a symbol for strength in the company's tires.

*"Also, there's the idea about strength in the tires, and the tires are the foundation for your car. So there's some correlations that probably exist between those too," Fine said.*

According to Fine, the factory's style could also point to the discovery of King Sargon's palace, which was found excavated in the late 1920s.

*"There was a lot of interest in kind of antiquities during this era. People were gravitating towards this architecture, and it was all about exotic cultures from far away places bringing it to L.A."*

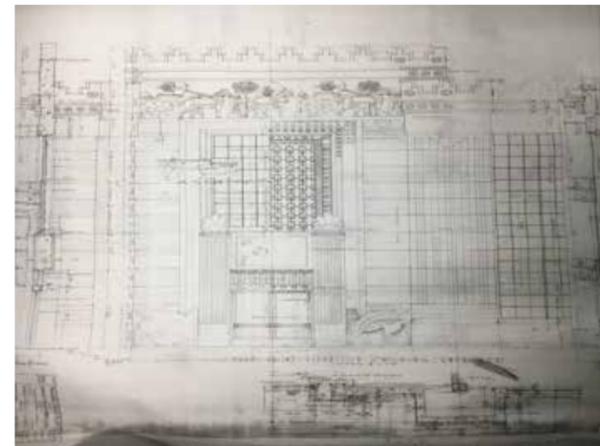
Unluckily for Schleicher, the economy's foundation crumbled with the stock market crash, which put a damper on the Samson tire business. Soon after the factory opened, he was forced to sell it to the company now known as Uniroyal.

After World War II, the tire industry bounced back and L.A.'s automotive industry took off. In fact, the Commerce area in car manufacturing was second only to Detroit up until the '60s. And at that time, the factory crashed again. It was an abandoned eyesore, dulled by pollution.

The City of Commerce purchased it in 1983. And a development company, Trammell Crow Co., later bought it, transforming it into a mix of stores, office buildings, even a hotel that opened 28 years ago.

Louis Troiani was the lead architect behind the Citadel's most recent transformation in 2003, where people go now to find brands like Coach, Levi's and DKNY on the cheap.

If you've ever seen those 30-foot-tall LED screens just above the wall, that was Troiani's baby. A pretty eye-catching way to show commuters it's open for business.



The Citadel's director of architecture, Louis Troiani, said the building's original 1929 construction was based off just five drawings. Troiani says it would take about 500 sheets to explain the same building's construction today. COURTESY OF LOUIS TROIANI

Next to each screen is a large winged creature. The creature's official name is a Lamassu, an ancient Assyrian protective deity with cloven feet and a human face. Troiani added that too. And if you happen to catch a glimpse of them at sunset, the light and shadows reveal extra textural details.

*"If you were to see them up close, the veins in the legs. It is truly an exact replica of the original,"* Troiani said. But the wall also has hidden gems, like a series of triangular engravings that literally tell Sargon's story.

*"That is the original language of the Assyrians which is called cuneiform. This language helped tell [King Sargon's] story in a written format while the visuals gave you a taste for the story they were trying to tell,"* Troiani said.

Embedded in the Citadel wall, there are also genies. They were military advisors back in the day. Troiani also gave some insight on their roles.

*"They conquered kingdoms all over the place and had such power. Until one year, one battle, King Sargon II died, and they moved from that palace to another palace."*

And that new palace? It's the Citadel, of course.

The genies still serve a purpose. They stand guard, protecting, even today in a little kingdom called Los Angeles, where the Citadel looks like it's here to stay.



A lamassu modeled on ancient carvings decorates the Citadel Outlets in Commerce, California.



A concrete figure representing a King Sargon II, modeled on ancient carvings, decorates the Citadel.



Exterior view of the Home of U.S. Tires.



The original steel roof beams from the tire and rubber factory that later became the Citadel Outlets are still visible above the mall's food court in Commerce, California.



A facsimile of cuneiform writing decorates the facade of the Citadel Outlets in Commerce, California.



A concrete figure representing a genie, modeled on ancient carvings, decorates the Citadel Outlets in Commerce, California.

# The Legend of King Abgar V

by Elizabeth Mickaily-Huber, Ph.D.

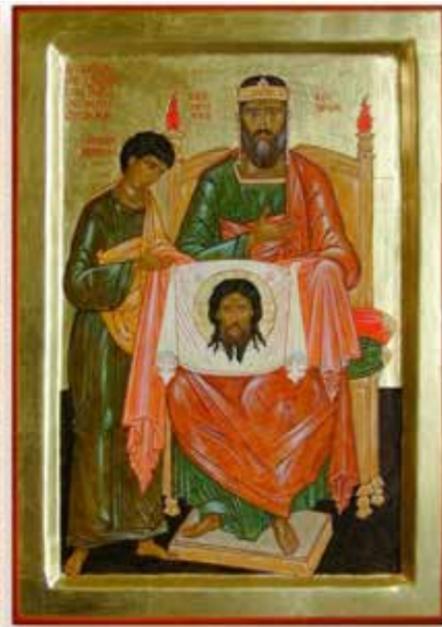
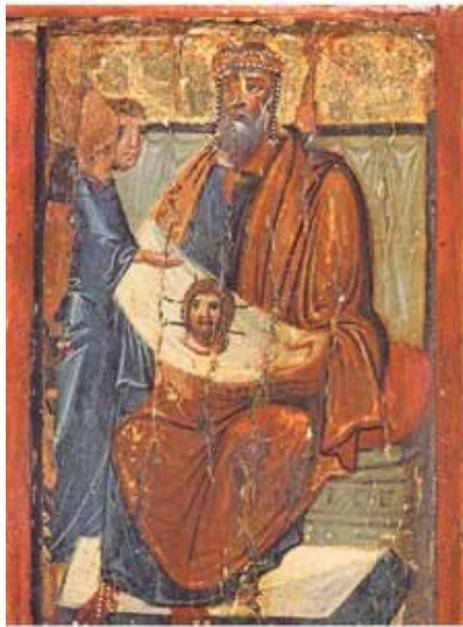
On a recent reading spree, I landed upon the story of King Abgar V of Edessa. This king, also known as Abgar the Black, was the ruler of the small Kingdom of Osroene in Northern Mesopotamia contemporaneous with Jesus. Legend has it that Abgar suffered terribly from an incurable disease. Upon hearing of the miracles performed by Jesus, he wrote the following letter:

*Abgar, ruler of Edessa, to Jesus the good physician who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem, Greeting. I have heard the reports of you and of your cures as performed by you without medicines or herbs. For it is said that you make the blind to see and the lame to walk, that you cleanse lepers and cast out impure spirits and demons, and that you heal those afflicted with lingering disease, and raise the dead. And having heard all these things concerning you, I have concluded that one of two things must be true: either you are God, and having come down from heaven you do these things, or else you, who does these things, are the son of God. I have therefore written to you to ask you if you would take the trouble to come to me and heal all the ill which I suffer. For I have heard that the Jews are murmuring against you and are plotting to injure you. But I have a very small yet noble city which is great enough for us both.<sup>1</sup>*

According to legend, with the help of a courier/scribe, Jesus replied as follows:

*Blessed are you who have believed in me without having seen me. For it is written concerning me, that they who have seen me will not believe in me, and that they who have not seen me will believe and be saved. But in regard to what you have written me, that I should come to you, it is necessary for me to fulfill all things here for which I have been sent, and after I have fulfilled them thus to be taken up again to him that sent me. But after I have been taken up I will send to you one of my disciples, that he may heal your disease and give life to you and yours.<sup>2</sup>*

Following the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, there exists some evidence that St. Thaddeus (also known as Mar Addai or Saint Jude) was sent to Edessa by St. Thomas to fulfill the promise of Jesus to heal King Abgar. The story has it that St. Thaddeus did indeed heal the King of his illness and Abgar immediately became a follower of Christ, thus becoming the first Christian ruler roughly 350 years prior to King Constantine I of Byzantine who is looked upon as the first Christian king in the Western world.



