



NINEVEH

CULTURAL | EDUCATIONAL | SOCIAL



He is a young hobby artist, works as an Art and History teacher in a Middle and High school in Sweden.

His art can be viewed on Instagram; @artbySargon

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Dear Nineveh Magazine Subscribers, Readers, and Supporters,

The Editorial Staff at Nineveh Magazine strives to provide you with an interesting and enlightening reading experience in each issue. Our goal is to bring you articles pertaining to Assyrian culture, history, education, and current events around the world.

We welcome you to submit your contributions for review to our magazine. Perhaps you would like to write about a historical Assyrian figure in your family, or to share a long loved Assyrian recipe or some other interesting topic related to Assyrians, we welcome your contributions.

Please send your articles for review to editor@assyrianfoundation.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,
Dr. Ninwe Maraha
Dr. Elizabeth Mickaily-Huber



Snow culpture Lamassu
by Odishi Kifarkis

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

Opinions expressed in NINEVEH are those of the respective authors and not necessarily those of NINEVEH or the Assyrian Foundation of America.

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Meet the AFA Board



Sargon Shabbas, – AFA President

Sargon Shabbas is the president of the Assyrian Foundation of America (AFA). He was born in Baghdad, Iraq at the Kamp AlKailani, also known as the Armenian Camp. He grew up in Habanniya and later lived in Baghdad. Sargon attended St Joseph Latin Primary School, graduated from the Jesuit Baghdad College high school, and obtained a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Al Hikma University. In 1970, he immigrated to the U.S. where he obtained an MBA from Armstrong University. Since 1991, he is CFO of the Ted Jacob Engineering Group in Oakland, California. Sargon has been married to Jermaine (Yonan) Shabbas since 1974. They have two children, Atur and Nineveh Shabbas, as well as two adorable grandchildren Amarissa and Matthew.

Sargon joined the AFA in 1973 and has held various positions within the board since that time, as well as the function of President from 1985 to 1988. Moreover, he joined the Assyrian Aid Society of America in 1991 to help our Assyrian brothers and sisters back home and has acted as treasurer beginning in 1992. It has always been his goal to help his fellow Assyrians, especially those back in the homeland. He has visited northern Iraq many times to join Akitu festivals and to visit our Assyrian schools and children. To continue his efforts to help Assyrians in need, wherever they may be, Sargon has valiantly taken on the position of President of the AFA.



Annie Elias – AFA Vice-President

Annie Elias is honored to serve on the board of the AFA, where her dad, Joel Elias, served for decades. Annie is a playwright and director who specializes in the creation of documentary theater--plays based on interviews. Her acclaimed play "Tenderloin," composed from interviews of residents from the SF neighborhood, premiered in 2012 at The Cutting Ball Theater, and was remounted in 2019. Since graduating from Mills College, Annie has received numerous grants and awards, including a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship and a grant from the Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Science and Technology Project for her original theatrical adaptation of the novel Einstein's Dreams. Annie is an associate artist at Phantom Theater in Vermont where many of her plays have been performed. She serves as the Chair of the Performing Arts Department at Marin Academy where she has taught for twenty years.

While she grew up with her dad's Assyrian influence, it was only after he died that she got involved with the Assyrian Foundation, through a desire to stay connected to that part of her family heritage. Annie has co-written an article for a recent issue of Nineveh Magazine and hopes to support this very important journal in the future by contributing interviews and finding worthy authors and subjects to submit to the magazine. In addition, Annie is collaborating with Dr. Ruth Kambar on a project, called "Assyrian Americans in Motion," researching a 1937 film of Assyrian Americans that Annie and her siblings found among her dad's belongings when he died. The amazing discovery, along with Annie and Ruth's research, will appear soon as an exhibit on the Assyrian Studies Association website.

Annie appreciates the great opportunity to help support and raise awareness of Assyrians through the many good works of the AFA.

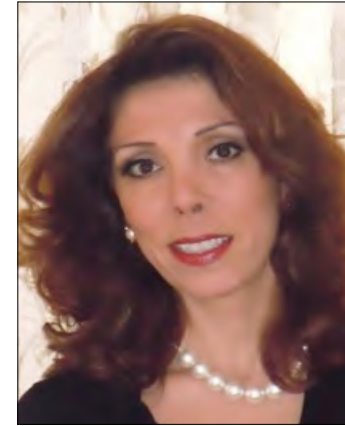


Sargon Warda, – AFA Treasurer

Sargon was born in Baghdad Iraq in 1947. He graduates from the American Jesuit University in Baghdad in 1969 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering. Thereafter he worked in Iraq, Kuwait, and in the USA after immigrating in 1981. Sargon worked for many years at Bechtel Corporation as a Civil Construction Engineer and has been a Licensed Building Contractor in California since 1987.

Sargon is married to Sonia Warda and has two children Tara and Rami. He also has 3 handsome grandsons who are the sons of his daughter Tara. Currently, Sargon lives in Milbrae, CA.

Sargon has been a member of the AFA since 1982. At present, he is serving his second term as Treasurer. Moreover, because of his long and vast experience in construction, he assists the Building Chairman Daniel DeKelaita whenever needed.



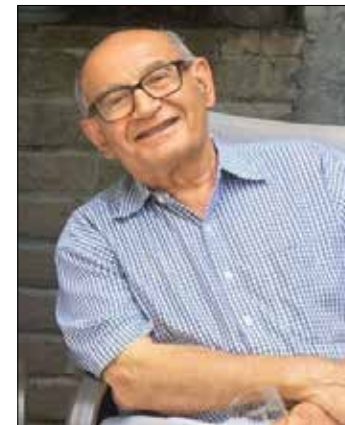
Jackie Yelda-AFA Secretary

Jackline Yelda, MBA, is an accomplished professional in the beauty and fashion industry with over 20 years of experience in supply chain and product development. She is currently a Senior Project Manager at Forma Brands, an international cutting edge cosmetics and skincare company. While working full time in her professional field, Jackline also taught business classes at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising in San Francisco, where she mentored students and helped them enter in the fashion industry and flourish in their careers.

Jackline served as the President of the Assyrian Foundation of America ("AFA") for two terms, contributing several key legacies during her seven years at the helm:

- Championed the launching of the Assyrian Studies Association ("ASA"), an organization that focuses on promoting Assyrian history, language, culture and heritage within the academic community worldwide.
- Instrumental in assuring that Assyrians were represented on a plaque in front of the Joseph Strauss statue at the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, one of the most visited tourist spots in the world. The plaque is written in both English and Assyrian and mentions the AFA on it.
- Lobbied to include the word "welcome" in the Assyrian language on the steps of the Golden Gate Bridge, where many world languages are represented to greet visitors to this iconic San Francisco landmark.

Jackline is passionate about promoting Assyrian history and heritage in the academic world and beyond. She is adventurous and a world traveler. Among her many adventures, Jackline summited Mt. Kilimanjaro (Tanzania), trekked through the Himalayas (Bhutan) and the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu (Peru). Jackline's motto in life is "always do the right thing, even if it is harder to do".



Daniel DeKelaita, – AFA Building Chairman

Daniel DeKelaita has been a member of the Assyrian Foundation of America (AFA) for over 35 years. It is thanks to him that the AFA was able to purchase a property in Pacifica, California that has been a steady source of income to the AFA, helping to fund a variety of projects mentioned in Nineveh Magazine over the years. These projects have always been charitable in nature, serving to benefit Assyrian culture, language, education and welfare, as has been the ultimate goal of the AFA since its inception.

Daniel was born on November 9, 1936 in Mosul, Iraq. When he was one year old, Daniel's family moved to Habbaniyah where he spent his childhood. He came to the United States in September of 1956 where he lived with relatives in San Francisco. In early 1960, Daniel served our country as a soldier in the United States Army. He began his service in Texas, later attaching to the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment in Germany where he served for 18 months and received an honorable discharge in 1962. After returning to the States from his service in Germany, Daniel obtained a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Math and Physics from San Francisco State University.