Painting and iconographic image of King Abghar of Edessa

Egeria, Holy Land pilgrim during the years 381-384AD

Fascinated by this story, I continued my reading only to become more and more perplexed as a result of conflicting information. In a desire to clarify my points of confusion, I wrote to a friend, Dr. Stephen Andrew Missick, Baptist Minister and Scholar of Assyrian history and Aramaic language. Dr. Missick has written multiple books and produced several films on these topics. Hereafter, I will convey my questions and Dr Missick's replies:

*Hello Stephen, I was recently reading more about the story of King Abgar. I have a few questions and thought you would be a good source of information (if you don't mind):*

*1) Was this king Abgar Assyrian or Armenian (one source I read said he was an Arab)?*

King Abgar Ukama, this is Abgar the Black or Abgar V, ruled over Edessa. Edessa was an Aramaic-speaking city. Actually, if you go to church in the Assyrian Church of the East, when they are using the old Aramaic language, they are using the dialect of Aramaic that was spoken at Edessa, the Syriac form of Aramaic. So obviously, we would think of King Abgar as being what we would call today an Assyrian; he is an Aramaic-speaking monarch using the form of Aramaic which is used in Assyrian churches to this day.

Now as to the question about him being an Armenian, back then, just as today, a lot of the royal families would intermarry. For example, during World War I, it is particularly interesting because all of the royal families were cousins of each other and looked alike. They were all very closely related.

So, Armenia actually put King Abgar on their currency and they claim that King Abgar was Armenian, but he was ruling over an Assyrian city and speaking Aramaic, the form of Aramaic used by Assyrians today in their church services and closely related to the form of Aramaic that they speak today. Thus, I would say that King Abgar was a Syriac Aramaic-speaking ruler. I would not say he was Armenian, even though the Armenians claim him as one of their own. However, it is true that these royal families were related to each other and often intermarried.

*2) Regarding the letter he wrote to Jesus and the one received back, what viable sources authenticate this correspondence?*

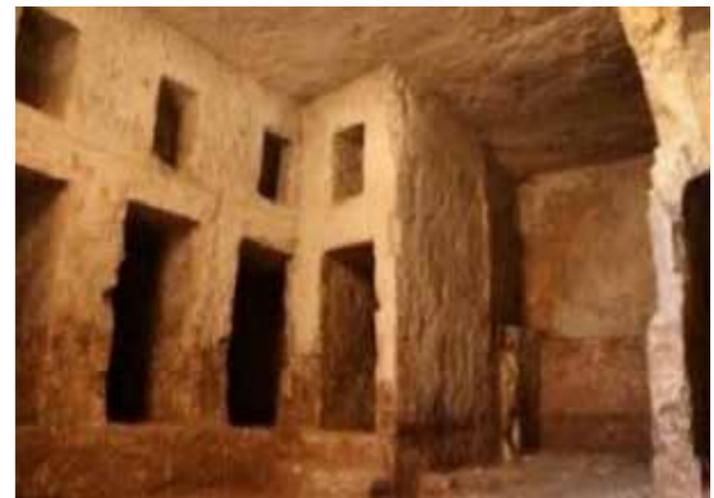
The letter of King Abgar to Jesus and its reply are found recorded in the writings of Eusebius Pamphilius, the father of church history, in his Ecclesiastic History, which he wrote around the year 325. Eusebius went to the city of Edessa, to the royal archives where he found this correspondence between King Abgar and Jesus. Abgar sent a written message to Jesus and Jesus sent an oral reply noted by a scribe/courier.



Dr. Stephen Missick with Mar Dinkha, beloved late Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East



Iconographic image of St. Thaddeus the Apostle



Tomb of King Abghar and the Royal Family

Some scholars are skeptical about the authenticity of this story, but on the other hand, Eusebius himself went to Edessa. He saw these letters and he believed that they were true. The fact of the matter is that the archives no longer exist. Since these documents have disappeared we can not test them. We are not able to do what Eusebius did and actually look at these letters. So Eusebius recorded this story; he is one of the earliest, most important sources of this story.

After the time of Eusebius, there is a book written in Aramaic called the Doctrine of Addai which gives the traditional Assyrian account. It is also repeated in the Acts of the Apostle Mari. Later on, Egeria, who was from Europe, traveled on a pilgrimage from the Sinai all the way to Edessa, visiting holy places and writing about what she saw. She went to Edessa and was shown the letter of King Abgar and its response which were still there in the city at that time.

### 3) Was it St. Thomas or St. Thaddeus who actually brought Christianity to the Assyrian people?

According to Eusebius, Thomas, by the inspiration of the holy spirit, sends Thaddeus to go to Edessa to take the Gospel to the Assyrian people. The King hears of the arrival of Thaddeus and sends for him. Thaddeus heals the king and the king is converted.

This is the story of the origin of the Assyrian Church of the East. Honestly, there is some debate about who this Thaddeus is. In the Bible, we have the 12 apostles and one of them is Thaddeus, but some people think that the Thaddeus who took the Gospel to Mesopotamia may have been one of Jesus' 70 apostles, as mentioned in the Gospel of Luke. However, most people believe that the Thaddeus who was sent by Thomas was that of the 12 Apostles.

He is also called Addai or Addeus. Sometimes people try to differentiate Thaddeus of the 12 Apostles from Thaddeus of

Edessa or Addeus, thinking they are different people. However, most scholars believe that Addeus or Addai is Thaddeus and that is how he is identified in Eusebius' writings.

The interesting thing is that Egeria mentions the story of King Abgar and the letter that he sent to Jesus, but she does not mention Thaddeus at all. She only mentions Thomas. The other interesting thing about Thomas is that scholars believe that the Acts of Thomas and the Gospel of Thomas, and other writings associated with the Apostle Thomas, originated in Edessa. I think it is likely that the reason why we have all this literature attributed to or about Thomas in Edessa, is that Thomas himself went there. He sent Thaddeus first, but then he went there himself. That is why there is all this veneration of Thomas in Edessa, and of course also in India.

So the person who first brought the Gospel to Edessa, to the Assyrian people, would be Thaddeus, but I think it was very likely that Thomas himself followed and ministered to the Assyrian people. Eusebius said that Thomas evangelized Parthea, which is modern day Iran, so if this is true, as it seems to be, then Thomas would have gone through Edessa and other cities and areas where Assyrians lived. There are references to Thomas evangelizing Parthea even in the Acts of Thomas which focuses on Thomas' missionary work in India.