Over the years, Daniel held many different jobs, working as a busboy at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco, a butcher in a meat company, a taxi driver, as well as a math, physics and chemistry teacher at a Justin-Siena Lasallian Catholic High School in Napa. For a time, he also worked at Stanislaus State University with the head of the Physics department at the time, who was also Assyrian, Professor Vladimir Tuman. Together, they worked on the "Earth Pulsation" project funded by the US Navy.

Daniel met his lovely wife Ineke Brom in 1965 on the campus of the University of California at Berkeley where he was studying in the department of Physics. Daniel and Ineke are blessed with three daughters Ingrid, Christina and Daniella, all raised in the city of San Francisco. Daniel and Ineke are also the proud grandparents of Johanna, Sierra, Daniel and Kole.

Daniel opened his own upholstery business in 1976 and also worked as a real estate agent. It is thanks to his real estate skills that he was able to help the AFA purchase a mixed-use building in Pacifica. Daniel searched for many years until he found the perfect investment building for the AFA. Over the past 11 years, Daniel and his wife Ineke have graciously donated significant amounts of time and energy on maintaining the building that would finance multiple projects for the AFA.

Meet the AFA Board



Dr. Jack Chaharbakhshi – AFA Education and Culture Chairman

Dr. Chaharbakhshi obtained his doctorate in Psychology in Organization Development from Alliant International University in Fresno, CA. His thesis topic was “An Intervention Designed for the Career Development of Assyrian Refugees and Immigrants to the United States.” Moreover, he has a Master of Science degree in Technology Management from Golden Gate University in San Francisco, as well as a B.S. in Business and Operation Management and Computer Information Systems from California State University, Stanislaus.

Jack is an accomplished professional in a variety of industries including: Manufacturing, Telecommunications, Business Analysis, Operation and Project Management, Business Consulting, Executive and Personal Coaching, Career Development, and Education. Jack has been with AT&T for over 21 years, working as an engineer and project manager in multiple telecom technology programs and projects. He worked as Manufacturing Operation Manager for over 11 years at companies like Procter & Gamble, overseeing manufacturing production, quality engineering and production control. Furthermore, Jack has been an adjunct professor at the NPU Business School in the Bay Area, teaching various MBA courses (pre-Covid19).

Jack served for 20 consecutive years in United States Navy, both as active duty and selected reserve, with 5 tours of duty abroad, in Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East. He held many leadership roles during his service with the Department of Defense, the Joint Armed Forces, and the US Navy. Jack officially retired from service in 2008.

He spent several years as a volunteer missionary with Christian organizations, such as the Campus Crusade for Christ and Navigators, in the United States and abroad, providing humanitarian aid and evangelizing. Jack has been instrumental in leading the Jesus Film Project translation into the Assyrian language, using it as an evangelistic tool to spread the Gospel and to distribute the movie to the global Assyrian community.

He is also currently serving as the Education and Culture Chairperson for the Assyrian Foundation of America. Previously, he was an executive board member of the Assyrian American Association of San Jose for two years. Jack's hobbies include traveling, reading, listening to music, boating, and motorcycle riding. His favorite past time is coaching young adults to help them achieve their dreams.



Chris Hamzaeff, – AFA Social Committee Chairwoman

Chris was born and raised in Modesto, CA where her parents were members of an Assyrian-American Club, formed by a group of Assyrian women, “The Femmes Club.” Her mother's family was from Urmia, Iran, immigrating first to Chicago, then to Modesto after her father passed away. Her father's parents had immigrated from northern Italy & settled in the farming area of Point Arena, CA. Chris received her LVN in Nursing from Modesto Junior College in 1967 and enjoyed working in that career for many years.

Prior to being introduced to the AFA, she married Victor Hamzaeff in 1999 and moved to Sonoma, CA. Victor took Chris to AFA business meetings and encouraged her to become an active member. Once in Sonoma, she worked with her husband Victor who was broker and owner of his own real estate company. Thereafter, Victor suggested that Chris study for a real estate license, so that they could work together as a team. It was a wonderful and interesting career. Following Victor's passing in 2013, Chris returned to nursing, part time while also actively working in real estate, with another broker. She is now retired from professional life but enjoyed her various work experiences.

As a hobby, she has continued to maintain their boutique vineyard that was established in 1999. The Nineveh label graces the bottles of Merlot & Sauvignon Blanc, along with the history of wine in Assyria on the back of the label.

Soon after joining the AFA, Chris began assisting honorary, forever supportive and very social, past chairwoman, Mrs. Flora Kingsbury. Even now, as the Chairwoman of the Social Committee, Chris stays in contact with Flora and appreciates her advice and experience. Together, they hope and look forward to greeting AFA members for events toward the end of this year.

Chris realizes that being a board member of the AFA is an important responsibility. Her goal is to ensure that members are honored through meetings and other events. She appreciates reading Nineveh Magazine because “it helps to keep us informed and reminds us of our wonderful and unique heritage.”



Ramin Daniels, – AFA Membership Chairman

Ramin was born in Tehran, Iran. He attended two years of high school at Shooshan Assyrian School there. After immigrating to the US, he completed high school in Chicago where he lived with his aunt and uncle. His family later moved to California where he attended San Jose State University, graduating with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering. He has worked in the chemical industry for over two decades.

His involvement in Assyrian organizations began with the youth group of the Assyrian American Association of San Jose, where he later served on the education and fundraising committees. Ramin has also been active in the Assyrian Aid Society of America and served on the board of directors for about a decade. As a long time member of the Assyrian Foundation of America, he served as the treasurer in 2002. Presently, Ramin is serving on the board of the Assyrian Foundation in charge of membership, and is hopeful that we can get members whose memberships have lapsed to become current on their dues.



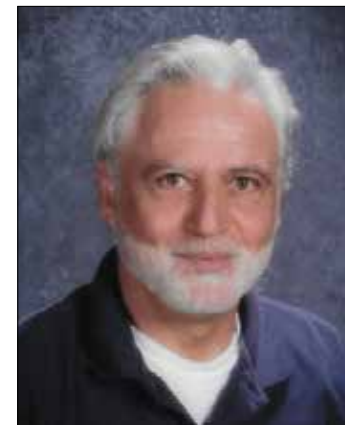
Flora Ashouri Kingsbury, – AFA Social Committee Co-Chairwoman

Flora was born to Babajan and Shooshan Ashouri in the city of Brougard, Iran. From six months to seven years of age, Flora lived in the village of Mushawa, later moving to Urmia.

Flora was inspired to take on a career in nursing thanks to witnessing the wonderful care that an Assyrian nurse gave to her ailing brother Frederick. Thus, following high school, Flora went to Nursing School in Abadan, sponsored by the oil company for which her father worked. During her seven years there, she completed her training and worked in the medical and surgical units, including the operating room and eventually becoming a charge nurse. In 1965, Flora immigrated to California. After completing coursework at the University of California, Berkeley, Flora received her California Nursing License and worked at the Civic Center Hospital in Oakland.

After marrying Bob Kingsbury in 1969, Flora and her family spent a few years living in Saudi Arabia where Flora worked at an eye clinic in Dhahran and taught first aid classes in Ras Tanura. Upon the family's return to California in 1979, Flora began working at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley. During a fateful visit to the Church of the East in San Francisco in 1980, Flora met Julius Shabbas, late President of the AFA, who encouraged her to take part. Thereafter, Flora and her family became active members of the foundation. Flora became the Social Chairwoman under President George Bet-Shlemon in 1980, helping to organize many events and parties at the old AFA building in Berkeley.

Over the years, Flora has worked on the AFA Board under 13 different Presidents, devoting 33 years of her life to the service of AFA. She brought her special flare to all events - creating collages, timelines, appreciation events, and extravagant centerpieces. While he was alive, Flora's husband Bob was her constant companion at these events, often working at the check in table.



Raman Adam – AFA Welfare Officer

Raman Adam came to the United States in 1970 from Kirkuk, Iraq. He began working at the tender age of 14 in his father's grocery store in San Mateo. Raman has held various occupations since then. In his youth, he worked in retail, transitioned to a job in a cabling company, followed by work as a warehouse supervisor for several companies. As a jack of many trades, Raman has also worked in pipe fitting, handywork and maintenance, as well as owned his own courier business for numerous years. Over the years, Raman has resided mainly in Northern California, with the exception of 6 years during which he lived in North Carolina with his family. Raman has one son, a successful musician/singer-songwriter, who currently lives in North Carolina.

Raman has been a member of the AFA for many years and is passionate about serving his fellow Assyrians. In the past, he served one term as Vice-President of the AFA. He is proud to be part of the team because he believes in the goal of helping needy and struggling Assyrians around the world. Raman is pleased to serve as the AFA Welfare Officer who helps to determine how and when funds are distributed to Assyrians in need.



Assyrian Princess Comes to the United States!

(Part 1 of 3)

by Christopher R. Nelson, Mar Shimun Memorial Foundation

1926 (using a photo from 1919), the American press of the twenties—preoccupied with woman's suffrage and all things Eastern and exotic—can be excused for exaggerating Surma's official political status; not to mention that of the phantasmal Assyrian "nation"/country itself. At the time this rehashed headline was reprinted, Surma Khanum (Lady Surma), as she was respectfully regarded, was in London advocating for an Assyrian homeland, uncertain if she would be continuing on to the United States. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, a fervid advocate of the Assyrians, had formulated an inter-denominational committee to raise funds for Assyrian relief and Surma Khanum—"Princess," "Ambassadress," "President"—was asked to lead the publicity tour. Over seven long months, she would visit over fifty cities in sixteen states across the country (including three Canadian cities), presenting the Assyrian plight to diverse groups of Americans, many of whom, to quote a colorful Irish reporter of the day, "... had thought the country and its people as extinct as the brontosaurus and the dodo, as dead as Nineveh and Jonah and his whale..."² Today's Assyrians know the empty-handed results of such attempts to secure a homeland in the Middle-East, but few are aware of Surma Khanum's significant role in these valiant but doomed efforts. This series of three articles fills in some of these missing gaps by focusing on the 1925-6 period during which the future of the Assyrian nation in Mesopotamia still hung in the balance.

Let us then travel back to the beginning of 1925. King Faisal of Iraq is meeting with representatives of the League of Nations Frontier Commission (sent in accordance with the

Treaty of Lausanne) in Baghdad. They are on a research mission to gather data and information about the disputed border region with Turkey, north of Mosul (Surma would also meet with them in early February). The Assyrian levies are engaged in sporadic skirmishes with Sheikh Mahmoud's Kurdish warriors in the Suleimania region (east of Kirkuk) on behalf of the British and Iraq government. Church of the East Metropolitan (of India), Mar Timotheus, at the behest of Mar Shimun, is in the United States presenting the needs of the Church (primarily, for theological schools and a printing press), to the Episcopal representatives there. The Patriarch, seventeen-year old Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, whose educational course had been agreed upon between Mar Timotheus and the Archbishop of Canterbury, is passing through Jerusalem on his way to England to attend his first year of college. And in Mosul, his aunt Surma Khanum is writing to the British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Dobbs, to remind him of his pledges of two years prior that Assyrian demands for autonomy would have his government's "... closest attention." She diplomatically relays the results of a recent meeting of Assyrian maliks (chiefs/leaders): "... They all agree in one accord, imploring the British government to emigrate them to one of their colonies which climate agrees with, so that the small remnant may live in peace, and work to keep their existence. At the same time, not at all ungrateful for all favours and help that Great Britain has bestowed most generously to the Assyrians in the time of their greatest need and sufferings."³

Up to this point Dobbs and the Colonial Office had been unsuccessful in locating a suitable country from their long, but ever-shrinking menu of colonial protectorates and dominions, let alone one that was willing to admit war refugees. The head of the Colonial Office in London, Secretary of State Leo S. Amery, personally sympathized with Surma and the Assyrian's desires, but his primary job was to ensure that Mosul, "... the most fertile and, since the subsequent oil discoveries, the richest part of the whole country," remain within the newly formed state of Iraq, and thus, under British control. The sine qua non, then, of any British help for the Assyrians would depend upon, "... The rapid improvement and training of

the Iraq Army in a short time to take the principal part in the maintenance of internal security and the control of the Iraq frontiers," with the not inconsequential result of reducing the British government's burdensome yearly expense of some three-million pounds in administering Mesopotamia.⁴

On the day she posted her letter to Dobbs in late March, Leo Amery and Sir Samuel Hoare (Sec. of State for Air) arrived for a personal inspection of the "Mosul muddle," as the British press was calling it. They met with Surma who expressed her fears that, without British support, the Iraqi Government wouldn't hesitate to scatter the Assyrians throughout villages in the Mosul vilayet. "If this plan is carried out I can only regard it as the final burial of our people," she told them.⁵ There were really only two acceptable options: Emigration out of Iraq, or a scheme for colonization supported and protected by the British.

Under no delusions as to British restraints and priorities, Surma Khanum was determined to lobby for a seat at the table of the decision-makers in Geneva; whether it be herself or a trustworthy representative.⁶ As she confided to Mrs. Edith Davidson, the Archbishop's wife, "... If there is not somebody to put the Assyrian cause strongly in the League, I fear that, having so big and important things to settle, our poor cause will be forgotten, or more likely will be soaked in Mosul oil."⁷ Fresh upon their return to London, Amery and Hoare met with the Archbishop and expressed their desire to do something for the Assyrians. Archbishop Davidson (no doubt, after talking with Mrs. Davidson) followed up with Surma on May 29th to inform her how impressed Amery and Hoare had been with her "appreciation of the perplexities of the problem," and asked if she was willing to go to Geneva to represent the Assyrian voice at the League's impending Frontier Commission. Before signing off, he provided encouraging updates about Mar Eshai who had recently accompanied him to Canterbury Cathedral for a large ceremonial funeral service in honor of Viscount Milner, former Sec. of State for Colonies. His Holiness, he added, was "getting on well" and "very popular"⁸ at St. Augustine's. The cheerful prospect of visiting with Mar Shimun no doubt factored into her decision whether or not to leave Iraq for the West again.



Surma Passport 1925



Aquitania Southampton



LIST OF MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE VESSEL									
S.S. AQUITANIA. Passengers sailing from Southampton, 10th March 1926.									
No.	Name	Age	Sex	Birthplace	Occupation	Remarks	No.	Name	Age
1	Mr. J. H. Smith	45	M	England	Engineer		11	Mr. A. B. Jones	35
2	Mrs. J. H. Smith	42	F	England	Housewife		12	Mr. C. D. Brown	28
3	Miss J. H. Smith	15	F	England	Student		13	Mrs. E. F. Green	30
4	Mr. G. H. White	50	M	Scotland	Teacher		14	Mr. F. G. Black	40
5	Mrs. G. H. White	48	F	Scotland	Housewife		15	Miss F. G. Black	18
6	Mr. I. J. Black	38	M	Ireland	Farmer		16	Mr. H. I. White	25
7	Mrs. I. J. Black	35	F	Ireland	Housewife		17	Mr. J. K. Green	32
8	Mr. K. L. Green	22	M	France	Student		18	Mrs. K. L. Green	20
9	Mrs. K. L. Green	20	F	France	Student		19	Mr. L. M. Brown	27
10	Mr. L. M. Brown	25	M	France	Student		20	Mrs. L. M. Brown	23

Aquitania Manifest Mar 10, 1926

When the anxiously awaited League report was publicly issued on August 7th, 1925, Assyrian hopes of returning to their Hakkari homes were all but dashed. The writers recommended the placement of the region north of the temporary border above Mosul known as "The Brussels Line," firmly into the hands of Turkey, while the area south (i.e., the Mosul vilayet), and Iraq itself, would remain under British mandate for a theoretical twenty-five year transition period. Formal discussion and review of this report, which managed to satisfy none of the parties involved, was scheduled to take place at The League of Nations Enquiry Commission in Geneva beginning September 1st.