*(Dr. Missick responded to these questions in video format on his YouTube channel. If you would like to see his presentation, that includes excerpts from his films, please follow this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZSuozUuqJs&feature=youtu.be>)*

A few days following my correspondence with Dr. Missick, I came across an article completely randomly stating that the tomb of King Abgar had recently been discovered. It states quite simply, "The tomb, in which 10 members of the royal family were buried, is decorated with a mosaic and a de-

picture of a cross. Also, a plate with an Assyrian inscription "Great King Abgar V the Black, the first Christian ruler of Edessa" was discovered".<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Missick is producing a film entitled *Saint Thaddeus: The Legend of the Shroud* dramatizing the story of the conversion of King Abgar. The film is based on ancient sources including the Doctrine of Addai. He hopes that the movie will make the story of the Assyrian King Abgar more accessible to a general audience and create greater awareness of the Assyrian Church of the East, as well as the Assyrian Christian heritage.

The film features a mysterious relic known as the Image of Edessa (a.k.a. the Mandylion). In some sources, the image is described as a painting, but in others it is described as a miraculous image not made by human hands. This relic has disappeared, but some have theorized that the Shroud of Turin is this same image. In Catholic iconography, Saint Jude Thaddeus is often portrayed holding the Holy Image of Edessa. In Armenian tradition, it is believed that Thaddeus kept the Holy Lance that pierced the side of Jesus and brought it to the Armenians who preserved it.

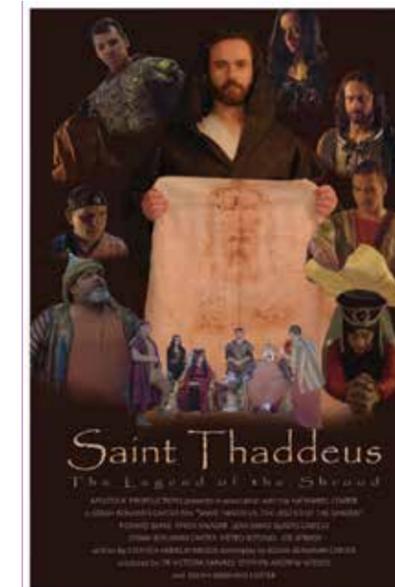
Assyrian-American actress and singer Leah Rose Fisher plays the role of the Assyrian Queen Augustine in the movie. Leah is a performing artist and voice teacher based in New York City. A classically trained soprano, she has sung and acted on stages across the U.S. and around the world. She has composed and performed a song in Modern Assyrian to accompany the feature. Leah's music video featuring her song "Chiaydta d'Melcha Aturaya l'Melcha d'Melcheh" (English Title: "The Assyrian King's Letter to Jesus") was nominated for Best Music Video by the International Christian Film Festival in 2017. The lyrics to the song are based on King Abgar's letter and were adapted into Assyrian by Rabi Yosip Bet Yosip. The music video was edited by Karina Carielo and directed by Josiah Missick, Dr. Missick's brother, who also directed the movie.

Currently, Dr. Missick is editing a documentary in which Leah Rose Fisher portrays Egeria. The stories of King Abgar, Eusebius, and Egeria are pivotal in the history of the Assyrian people. He is also working on other documentary films about the Assyrian Church in addition to artwork of Assyrian saints.

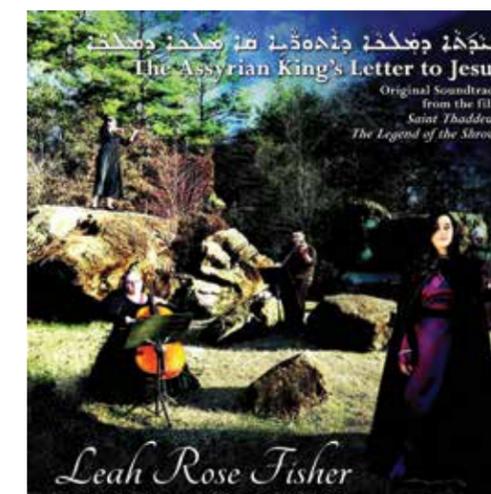
<sup>1</sup> Leclercq, Henri (1913). "The Legend of Abgar". In Herbermann, Charles. *Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250101>.

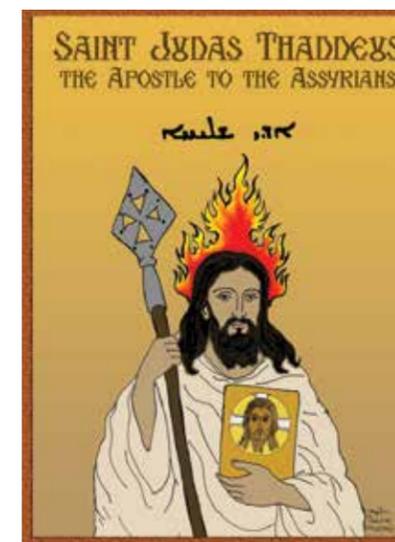
<sup>3</sup> <http://allinnet.info/interesting/the-tomb-of-abgar-v-the-first-christian-king/htm>



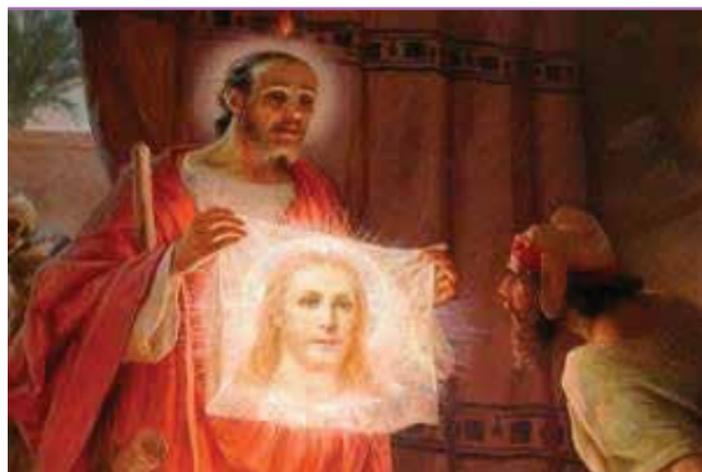
Poster of the upcoming Thaddeus film



Soundtrack can be found by searching "Leah Rose Fisher" on Amazon, iTunes, Spotify, and CD Baby



Stephen Missick's artwork depicting St. Thaddeus



St Thaddeus shows the Holy Image of Edessa to King Abgar



Leah Rose Fisher as Egeria being shown the letters of Abgar and Jesus by the Bishop of Edessa.



## Cuneiform tablets from Bassetki reveal location of ancient royal city of Mardaman

ASSYRIAN CLAY TABLETS FROM THE 2ND MILLENNIUM BC LINK EXCAVATION SITE TO IMPORTANT COMMERCIAL CITY

Translations of Assyrian writings found by archaeologists from the University of Tübingen have yielded a secret lost to history: The place where the clay tablets were found – Bassetki, in Autonomous Region of Kurdistan in Iraq – appears to be the ancient royal city of Mardaman. This important northern Mesopotamian city is cited in ancient sources, but researchers did not know where it lay. It existed between 2,200 and 1,200 years BC, was at times a kingdom or a provincial capital and was conquered and destroyed several times.

Archaeologists from Tübingen’s Institute for Ancient Near Eastern Studies excavated the archive of 92 clay tablets in summer 2017. Headed by Professor Peter Pfälzner, the team is working at the Bronze Age site with Dr. Hasan Qasim of the Duhok Antiquities Department. The clay tablets date to the Middle Assyrian Empire, about 1,250 BC. The small, partly crumbling tablets have now been read painstakingly by the University of Heidelberg philologist Dr Betina Faist, who is cooperating as specialist

for the Assyrian language with the archaeological project at Tübingen. She used photographs of the texts, which bit by bit shed light on the history of the city and the region at the time of the Middle Assyrian Empire.