Within days a red-wax sealed envelope labelled, "On His Majesty's Service," in bold black letters, magically appeared at Surma's door: "Dear Lady Surma, ... Sir Samuel cabled me this morning that the Archbishop advises you to go to Geneva. I have provisionally arranged for a passage for you on the air mail leaving here on the 19th August ...—Air Headquarters, British Forces in Iraq (Baghdad)."⁹ Packed and ready bright and early at the appointed day and time, Surma Khanum was at the R.A.F. airstrip at Hinaidi, Baghdad where she boarded a twin-engine Vickers Vernon for the twelve-hour flight to Cairo—"the only civilian allowed this privilege" according to a British official—from where she was either flown or taken by boat to Marseille, France. From there she boarded the train to Geneva. En route, as the magnificent French-Swiss countryside passed through the window, she re-read the Archbishop's benediction to her undertaking: "We pray God that your presence in Geneva may be of real use to the plans we hope for as regard the settlement of your people in Iraq. I am certain that it is wise that you should be available in Geneva for settling before the authorities the needs and possibilities of the Assyrians."¹⁰

Arriving in Geneva on September 1st she was met by long-time friend Georges S. Reed and his wife. Reed, an ex-missionary of the Archbishop's Assyrian Mission (1905-1915), had seen her off in Basra, Iraq for her first trip to England in 1919. The Reeds drove Surma to the Hotel Russie, situated not far from



Archbishop of Canterbury,
Randall Davidson & Edith Davidson



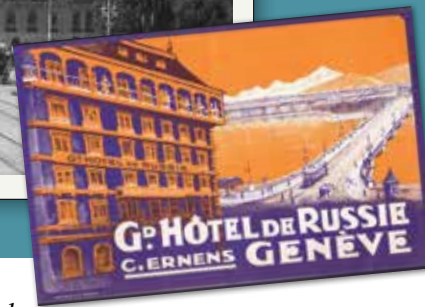
Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, Jan, 1926



Surma Khanum, London, 1925



Hotel Russie, Geneva, circa 1905



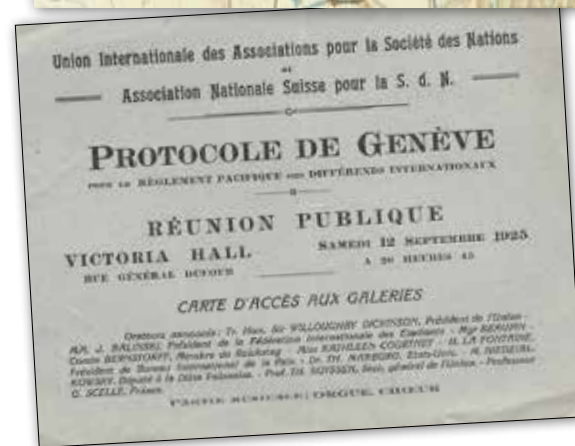
the League Secretariat on the Quai du Mont-Blanc, facing Geneva harbor where the Rhone flows into Lac Lemman. The salubrious autumn alpine air and vistas of snow-capped Mont Blanc reminded her of the Patriarchal See of Qudshanis. She and the Reeds somberly reflected on the ten extraordinarily painful years that had passed since she last saw her home. A period in which over a quarter-million Assyrians (between a third and half of the total population) had lost their lives in the Turkish organized genocide during the war.¹¹ Four of her brothers and many close relations had perished. The survivors were now refugees wanting nothing more than to go home and rebuild their lives. These tragic losses weighed heavily and though she sensed the increasing impossibility of winning back their Hakkari homes, Surma Khanum wasn't about to let the League representatives, or anyone else for that matter, forget the Assyrians. Within the first several days she requested personal meetings with three committee chairmen: Aristide Briand (French Foreign Minister), Bo Osten Unden (Swedish Foreign Minister), and Edvard Benes (Czech Foreign Minister). Whether or not Briand or Unden found time in their busy schedules to talk informally with her or not is unknown, but Edvard Benes of the Czech delegation promised his personal support for the "aspirations of the Assyro-Chaldean people and their rights" at the opportune occasion.¹²

Meanwhile, British delegate Leo Amery, was battling with Tewfik Rushdi Pasha of Turkey over borders and boundaries. Straight out of the gate, Tewfik charged the British with staging military demonstrations to exert influence over the Mosul provisional boundary. When pressed as to the well-being and security of Kurds and Assyrians on their side of the border, Tewfik refused to provide any assurance. In contrast, Amery promised protection for the Assyrians, so long as they were placed under Iraq's sovereignty. He even made a last-ditch effort for an expansion of the Iraq border north of the Brussels Line that would include the Hakkari, or at least part of it. Tewfik responded with cool indifference. Perhaps because at that very moment Turkish military forces were violently expelling some eight-thousand (Syriac Orthodox) Assyrians from the Goyan region, just north of the Line.¹³

Shots had been exchanged between patrols of Iraq and Turkish military north-west of Zakho and news-headlines announcing imminent war flashed across the world. Sir Samuel Hoare commented to the Colonial Office that the Turkish rationale for this timing and action could only be explained by a calculated attempt to create an unfavorable situation on the frontier so as to provoke a plebiscite, or popular vote, on the issue (an Arab majority populated the region). This latest aggression was therefore seen for what it was, a prelude to punitive action against the last of the Assyrian "rebels" remaining in Turkish territory.

Before Surma Khanum was even scheduled to meet with

Brussels Line



Union Internationale des Associations 1925

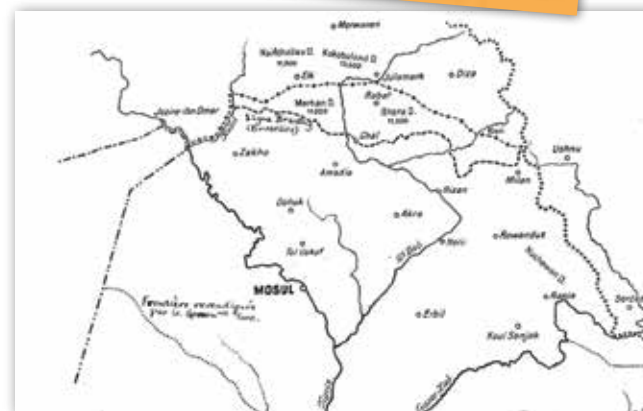
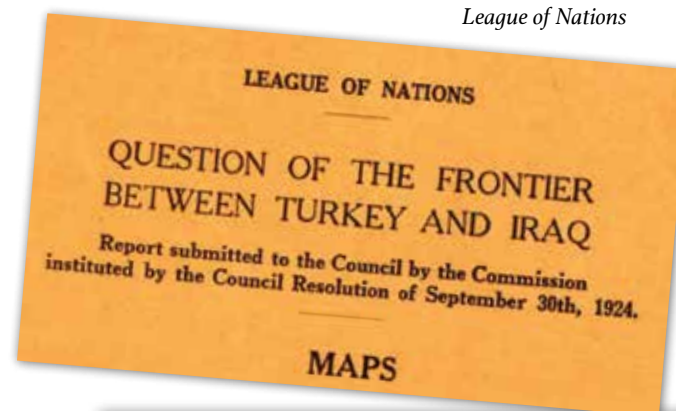
League officials, the contentious dispute had to be handed off to the Hague for an advisory opinion regarding procedural issues raised by the Turks. Undeterred, Surma managed to secure an audience with League officials at 10:30 am on September 22nd. Georges Reed and his wife escorted her along the Geneva waterfront to the League Secretariat. Though the discussion seems to have been undocumented, it's safe to say she told them what she told the Women's International League of London a month later: "We do not ask Great Britain to let us revenge ourselves on the Turks. We only ask to be assured of peace, and above all of security. It has always been the great wish of the Assyrians to be under British rule, and all they desire now is that they may be permitted to settle in the healthy, open country north of Mosul, where they can maintain their own language, religion,

and schools, free from Turkish interference. Our people fought on the side of the Allies during the Great War, and we only ask in return that the little remnant now left of our nation may continue in peace and liberty."¹⁴ Reed testified to the powerful "... impression she made on the greats of this world gathered there," adding that, "... she had the stature of a queen among them and Rabbi Dr. Browne would have been proud of her."¹⁵