To the archaeologists’ surprise, Dr. Faist was able to identify the find site as the ancient city of Mardama. As the cuneiform scripts show, it was the administrative seat of a Middle Assyrian governor. This reveals a new, previously unknown province of the empire, which straddled large parts of Northern Mesopotamia and Syria in the 13th century BC. Even the name of the Assyrian governor, Assur-nasir, and his tasks and activities are described in the tablets. “All of a sudden it became clear that our excavations had found an Assyrian governor’s palace,” says Pfälzner.

At the same time, the translation reveals the location of the city named as Mardaman in Old Babylonian sources from around 1,800 BC, and which is likely to be the

Universitaet Tübingen

Header Image – The Bassetki tell on the broad plain of the eastern Tigris with the Zagros mountains in the background. Photo: Matthias Lang/ Benjamin Glissmann, University of Tübingen eScience-Center

Assyrian Mardama. According to the sources, it was the center of a kingdom which was conquered by one of the greatest rulers of the time, Shamshi-Adad I, in 1,786 BC and integrated into his Upper Mesopotamian empire. However, a few years later it became an independent kingdom under a Hurrian ruler called Tish-ulme. A period of prosperity followed, but shortly later the city was destroyed by the Turukkaeans, people from the Zagros Mountains to the north. “The cuneiform texts and our findings from the excavations in Bassetki now make it clear that that was not the end,” Pfälzner says. “The city existed continuously and achieved a final significance as a Middle Assyrian governor’s seat between 1,250 and 1,200 BC.”

The history of Mardaman can be traced back even further, to the early periods of Mesopotamian civilization.



A cuneiform clay tablet on the floor of the Assyrian governor’s palace, and a broken ceramic vessel. Photo: Peter Pfälzner, University of Tübingen

Sources from the Third Dynasty of Ur, approximately 2,100–2,000 BC, portray it as an important city on the northern periphery of the Mesopotamian empire. The oldest source goes back to the Akkadian Empire, which is considered the first empire in history. It mentions that the city was destroyed a first time around 2250 BC by Naram-Sin, the most powerful Akkadian ruler.

“The clay tablets of Bassetki make an important new contribution to the geography of Mesopotamia,” the Assyriologist Betina Faist explains. This discovery may provide clues to the locations of other early cities in Mesopotamia, Pfälzner says.<sup>2</sup> “Mardaman certainly rose to be an influential city and a regional kingdom, based on its position on the trade routes between Mesopotamia, Anatolia and Syria. At times it was an adversary of the great Mesopotamian powers. So the University of Tübingen’s future excavations in Bassetki are sure to yield many more exciting discoveries.”

The Bronze Age city site of Bassetki was discovered in 2013 by archaeologists from the Tübingen collaborative research center 1070, ResourceCultures. The clay tablets found in 2017 had been deposited in a pottery vessel used as an archive, and had been wrapped in a thick covering of clay along with other vessels. “They may have been hidden this way shortly after the surrounding building had been destroyed. Perhaps the information inside it was meant to be protected and preserved for posterity,” Pfälzner explains.

Discovery and unearthing of the vessel containing the Assyrian clay tablets in Bassetki. Photo: Peter Pfälzner, University of Tübingen

## Language as politics: Nineb Lamassu promotes heart of Assyrian identity

The Assyrian Journal | May 2018 | Photos contributed | By Robina Lajin



Cambridge, England – Nineb Lamassu cannot take credit for his passport reading Assyria. As a PhD Candidate at the University of Cambridge, Lamassu says his wife Susan did the convincing with Australian passport officials to change their place of birth.

Today, Nineb fights for Assyrian rights, including the right to name Assyria as a place of birth, through his PhD work on language studies as well as through a number of authored books, an Assyrian language publishing company, Enheduanna Publishing, and an app designed for Assyrian language books.

*“Assyria is in your head,” Lamassu said. “If you don’t believe in Assyria and don’t keep it in your heart, it can never exist on the ground.”*

### A PASSION FOR LANGUAGE

Born as Nineb Giwargis Toma Al Bazi in the ancient Assyrian city of Arrapkha (modern day Kirkuk), Nineb grew up in a refugee camp in Iran. His close-knit community kept their Assyrian traditions alive and promoted higher education, including putting up white cloths to hold church services and teaching children the languages of Assyrian, English, and French.

Lamassu and his family later moved to New Zealand and then Australia, where he met his wife Susan, a daughter of the late singer George Homeh. They finally settled on England, where Nineb changed his surname to Lamassu.

*“I wanted a name from our homeland of ancient Assyria,” he said. “When my wife and I got married and had a son, we didn’t want our son to have my last name which is of Jewish origin or Susan’s last name which is of Persian origin. We wanted him to have an Assyrian last name.”*

While in the UK, Lamassu studied Ancient and Eastern Studies in Archaeology and Ancient Languages at London’s Global University, where his work included excavating archaeological sites in Turkey and studying language courses consisting of Akkadian, Sumerian, and Biblical Aramaic.

His first Master’s Degree was in Biblical Aramaic and his second was in Modern Aramaic.

Preserving the Assyrian language is what Lamassu considers his passion. In his opinion, by losing the language – which according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is already endangered – Assyrians will lose their identity.

*“Language is the one part of our identity which is forgotten the easiest,” Lamassu said. “Language is not only teaching how to speak but it is also in our literature.”*

He hopes that reading Assyrian literature will one day be so common in our communities that it could reach the level of international literature.

*“Assyrian literature must move us back to Assyria,” Lamassu said. “It must make*

*“Assyria is in your head,” Lamassu said. “If you don’t believe in Assyria and don’t keep it in your heart, it can never exist on the ground.”*

*every Assyrian man and woman say, ‘Wow, what a beautiful language.’”*

For Lamassu, one thing missing in the global Assyrian community is a way to make the youth fall in love with the language. Lamassu refers to Bet Kanu, an Assyrian organization that uses cartoon videos and games to teach children the language in a playful way, as a powerful tool for the youngest demographics.

The current language tools in place, he says, fail to address an age range of Assyrians.

*“We have a huge gap between children, adults, and older adults. This gap is called the youth. We must use more creative ways to make our youth fall in love with the language,” he said.*

In order to preserve the language at a local level, Lamassu believes that communities must begin hosting workshops, online lectures, promoting apps and engaging in social networks.

### LANGUAGE IS POLITICS

To support his work with the Assyrian language, Lamassu says it is important to get involved in politics. Every Assyrian, he says, is born political because of the oppression they experience by being denied an identity and certain rights.

During the Baath regime in Iraq, for example, he points out that it was forbidden to partake in anything related to the Assyrian heritage.