Surma Khanum's mission in Geneva accomplished, she took a train to the French port-town of Calais and boarded the ferry for the Channel crossing to Dover, England on the 26th. Surma's frank discussions with Amery and Hoare, her presence in Geneva, and her persistent appeals to Christian conscience inspired Archbishop Davidson to action. On September 28th, he called upon Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, who publicly promised his Government would not lose sight of "this important aspect of the problem."¹⁶ Another public appeal from the Archbishop followed a week later, and from this, a special Assyrian and Iraq Christians Committee was formed under the leadership of Sir Henry Lunn. Described by a Canadian reporter as a "visiting British knight, European tourist organizer, and apostle of unity among churches and brotherhood among nations,"¹⁷ Lunn, together with Amery, suggested bringing on board long-time Assyrian advocates like Lord Cecil, Dr. Wigram, Rev. Heazell, and of course, Surma Khanum herself (who was then staying as a guest of Canon Mason at Canterbury). Out of this committee sprouted the idea of a fundraising tour in America, to be organized by their Episcopalian colleagues in New York.

Within days, the Archbishop cabled Surma Khanum to officially request her presence in the United States. A second cable followed the next day from William Chauncey Emhardt, Field Director of the American Episcopal Church. Emhardt, whom Surma had met on his visit to Mosul in the summer of 1924 to discuss potential Assyrian emigration to America, and Mar Shimun's educational plans, also informed her that she'd soon be receiving correspondence between himself and Mar Timotheus regarding the latter's claims that the Patriarchal Family had made him patriarchal "regent" (as opposed to "qa-

League of Nations



Brussels Line



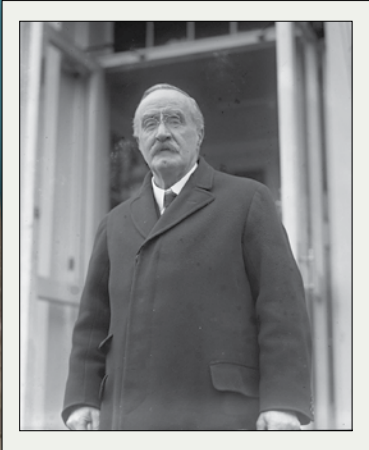
Samuel Hoare



Leo S. Amery



Leo Amery, Geneva, 1925



Sir Henry Lunn



BBC London, Feb 17, 1926



Lord Cecil Geneva 1925



Lady Surma, London, 1925



Surma d'Mar Shimun, London, 1925

yoma,” or representative/plenipotentiary) in October of 1920. Quickly thereafter, a third telegram arrived, this one from the Assyrians in Chicago who felt slighted by Mar Timotheus’ suspension of two priests and ordination of another of his choosing. It read: “*Kindly visit America. Your command will be honored by all parts. Church needs you for organization. Others fail.*”¹⁸ Her fundraising tour of America had suddenly taken on the added dimension of peace mission amongst her own people.

On the 21st of November, the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague re-confirmed the League’s authority to make a definitive determination about the frontier issue between Turkey and Iraq, and that this decision would be made through majority voting process. The Turkish delegates stalled for time by refusing to vote, claiming to require unanimous approval from their National Assembly back in Angora first. They were over-ruled. Silence would be a no-vote, and so they would be bound by the League’s ruling.

Surma Khanum wasn’t one to passively wait around for the League’s verdict on her countrymen’s fate, or for final confirmation of her trip to America. She had more meetings with the Archbishop and others during this time, attended the opening of Parliament by the King and Queen, and sat in on a debate in the House of Commons over the new Anglo-Iraq Treaty.¹⁹ She held speaking engagements at several events arranged by Lunn’s Relief Committee that included church gatherings, clubs, schools, women’s groups, and even radio (on Wednesday, February 17th, at 7:40 pm, sandwiched between Beethoven and Chopin, Surma Khanum introduced thousands of London listeners of the BBC to “Assyrian Christians”).²⁰ She also caught up with Mar Shimun at Canterbury, filling him in on all that had transpired, especially with regards to Mar Timotheus.

As a new year was underway and snow drifted down on London, Surma received confirmation of her worst fears from her brother Rab Khaila Dawid (Commander in the Assyrian Levies, and father of Mar Eshai). He related intelligence that the Iraqi Government was indeed making plans to scatter the

Assyrians willy-nilly in villages across Iraq. She lamented in her diary: “*Dear Lord, what will happen to these poor Assyrians among the politics of the world.*”²¹ After several long walks over the next couple of weeks, and much prayer in the evenings, she debated whether her presence back in Mosul or in America would be more beneficial. Her people had failed to achieve autonomy through either military or diplomatic means. That left one untried option: capital. If enough money could be raised they might be able to purchase enough land from the Kurds in the North for a homeland. Lunn had made a public appeal for one-hundred thousand pounds (about half-a-million dollars) with which to do this. His Committee had so far managed to raise over twenty-thousand pounds (in no small part due to Surma’s efforts), which was helping the Goyan refugees in Zakho and others in Mosul. If this kind of money could be raised in war-depleted, downtrodden England then surely the prosperous bandwagon of America would be willing to contribute. Still, five-hundred thousand dollars seemed a tall order. She reminded herself that the Hakkari mountaineers had surmounted impossible odds against their very existence four-times as long as the United States had been a country, and that hope alone was not a survival strategy. And then there was the troubling rift in Chicago . . . She wrote to Dr. Emhardt in New York on January 29th agreeing to come to America.

As a prelude to her lectures in the U.S., she told a gathered crowd of influential personalities at London’s Mansion House on February 1st: “*Alas, we have no homes, but there is much land in Iraq where we could settle ourselves if only the League of Nations would make up their mind that we have a right to some place to live. We are independent people and do not wish to live on alms all our lives. Idleness is bad for every nation. We are an ancient civilisation, and we do not want our nation to die. We want a means to live.*”²²

Anxious Assyrians in Mosul, after having digested the disappointing League results issued in mid-December, had written and signed another petition: “*. . . Our mind is not changed and our requests are the same [as the] first one which has been submitted to your Excellency, i.e. either our small lands under the British Mandate, be returned at any possible way, if not, we beg to emigrate us to any of the British Colonies [where] the climate and*

water would suit us, and [where] we would be relieved from our anxieties, miseries and dark future; because in Iraq we cannot live in any way. As our request is simple and we are a very small nation (or family), we trust that the British Government will take a kind action, and we shall be granted one of the two humble requests. We believe that our request will be heard and will receive a favourable reply.”²³ Surma received and translated this petition from Mosul, handing it over to the Archbishop for presentation to the British Government on the 28th. The following week, she returned to Canterbury with Dean George Bell to visit with Mar Shimun. She proudly watched him conduct Holy Communion at St. Augustine’s chapel alongside two English deacons, fondly recalling guiding him through his very first communions and church consecrations in the Assyrian villages of Amadia five years earlier. Next morning, her passport arrived from the American Consul.