*“The fact that you would speak the language and write in the language was a political act,” he said. “Language is politics.”*

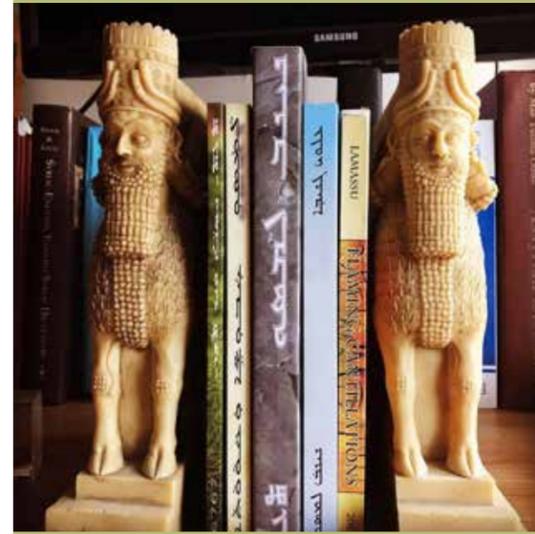
Lamassu calls on all Assyrian academics to be brave enough to speak up for their people, even in spite of risking their reputations or losing their high-ranking positions.

*“I did not become an academic to earn money,” he said. “I became an academic to serve humanity and my people in particular.”*

In order to accomplish this, he believes Assyrian organizations need to change their tactics and better utilize tools such as social media. According to Lamassu, only if Assyrians get their hope and faith restored, then they will have a chance to someday have a country.

*“We need to reach Assyrians who do not care about their people and to do that we need integrity, sincerity, and practical ways of how to implement the vision,” he said. “We must understand that times have changed and we should change with them. We must not have self-interest and we have to find creative ways to move forward.”*

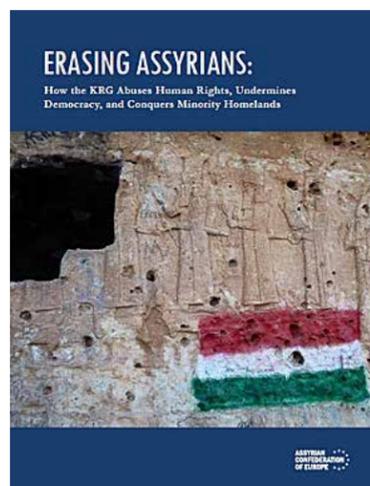
Lamassu is running as an independent candidate on the ABNAA Al-Nahrain List 154. Parliamentary elections will be held in Iraq on May 12, 2018.



## Erasing Assyrians: How the KRG Abuses Human Rights, Undermines Democracy, and Conquers Minority Homelands

by Reine Hanna and Matthew Barber *Assyrian Confederation of Europe, September 25, 2017*  
Special thanks to Max J. Joseph and Mardean Isaac for their assistance and contributions during the research for and composition of this report.

*The findings of this report indicate widespread abuses of human rights, attacks on democratic political processes, the denial of freedom of speech and opinion, state-level organized crime targeting minorities, other forms of racially and religiously-motivated prejudice, and a long-term project to break the Assyrian aspirations of self-governance and to appropriate the Assyrian homeland for the Kurdistan Region. The abuses reported here — not the conduct of IS or other terror groups, but of the official Kurdish power structures legitimized and supported by many Western actors — jeopardize in very real terms the future survival of the Assyrian people in their homeland.”*



Cover photo: 7th-century BCE Assyrian archaeological site in Dohuk [Nohadra, Assyria] vandalized with the Kurdish flag.

### Objective

This report is produced with a concern for Assyrian human rights and longevity in their homeland. The Assyrians are a people who have existed in Mesopotamia for thousands of years, yet we may be witnessing the very disappearance of this community, in our time. The end of the Assyrians in Iraq means the eventual end of the Assyrians. This may sound dramatic, but it is a very real possibility and not an exaggeration: The situation of Assyrians in Iraq is beginning to resemble the previous situation of Assyrians in Turkey, Iran, and Syria, which is a terrifying thought. Iraq, and specifically the Nineveh Plain, represents the only hope for a sustainable future that maintains the vital connection of Assyrians to their heritage. Without it, the ancient language and culture of the Assyrians could die.

A number of serious abuses that victimize the Assyrian people are underway in their homeland but are not widely known among those in the international community who have a concern for the welfare of minorities in Iraq. This report endeavors to raise awareness about these human rights violations and about the political dynamics that seek to deliberately undermine Assyrian efforts to develop a stable framework of local administration and security in the Nineveh Plain.

### Methodology

This report conveys and contextualizes findings made by a representative of the Assyrian Confederation of Europe (ACE) during a research trip to Iraq in December 2016 and January 2017, in addition to data gathered on an ongoing basis from a wide range of members from many Assyrian communities in Iraq. It seeks to convey a detailed understanding of the current situation facing Assyrians in northern Iraq.

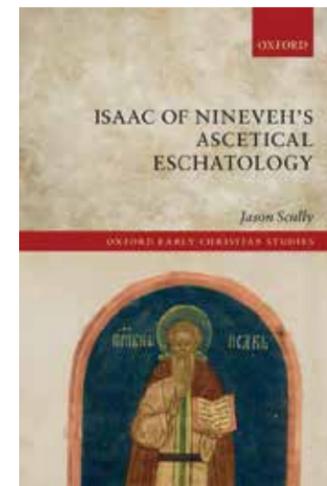
ACE has interviewed approximately 100 men and women of Assyrian communities in the Kurdistan Region and the Nineveh Plain. In addition, ACE continues to conduct follow-up telephone interviews. All individuals interviewed were informed of the purpose of the interview, and verbally consented to the use of information provided in this report. Names and identifying information of many interviewees have been withheld in the interest of their personal safety.

### Organization of This Report

This report is divided into five parts, with Part Two and Part Three comprising the bulk of the report. Following the introduction provided in Part One, Part Two deals with the broad range of problems facing Assyrians in the disputed territory of Nineveh. Part Three then examines problems experienced by Assyrians living inside the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). These sections are followed by a shorter Part Four that presents some examples of how the KRG has responded when human rights abuses have been publicized. The report is completed with some policy recommendations in the concluding Part Five.

*The Assyrian Confederation of Europe (ACE) represents the Assyrian European community and is made up of Assyrian national federations in European countries. The objective of ACE is to promote Assyrian culture and interests in Europe and to be a voice for deprived Assyrians in historical Assyria. The organization has its headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. (PDF, 4MB, 115 pages)*

*Assyrian Confederation of Europe [www.assyrianconfederation.com](http://www.assyrianconfederation.com). Assyrian Confederation of Europe, September 25, 2017.*



## Isaac of Nineveh's Ascetical Eschatology

Jason Scully

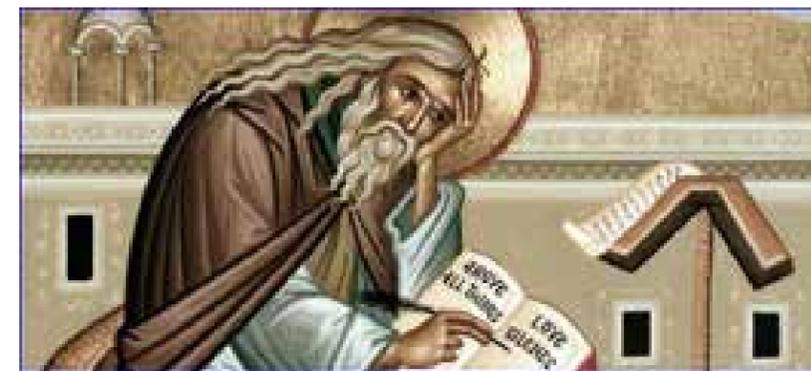
*Oxford Early Christian Studies*

- Recounts the development of Isaac of Nineveh's eschatology through an examination of his use of Syriac sources, while also showing that Isaac's cultural milieu includes Syriac translations of thinkers who originally wrote in Greek
- Examines Isaac's protological account of creation and fall and then traces the way that this foundation affects his eschatology
- Uncovers the fundamental role that asceticism plays in every aspect of Isaac's thought
- Investigates six source trajectories relevant to the study of Isaac's Syriac source material and cultural heritage: the corpus of Ephrem; the corpus of John the Solitary; texts arising from the School of Nisibis; the Syriac translation of Evagrius's Gnostic Chapters; the Syriac translation of Pseudo-Dionysius' Mystical Theology; and the Syriac translation of the Pseudo-Macarian corpus

Core Fellow Jason Scully recently published a book entitled *Isaac of Nineveh's Eschatology* (Oxford University Press, 2018) in Oxford's *Early Christian Studies* series. Dr. Scully has been teaching in the Core for several years, and he brings his knowledge about church history into his teaching.