Back in London, she attended communion at the Church of St. Philip where the Priest requested a prayer from the congregation for her safe and peaceful trip. Sir Samuel Hoare had left a note for her at Lambeth: “*I write to wish you every success in your journey to America. You can rely on Mr. Amery and myself to do everything in our power to ensure fair treatment for your people.*”²⁴ On the 8th, with Mar Shimun in attendance, she talked over her travel plans one final time with the Archbishop, and Bishop Charles Gore recited a poem in her honor. A farewell luncheon was held for her at the National Liberal Club at Whitehall Place, hosted by Lunn’s Assyrians and Iraq Christians Committee the following afternoon.

On the morning of the 10th she boarded the S.S. Aquitania in Southampton and at 1pm the clanging of a bell announced their departure. Surma Khanum stood on deck beside fellow passengers observing several steam-billowing tugs guide the majestic ship from the quay. Such unity of purpose, she knew, was the only way the divided denominations of her people would ever launch a nation of their own. Lines were slackened, tossed into the water and reeled in. Vibrations rippled across the deck as the giant propellers began churning below; black

coal smoke billowed out of the four red cylindrical smokestacks. The “Ship Beautiful,” as she was affectionately known, slowly slipped away from England, then glided forth as a series of deep guttural horn blasts shouted independence from shore. The fluttering dove handkerchiefs and waving hands of the anonymous English men and women on the dock shrunk into the distance. “Princess, Ambassadors, President” Surma Khanum was on her way to America.

(To Be Continued . . .)

¹“Lady Surma of Assyria,” *Portage Daily Register*, 02 Dec, 1925, 32; 30 Jan, 1926, 4.
²“Belfast Rotary Club—A Problem of the Middle East,” *Northern Whig*, 2 Jul, 1924, 9.
³Surma d'Mar Shimun to Sir Henry Dobbis, 7 Jan, 1925. SurmaCorr: Mar Shimun Memorial Foundation Archives.
⁴Amery, L.S. *My Political Life, Vol 2: 1914-1929*. London: Hutchinson, 1953. 307-310; *British Colonial Report* (1925), 12.
⁵Surma to L.S. Amery, 9 May, 1925. SurmaCorr: MSMF Archives.
⁶9 May, & 12 May, 1925. SurmaCorr: MSMF Archives. Note: American missionary E.W. McDowell was considered.
⁷Surma to Edith Davidson. 31 Mar, 1925 in Bell, G.K.A., *Randall Davidson Archbishop of Canterbury*, vol. 2. (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 1189.
⁸Randall Davidson to Surma, 29 May, 1925. SurmaCorr: MSMF Archives.
⁹British Air HQ to Surma, 07 Aug, 1925. *Ibid*.
¹⁰Randall Davidson to Surma, 22 Aug, 1925. *Ibid*.
¹¹David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors, Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I*, (New Jersey: Gorgias Pres, 2006), 300-1.
¹²V. Finersly to Surma, 17 Sep, 1925. SurmaCorr: MSMF Archives.
¹³Note: None of these people had taken up arms against the Turks in World War I.
¹⁴“An Assyrian Woman Ambassador,” *The Vote* (London), 29 Jan, 1926, 1 & 2.
¹⁵Georges S. Reed, “La Mission de L'Archeveque de Cantorbéry Aupres des Chrétiens Assyriens,” *Le Monde Non Chretien* 84 (Oct-Dec, 1967): 31. Note: W.H. Browne, Anglican missionary to the Assyrians (1886-1910) had tutored Surma in her youth.
¹⁶Bell, G.K.A., 1189-90.
¹⁷“Unhesitating Adhesion Urged by Sir Henry S. Lunn to Secure World Peace,” *The Gazette*, Montreal, 3 Mar, 1926, 5.
¹⁸Rev. George Azoo; Rev. Nestoris Malick; Baba Badal; M. Sargis to Surma. 5 Dec, 1925. SurmaCorr: MSMF Archives.
¹⁹Feb 2, and Feb. 18, 1926 respectively. SurmaDiary: MSMF Archives; *British Parliament* (HC) 191, 18 Feb, 1926.
²⁰*RadioTimes*, BBC (#125), 12 Feb, 1926, (19:40) 12.
²¹Surma, 4 Jan, 1926. SurmaDiary: MSMF Archives.
²²“Lectures & Meetings. Assyrians & Iraq Christians Committee,” *The Times* (London), 26 Jan, 1926, 12; “Plight of Iraq Christians,” *The Guardian* (London), 2 Feb, 1926, 12.
²³League of Nations (R610/11): 50818/25888.
²⁴Sir Samuel Hoare to Surma, 7 Mar, 1926 in Shimun XXIII, Mar Eshai, *The Assyrian Tragedy*. (Annemasse, 1934), 21.

THE GENOCIDE CHRONICLES

By Professor Arianne Ishaya

This column commemorates the survivors of the WWI Assyrian genocide who came to America, worked hard, and made many contributions to their adopted country.

The family histories of the Assyrian old-timers were collected by Arianne Ishaya, professor of anthropology, in Turlock in 1981-1982.

Yonatan Paul
Date of Interview: 4/12/'82

Yonatan (Jonathan) was 81 at the time he shared his experience. He was one of the refugees who managed to migrate to USA in the early 20's. He had lived in Chicago the greater part of his life. In 1960 he married and made Turlock his permanent home.

I was born in the village of Degala, Urmia in 1901. My father was a carpenter. He had been to America and back. He had lived in Yonkers for seven years. I was 13 when World War I started. I remember everything. When I was a child I always dreamt of going to America. I did not want to stay in Iran because I had seen so much meanness. On our farm we had a Muslim caretaker who looked after it when pa was out of the country. He used to plough, irrigate, and harvest it. Once when I was thirsty I drank some water from a jug. The caretaker said I had desecrated the jug, and it had to be thrown away. So we had to pay for it. I asked my mother "We take baths, and we are clean, he never does. Why am I dirty?" She said "Son, this is how their religion is." From that day on, I decided I would not live in a place like this.

When the war started the Russians had a contingent in Urmia. As long as they were there we were safe. The local Turks did not dare to molest us. But in 1915 when they retreated, then the Muslims descended upon our villages and pillaged them. In our village many were killed. But from my family no one was killed; only the house was stripped of all its furnishings. We had a well-furnished home with Persian carpets and all. We just saved our lives and ran to town. We had a Turkish landlord. He gave us shelter until the Russians returned to Urmi. But they retreated again in the summer of 1917. It then became necessary to vacate the town. We walked the distance to Hamadan and Kermanshah under very difficult circumstances. I stayed without any food for more than three days. When we reached the British contingent they took us to Hamadan. My father had died three months earlier. I had a mother, a sister, and a brother who was younger than I. The Assyrian mountaineers and the plains men who were armed to protect us, were not very close. The former were courageous and they fell ahead instead of staying behind to protect the back of the procession. So wherever they reached, they pillaged the villages and when we got there, almost nothing was left to eat. They only helped themselves. When we reached Sain Qala, Agha Petros tried to convince the armed men to stay behind the line; but no one listened. "Each for his own" was the spirit. As we reached Hamadan, I was walking in the bazaar when British soldiers apprehended me and said that I had to enlist in the army. I was 16 then. They took a bunch of us to a village. It was very cold and we were without food or clothing. There were about 2000-3000 of us aged from 16-25. After a few weeks I deserted and ran away. The British were not able to get provisions. They were

giving us a kind of bread that looked like manure. It was inedible. During daytime-this was late August-when it was sunny, it was warm. But Hamadan is situated on the foothills of the Zagros Mountains. During the night the temperature dropped and it was very cold. When they caught me it was daytime and I was in a light shirt. We were so cold and so hungry that whenever we made a fire, I used to take the warm rocks and press them on my chest at night. They drilled us every day. One day two boys from my village and I held a meeting and the three of us decided to ask the guards who were highland Assyrians, to let us go. We told them we were hungry and wanted to get to a close-by vineyard and pick some grapes. We said we would return. The guard knew we were hungry. He felt sorry for us and let us go. I came to Hamadan. My mother had rented a room there. She would not let me out of her sight from then on. After a few weeks word came that whoever wanted to leave Hamadan, could go to Kermanshah, and the British would care for them. Since we had spent all the money we had, we decided to go. Some stayed permanently in Hamadan. They received no relief; but there was an American Mission there that helped them. On the way the British were taking men of my age to the army camp. My mother heard and dressed me like a woman until we reached the Iraqi border. There the British put the women in these big trucks called Lorries. But the men had to walk up to the railroad. There we boarded freight trains until we got to Baqubah.

Yonatan Paul, whose story we read above, was a very knowledgeable person with excellent memory. He was in a supervisory position in the camps, and later in Assyrian organizations in the Diaspora.

Yonatan Paul: The British had a very good system. They divided us into sections; each consisting of 1200-1300 families. There was an Armenian section,

a highlander section, and a section for the Urmia people. Ours was section 22. In every section there were 3-4 British enlisted men and one commissioned officer in charge of the administration of that section. They had an office there. After some time when General Austin was recalled and replaced by Colonel Owen [Cunliffe-Owen], the instructions were to reduce the cost of operation. This was in 1919. These officers had men like me working for them. I was the bellman and the interpreter. I had learned a little English in Degala. The British officers liked me because they saw that I was eager to learn. They taught me. They gave me newspapers and a dictionary. Every week they had to write a report indicat-

**"WE WERE SO COLD
AND SO HUNGRY THAT
WHENEVER WE MADE A
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PRESS THEM ON MY
CHEST AT NIGHT"**

ing demographical changes: arrivals, deaths, army recruits, etc. They sent it to the headquarters. When the British were removed from administrative tasks, we replaced them. We stayed in Baquba until the British decided to move us to Mindan. We reached Baquba in August 1918 and left on March 1920. If it was not for the British my family would have starved. People complained as if the British owed us something; but I had no ill feelings and obeyed what they said. As I was the interpreter, sometimes I was put

in a difficult position. The refugee men would complain that they were put to work. The work was for 10-15 men to push carts on the railroad track up to the headquarters, fill them up with provisions, bring them back to the camps, and divide them among the sections. Now, that was free food, carried on rails; even that they did not want to do. They would hide away. So they faced stiff punishment. They were sent away for two weeks to carry dirt filled bags on their back. Another problem: the tents were very large; there were 30-40 people living in each. The British asked us to lift the edges every morning to refresh the air in the tent. They would not do that. Yet another problem: it was not allowed to cook near tents to prevent fire hazards. There was a special place for cooking. But some would not listen. There were two

kinds of water. One kind was pumped by machines from the Diyala River. That was reserved in tanks. It was treated water for drinking. But for washing, there was the river water. They would use water indiscriminately. The British were exasperated. I had to come up with excuses to pacify them.

One way to cut costs was to replace the British with the Assyrians. I became section supervisor. Only one British officer was left to oversee the whole area. They began to replace imported food with local food. They even tried to persuade us to grow some produce. But Baquba was a desert area and lacked sufficient water.

So they did not succeed. People did not want to try hard either. So when World War I ended Kernel Owen asked me to instruct the people that the British could not care for us forever. Now it was time that we became self-sufficient. The British said they would take us to Mosul from where we could return to our own country. They said that they had made arrangements with the Persian government and the Turks would not pose a threat. Nevertheless they armed men like me to protect ourselves. We were to front the procession back to Urmi. The

highlanders did not want to go to Iran, they wanted to return back to their own homes in the Hak-kari Mountains. But at the time their homes were under Turkish possession and the Turks would not consent to their return. There was a British officer; his name was Gibson. He thought he was responsible for them. But they did not listen to him. They began to sell their ammunitions each acting individually. Gibson became so desperate that he committed suicide and Aga Petros' expedition to retake the Highlanders' homes back from Turkey failed.

In Mindan food was not good. Also men of fighting age were separated from the rest. When we were in Baquba the Arabs did not dare to attack us. We had two battalions numbering 2000 armed

men in Baquba. The men were trained by the British. But when the British moved us in groups to Mindan, those who were left behind came under Arab attack. I left Mindan and went to Baghdad. I worked for the British Civil Service as a store-keeper for the supply center for 8 months before I got a visa for America. But my mother and sister stayed in Mindan. My brother was in the army; but he had almost starved and had fever. So he deserted and joined me in Baghdad. I had a khaloo (uncle) in Chicago; he sponsored me. The documents for sponsorship required a letter from the place of employment, one from the bank, and one

from the church. Before leaving Baghdad I went to Dr. McDowell, the American Missionary. He gave me a letter to take to the president of the YMCA in Bombay, whose name was Dr. Monroe. He would see to it that we got our tickets and send us on our way. We stayed 5-6 months in Bombay. There were a lot of Assyrians stranded there. Ocean liners were in short supply. The war had just ended and soldiers were given priority to travel back to their homes. When we left Bombay

there were 23 Assyrians on board. In Italy we were sent to the city of Trieste, on the Adriatic because overseas transportation was not available in Naples. Other Assyrians arrived in the meantime. The numbers swelled to 83. The Italians called us Persi. For breakfast, lunch, and dinner we were served macaroni and wine over and over. It was in our contract that the liner had to pay for our expenses until we reached N.Y. In Naples they tried to avoid paying for our hotel. But I was instructed by Dr. Monroe of my rights and he told me to see the American Consul if they try to abrogate the terms of the contract. So they conceded. From Trieste we came to New York. It took 23 days. The route was from the Adriatic to the Mediterranean Sea, to Gibraltar, to the Atlantic Ocean, and then to New York.

“THE BRITISH SAID THEY WOULD TAKE US TO MOSUL FROM WHERE WE COULD RETURN TO OUR OWN COUNTRY. THEY SAID THAT THEY HAD MADE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE PERSIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE TURKS WOULD NOT POSE A THREAT.”

Pope's trip to Iraq: Hope for endangered Eastern Christians

By Joseph Yacoub* Courtesy of Le Figaro

France Credit: Fabien Clairefond Date of publication: March 5, 2021

Translated from French by Elizabeth Mickaily-Huber, Ph.D.

An exceptional event will take place from March 5 to 8: the first apostolic visit of a pope to Iraq, a nation ravaged by successive wars and a country plagued by crises and attacks, where the destruction of radical Islamism has been monstrous in recent years, especially against Yazidis and Christians. Twenty years ago, John Paul II nearly went there, but had to give it up.

Francis will tread on a land of covenant, holy and highly symbolic, A land that is the birthplace of the patriarchal figure Abraham, spiritual father of believers, who came out of ancient Ur in Chaldea, located in the southern part of the country. Here, the Pope will visit and participate in an interfaith meeting. For the record, we owe the discoveries in Chaldea to British and French archaeologists: Sir Leonard Woolley and François Thureau-Dangin.

Iraq is also one of the holy places of Shiite Islam, the center of which is in Najaf, 200 km south of Baghdad. There, the Pope will have an unprecedented meeting with Ayatollah al-Sistani, the highest Shiite authority and highly respected figure in the country.