The book developed from his dissertation. He said, "I had always intended to write a dissertation on a Greek author, but during the course of my graduate studies, I became increasingly fascinated with early Syriac theologians. Once I realized how wide open the field of Syriac studies was ("you can pluck a dissertation topic from the ether," my advisor told me), I decided to write on a seventh century Syriac author named Isaac of Nineveh, a figure whose historical importance far outweighs the relative dearth of modern scholarship devoted to his thought."

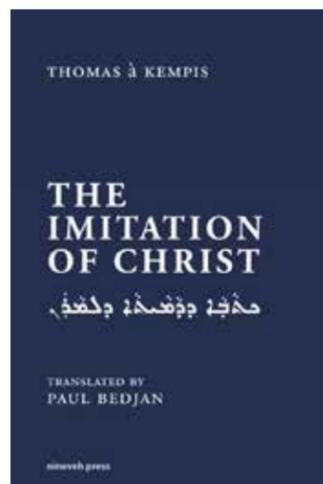
Dr. Scully's book is one of only three books on Isaac of Nineveh in the English language and one of only five overall. However, as Dr. Scully pointed out, Isaac of Nineveh is an important figure, honored by Christians all over the world. He was, in fact, he said, "the model for Fr. Zosima in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*."



## The Imitation of Christ

We would like to announce the release of our newly published book: 'The Imitation of Christ', by Thomas a Kempis, translated by Paul Bedjan.

Paul Bedjan (1838–1920) was born in Khosrova in Salamas (north of Urmia) in Persia where he was educated at a school established by French Lazarists. In 1856 at the age of 18, Bedjan went to Paris to enter as a novice in the Lazarist order, where he was ordained a priest in 1861 and returned to Persia. Following his work as a missionary among his own people in Urmia and Khosrova until the year 1880, he returned to Paris to pursue a career in editing and publishing books in Syriac and Eastern Assyrian until 1885. Bedjan then became head of the Sisters of Charity in Ans lez-Liège in Belgium for fifteen years. Between 1902 and his death in 1920, he lived in Köln-Nippes (Germany), where he devoted much of his time to writing.



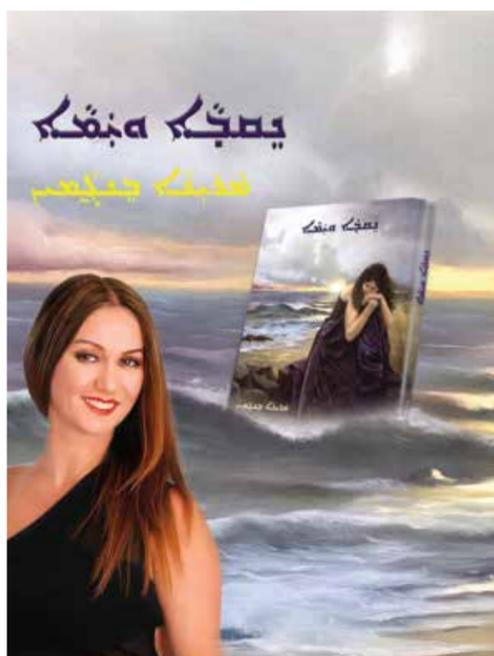
Of his works, the seven edited volumes of Lives of saints and martyrs and the five volumes of verse-homilies of Jacob of Serugh are the most significant.

This book, which is a translation (from Latin) of The Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis, is Bedjan's first book in Eastern Assyrian to be printed in Europe.

*Note that this book is in the Eastern Assyrian language.*

www.ninevehpress.com info@ninevehpress.com

TITLE: The Imitation of Christ | AUTHOR: Thomas à Kempis | TRANSLATED BY: Paul Bedjan | 6 x 9 in (15,2 cm x 22,9 cm), 268 pages | PUBLICATION DATE: February 2018 | PUBLISHED BY: Nineveh Press | PRINTED BY: Lulu, Morrisville, NC, USA 2018 | ISBN: 978-91-984100-0-6 | PRICE: \$23.99



**This book speaks from the heart of a woman that has experienced the clash of two cultures.**

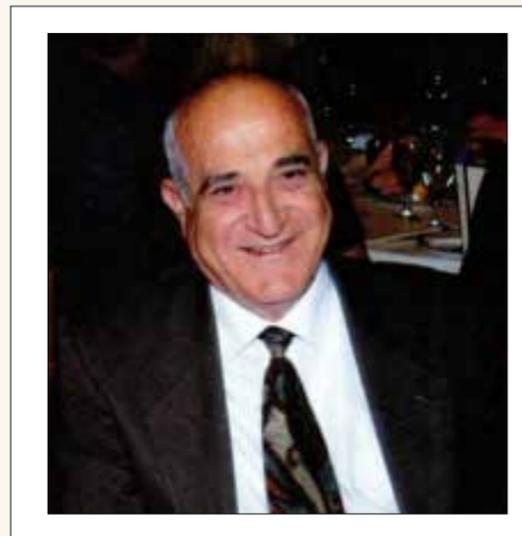
The pain of her suffering nation and the freedom of the new world. Through her poetry, she was able to express her feelings and thoughts freely without limits, which connected to the feelings of every woman of her nation, therefore, it gave them a new window to the present world. A woman is a strong being in her poetry, she has rights, freedom and respect from the world around her.

***By reading this book, you will meet Marina's traveling soul to the untouchable places. Enjoy the ride...***

For ordering the book, please contact: 1-360-709-7778 Marina Benjamin@Facebook or Marinaishtar@hotmail.com

## Sargon Yelda

03/24/1936 - 04/19/2018



Sargon Yelda was born March 24, 1936 in the city of Kermanshah, Iran. His father was Younatan Yelda of Sopurghan in the Plain of Urmia, Iran and his mother was Heleneh Badal Malik also of Sopurghan. Sargon was but 6 years old when his father Younatan died in 1942, and his mother Heleneh assumed responsibility for raising her family.

While still a teenager, Sargon began an apprenticeship to become a mechanic for large industrial vehicles,

proving great efficacy and ingenuity in his chosen profession. In 1951, Sargon decided to go to Baghdad, Iraq to stay with his sister Lida and her husband Matti Ganja, and soon after arrival, secured a job as a mechanic with a British company that was building a major bridge in the Iraqi capital over the Tigris river. That bridge is still a mainstay for traffic in the Iraqi capital.

Sargon went back to his mother's home in Kermanshah, Iran in 1958, continuing his work as a mechanic in both Kermanshah and Hamadan. While in Hamadan, he met Nanajan Shamoon and they got married on July 14, 1961. The couple established themselves in Kermanshah, Iran and were blessed with two children there, Younatan (known as John) and Jackline. The family moved to the capital city of Tehran in 1965, and the couple was blessed there with their youngest daughter Donatella.

In 1977, Sargon and Nanajan immigrated to the United States with the help of Sargon's brother Bellis Yelda and his wife Linda. Within a short time of settling in San Francisco, Sargon secured a job as a mechanic in the San Francisco Ship Yards, where he proved himself very capable in his profession and enjoyed the trust and support of his employer. Seeing his three children complete their college education and secure themselves in promising and successful jobs, Sargon decided to retire from the San Francisco Ship Yards at age 65 in 2001.

In recent years, Sargon had health problems with his heart, which later advanced to his kidneys. On Saturday April 14th, Sargon entered Kaiser Hospital in San Francisco, where he passed away on Thursday April 19th at 8:57 pm, surrounded by his wife and children. Sargon is survived by his wife of 57 years Nanajan, his son Younatan (John) Yelda and wife Karen, his daughters Jackline Yelda and Donatella Yelda. He also leaves behind, his sister Lida and her husband Matti Ganja, his sister Frida Shahbas, brother Bellis Yelda and wife Linda, and many nieces, nephews and their families.

Sargon was a hard worker, a loving husband and father, and a gentle and compassionate person. He also was a long time member of the Assyrian Foundation of America, in addition to the Mar Narsai Assyrian Church of the East Parish in San Francisco. Sargon has left his family, relatives, and friends with many fond memories. He will be missed dearly!

*"That man is a success who leaves the world better than he found it;  
Who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty or failed to express it;  
Who looked for the best in others and gave the best he had"*

*The family gratefully acknowledges all the expressions of sympathy and love shown after Sargon's passing. The many acts of kindness are a testimony to a life so beautifully lived and will be a source of comfort in the days to come.*

## Daizy Warda

10/07/1921 - 01/25/2018

Daizy Warda was born on October 7, 1921 in Kermanshah, Iran to Dr. Paul Malik and Katherine Baba Loghman. She passed away on January 25, 2018 at the age of 96. She was the second of 4 sisters and 2 brothers. In 1923, her family immigrated to Kirkuk, Iraq. In 1942, she graduated with her degree in teaching. Her career as a teacher and then a principal continued through her retirement in 1976. Mom met the love of her life, Wilson Warda and were married in 1950 in Kirkuk, Iraq. They worked hand in hand to raise a family of 3 daughters and a son. .



In 1990, Mom, Dad and May moved to the US and lived in Millbrae, CA to be close to the family. Mom fell ill at the beginning of this year and passed away peacefully at home a few weeks after surrounded by her loved ones.

Daizy Warda is survived by her children, Sonia, Nadia, May and Laith. Six grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren. Also, by her sisters Florance, Alice, Betty, Layla and brother Dr. George.

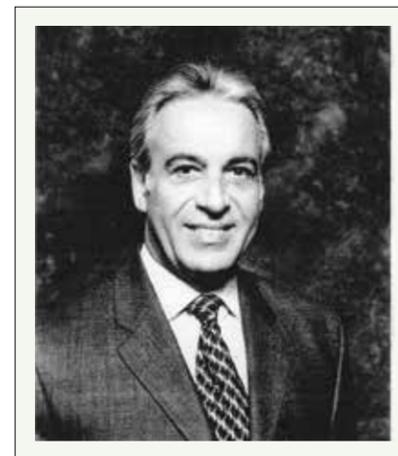
Mom was hard working, gentle, kind and loving. She was very soft spoken and always treated people with respect. In turn she was spoken of so fondly by everyone who knew her. To this day we are so proud when we meet her students and hear them speak highly of her so many years later.

Mom was a true Christian, a devoted and loving wife, mother and grandmother. She touched many people's lives and was loved and respected by all who knew her. She was always happy with a bright smile on her face and endless love in her heart. She will be greatly missed but never forgotten.



## Robert B. Adam

1955 - 2017 by Gilbert Adam I



In Memorium Robert B. Adam 1955 – 2017 By Gilbert Adam I would like to pay tribute and to celebrate the life of my beloved brother Robert Adam, a long- time resident of Scottsdale, Arizona, having resided there for well over 20 years. Prior to that, among other places, he lived in San Mateo for about 11 years, followed by more than 4 years in the Los Angeles area.

Robert was born in Kirkuk, Iraq on July 31, 1955, the second son to Baba and Florence Adam. Robert is survived by his mother Florence, his wife Kim, his brothers Gilbert and Raman, his nephews Christopher, Dr. Andrew, and niece Catherine. Robert is also survived by his uncle Ferdinand and aunties Alice, Gladys, as well as many cousins and relatives. As for our dad, he passed away in 1997.

Robert Adam was a beloved son and brother, devoted husband and cherished uncle who passed away on Saturday, September 23, 2017. He was preceded in death by his dad, his uncles; Phrydon, Alfred, and Pnoel, as well as aunts Germaine and Agnes. It seems surreal that Robert passed away when he was so full of life just before his illness. You just never know what curve ball life throws at you.

Robert immigrated with his family to the United States, arriving in Ohio on November 1, 1970, where the whole family spent some time with Uncle Alfred and his family. Subsequently, he arrived in California and established residence in the Bay Area.

Among his many talents and pastime pursuits, Robert loved playing golf and dancing. Also, he was an avid sportsman, including being a fearless high-jump diver, an ardent water and jet-skier, enjoying boating, and deep-sea fishing, catching fish more than twice his size, an automotive accomplished do-it-yourselfer, and motorcyclist. His family and friends will forever miss his infectious smile and quick sense of humor and intelligence. He was nicknamed the Mayor of Scottsdale due to his popularity and longtime residency there.

During his professional career, Robert received many accolades. Among his commendations was being named as Director of the Year for all Hyatt Hotels Worldwide. Robert had an outgoing personality. Because of his exuberant and extroverted demeanor, he socialized with famous personalities including Robin Williams and Jay Leno, and rubbed elbows with Mohammad Ali, The Raiders Howie Long, the martial artist movie star Chuck Norris and met Presidents Obama, Bush, Clinton and Reagan.

We are all mortals. The only thing that we can carry is our legacy. The memory of Robert's love for his mom, wife, brothers, relatives and friends will endure. All else is fleeting. Only our legacy is not transient. Robert was beloved by all who were fortunate enough to have known him. Robert did have a heart of gold and still had so much potential to offer. The following poem titled "God saw" seems to be quite fitting in this context:

*"God saw your getting tired  
And a cure was not to be,  
So he put his arms around you  
And whispered, "Come to me"  
With tearful eyes we watched you,  
We saw you pass away,  
Although we love you dearly,  
We could not make you stay,  
A golden heart stopped beating,  
Hard working hands at rest,  
God broke our hearts to prove to us,  
He only takes the best."*

# Assyrian Vegan Dolma

By Remouz Malek-Zadeh



## INGREDIENTS:

- Fresh ( I used a fresh grape leaves) or 8 oz grape leaves 1 jar, preserved grape leaves
- 2 cups rice
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- All diced: onion, Grimini mushrooms, riced broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, eggplant, 4 kind color bell-paper, jalapeños
- Diced fresh tomatoes
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 1/4 tsp allspice
- 1 Tbsp mint fresh, chopped
- 1/2 cup parsley or cilantro fresh, chopped
- 3/4 cup water

## SAUCE:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Sumac
- Tamarind
- 4 Tbsp lemon juice, fresh squeezed



## Instructions

1. To make the sauce Mix the 4 Ingredient together.
2. In a bowl place rice, mint, parsley, and allspice. Mix well.
3. In a small skillet sauté the onions in the olive oil until onions are translucent. Sauté all the vegetables

Remove from skillet and add to rice mixture and add the mint, cilantro, pine nut and the diced Tomatoes, garlic and Mix well.



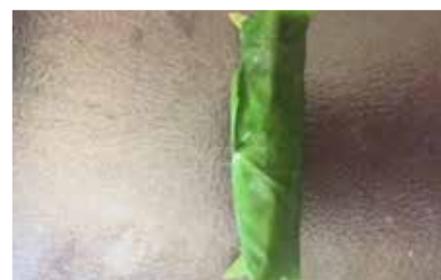
4. Rinse grape leaves and pat dry.
5. Place leaves flat on a large cutting board.



6. Place a heaping teaspoon of the rice mixture near the middle of the leaf.



7. Fold the sides of the leaf over the rice, and bring the bottoms and rolled.



8. Roll tightly to form a cigar shape.



9. Place seam side down in a skillet lined with the grape leaves.



10. Pour the sauce mixture and little bit of water if needed over the dolmas, and weigh down with a plate.



11. Cover and cook on low for about 40 minutes.



12. Allow dolmas to cool in the pan.



13. Transfer to a serving platter and leave in room temperature for about 2 hours before serving.



# Turkey returns confiscated Syriac Orthodox Church property deeds



*The controversial transfer of ownership began back in 2008, when regional authorities incorporated Mardin into a metropolitan municipality, updating the land registry and in the process re-drawing boundaries of the 4th century Mor Gabriel Monastery, belonging to Turkey's oldest indigenous culture (World Watch Monitor)*

Syriac Orthodox Church have welcomed the Turkish government's return of 55 title deeds, representing nearly half of their ancient church properties in southeast Turkey, which had been confiscated by the state in recent years.

Fifty of the official property deeds were delivered to the Syriacs' 4th century Mor Gabriel Monastery near Midyat, in Mardin province, on 22 May. The dis-

puted documents were received in person by Archbishop Timotheos Samuel Aktaş, Syriac Orthodox Metropolitan of Tur Abdin, and Kuryakos Ergün, chairman of the Mor Gabriel Foundation. An additional five title deeds were returned to another Syriac Orthodox foundation in Mardin.

The turnover of Syriac community deeds resulted from the 27 March passage of an omnibus bill in the Turkish Parliament. The newly amended measures signed into law by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan authorised the return of these historic Assyrian properties, many predating Ottoman times, to their original owners.

*"This is the first time our property deeds have been returned,"* Ergün told Cumhuriyet newspaper on 27 May, noting

that the new judicial amendments had considerably reduced property ownership problems of southeast Turkey's Syriac community. *"These returned deeds have created great joy here among the Assyrians in Mardin and those who live abroad,"* the foundation chairman told the daily. "At the same time, this also means the return of our minority rights, as birthed in the Lausanne Treaty," Ergün stressed.

But although he declared the legal change was "of great significance to us", he also clarified to Doğan news agency: "We still have a legal dispute over ownership of lands belonging to the community." The recovery of various Syriac Orthodox monasteries, village churches, and cemeteries, along with some 70 vineyards, gardens and lands attached to them, is still pending in the local courts.

## A YEAR OF NEGOTIATIONS

The formal transfer followed slow-paced months of legal negotiations since June 2017, after the Assyrian community in Mardin first confirmed that without their knowledge, legal ownership of at least 110 of their church properties had been revoked and turned over to government entities since 2014.

Inexplicably, many of the Assyrian deeds turned over to the state Treasury had then been transferred under the control of the Religious Affairs Directorate, a public institution which oversees only the affairs of Turkey's Muslim institutions.

News of the church property seizures was initially dismissed by some government officials, including the head of the Religious Affairs Directorate, who denounced the reports as a lie and "dark propaganda" being circulated abroad to defame Turkey.

But eventually the extensive expropriations were acknowledged in November 2017 by Deputy Prime Minister Hakan Çavuşoğlu, who declared the transfers were "mistakenly" enacted and pledged that the church's property rights would be returned.

By early February, Turkish media outlets reported that amendments designed to resolve the Assyrian property issues were being added to a planned new omnibus bill in Parliament. After reviewing the proposed text, lawyer Rudi Sümer for the Mor Gabriel Foundation commented to the daily Hürriyet newspaper that the church's property issues would "partly be solved" in the proposed amendments.

*"The 30 properties that should be returned include the Mor Malke, Mor Ya'qub and Mor Dimet monasteries," Sümer said at the time. "These three are very important."*

On 8 February, the European Parliament had referred specifically to the Syriac Orthodox Church property seizures in

"urgently address these issues with the Turkish authorities".

## LAND BOUNDARIES REDRAWN

The controversial transfer of ownership had begun back in 2008, when regional authorities incorporated Mardin into a metropolitan municipality, updating the land registry and in the process re-drawing boundaries of the historic Mor Gabriel Monastery.

The legal changes in effect slashed large parcels of land from the monastery's property, authorizing local officials to redistribute the land and other church assets in the surrounding villages as the property of "institutions whose legal entity had expired".

"Before 2000, there were no rights for declaring foundation ownership of unmovable properties. So previously our churches, monasteries and graveyards were registered in the names of an individual villager," Ergün explained to Cumhuriyet newspaper.

The Tur Abdin (literally 'Mountains of the Worshipers') region in Mardin is the ancient homeland of Syriac Christians, who still speak an Aramaic dialect close to that of Jesus and date their monasteries and churches back through the past 17 centuries.

Less than 3,000 Assyrian citizens of Turkey still live in the region, although an estimated 20,000 now reside in Istanbul. Tens of thousands have immigrated to Europe during the last few decades of armed fighting between Kurdish separatists and Turkish military forces in the southeast.



*Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Samuel Aktaş (left) and Mor Gabriel Foundation chairman Kuryakos Ergün welcome the returned property deeds from the Turkish Treasury. (Photo: Mor Gabriel Foundation)*



*Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Samuel Aktaş (left) and Mor Gabriel Foundation chairman Kuryakos Ergün welcome the returned property deeds from the Turkish Treasury. (Photo: Mor Gabriel Foundation)*

a resolution on Turkey's human rights situation, "condemning the confiscation of 50 Aramean [Syriac] churches, monasteries and cemeteries in Mardin" and calling on the European Commission to

last few decades of armed fighting between Kurdish separatists and Turkish military forces in the southeast.



















# کتابتہ تصنیف

قلم ۱۵۲:

۱۹۱۱ء میں لکھی گئی اور ۱۹۱۲ء میں شائع ہوئی۔  
۱۹۸۸ء میں دوبارہ شائع ہوئی۔

یہ کتاب اردو، پنجابی، سندھی، پشتو، گجراتی، بنگالی، اور انگریزی میں لکھی گئی ہے۔

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## کتابتہ تصنیف

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