In four days, several trips are planned: Baghdad, Najaf, Ur, Arbel, Mosul and Qaraqosh. Contrary to popular belief, the Church in Iraq (formerly Mesopotamia) does not owe its existence to Latin missionaries at all. On the contrary, she is indigenous and apostolic, having played a leading role in the propagation of the Christian message in Asia, even in China, long before the arrival of Western missionaries. This was the epic journey of the “Nestorians”. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that “people of Mesopotamia” were among the witnesses of Pentecost. And when the public asked Jesus to show them a sign from heaven, he referred to the people of Nineveh (present-day Mosul) who repented upon the message brought from God by the prophet Jonah.

Dating back to the time of the apostle Thomas, this branch of Iraqi Christianity came into being, so deep are its roots and so dense are its fields and domains of activity. Need we remember that Christians have greatly participated in western civilization, providing scholars and martyrs? Their history comes under various names: Assyrians, Syriacs, Orthodox and Catholics... Today, however, there is a drastic decrease in their influence and number. Christians are estimated to be around 300,000 in Iraq currently, compared to more than 1 million before 2003! Clearly, there exists a parallel between the plight of these Christians and the forced exodus of Iraqi Jews. The country was emptied, under duress and repression, of its Jewish population after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Is it now the turn of the Christians?

Such a rich vestige of Christianity is threatened with gradual extinction. Brother Najeeb Michael, a Dominican Chaldean, known to have saved the manuscripts of Mosul (who became archbishop of this diocese in 2018), drew a parallel with the genocide of 1915. “In 1915, the Ottomans did exactly the same thing as ISIS,” he declared to Le Figaro on December 26, 2016. We should therefore not be surprised if the exodus – on a massive scale – is the consequence of these persecutions. Today there are many more Iraqi Christians in the diaspora (in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Europe) than in



Honorary professor of political science, at the Catholic University of Lyon, deciphers the stakes of a visit to a region where Christianity has had a major civilizational importance, but where its faithful are threatened.

their native land.

The Holy See has always taken a careful look at this battered Christendom and has shown solidarity in every way. Its diplomacy defends Eastern Christians, a major focus of its bilateral and multilateral action is to inform the international community and to urge the United States and other great powers to protect them and preserve their presence there. In return, the Vatican is seen by these Christians as a supporting force that comforts them, helping them to feel that they are not abandoned. By meeting with Arab leaders and Muslim religious authorities, the Holy See is also working to improve their conditions, calling for reconciliation between peoples, and for Islamic-Christian dialogue.

Although Pope Francis continues along the line of his predecessors, he nevertheless brings something new. He was the first pope to recognize, in a homily on April 12, 2015, the genocide that struck Syriac Catholics and Orthodox, Assyrians and Chaldeans, along with Armenians, in 1915.

Francis is particularly attached to the “venerable” Eastern Churches and insists on making “their treasures known to the Western world”. Faced with the divisions that once weakened the Church, the Pope goes so far as to admit the diversity of interpretations of the first councils, which are the origin of schisms. In this sense, he has strengthened ties with non-Catholic Churches, including the Syriac Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church, as well as the Coptic Church. In this way, new steps are taken on the path – albeit a long one – of full communion among Christians.

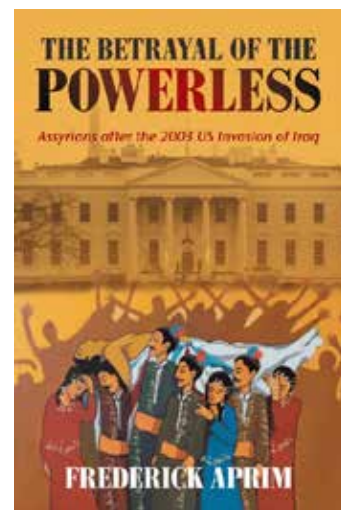
Regarding Islam, his speech at the International Peace Conference, at the influential institution of Sunni Islam, al-Azhar (Cairo), on April 28, 2017, asked some substantive questions to promote dialogue between Islam and Christianity. In the same vein, the Pope signed in Abu Dhabi, along with Sheikh al-Azhar, Ahmed al-Tayeb, on February 4, 2019, a document on human brotherhood. But what will he say in Iraq? Faced with an Islam, this time predominantly Shiite, what will be his speech? Will the exchange with Ayatollah al-Sistani result in a statement like the one from Abu Dhabi? Christians do not want to be turned into vestiges, as has been the case in other countries. What will the Pope say to them and what will be his real power? Let's hope that his visit can reinvigorate this eastern branch of Christianity and help guarantee Iraq's Christians with a future and hope.

** Last published works: A threatened diversity. Eastern Christians in the Face of Arab Nationalism and Islam (Salvator, 2018) and The Syriac Middle East. The unknown face of Eastern Christians (Salvator, 2019)*

NOTEWORTHY BOOKS

The Betrayal of the Powerless by Frederick Aprim

The indigenous Assyrians, Yezidis and the other smaller groups in Iraq were jubilant listening to United States President Bush explain the objectives behind the 2003 war on Iraq, promising to end the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein and securing freedom for all Iraqi people, regardless of their ethnicity or religious belief. It did not take long before the Assyrians began witnessing a genocide and yet another betrayal (the first was that promise made by of the British post World War I) when the US deserted the indigenous Assyrians and Yezidis and surrendered to the demands of the Shi'a Arabs and the Kurds. The continuous attacks on the Assyrian Christians in Iraq and bombing of churches started in 2004 and intensified through 2011. In 2014, ISIS invaded the Assyrian and Yezidi towns in northern Iraq (and in Syria) and caused a new tragedy and genocide while the Kurds and Shi'a strengthened their positions in the new Iraq.

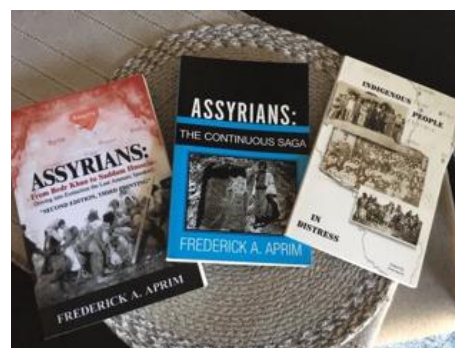


Mr. Aprim provides in his book, *The Betrayal of the Powerless: Assyrians After 2003 US Invasion of Iraq*, a lucid outline and analysis of the events after the fall of Saddam Hussein and the rise of the ambitious Kurdish power in the region inhabited by Iraq's indigenous population of Assyrians. According to the Author, the American policy in Iraq after the two Gulf Wars brought no end to their marginalized political power. In fact, it unleashed other internal and external actors who further deteriorated their status as the oldest inhabitants of Mesopotamia. This is an essential reading in order to fully understand the condition of the Assyrians under Kurdish, Arab and Islamic rules and the challenges faced by Assyrians in Iraq, Syria and perhaps soon in Iran. Mr. Aprim, with this work introduces the reader to the historical and current reality told by a person who knows the socio-ethnic-cultural environment of the different ethnic groups of Mesopotamia and their neighbours. The concise description of the events reflects a deep knowledge on behalf of the author of the modern history of the Assyrians.

- Prof. Dr. Efrem Yildiz Vice-Rector for International Relations, University of Salamanca, Spain

In his new book Frederick Aprim offers a detailed survey of the plight suffered by the Assyrians of Iraq in the 21st century. It details how the American invasion in 2003 stirred up renewed hope for liberation, resettlement and even self-determination among this indigenous minority, only to be crushed once again as discrimination and the horrors unleashed by ISIS in 2014 caused renewed waves of emigration. Today, fewer Assyrians than ever before in history remain in their ancestral areas. Aprim's work offers an important insider perspective to anyone who wishes to understand the current state and future outlook of the Assyrians in Iraq and the Middle East.

- Prof. Aryo Makko, Professor of History and Director of the Hans Blix Centre for the History of International Relations at Stockholm University, 2020



Mr. Aprim's previously published books are available for purchase through Amazon.com

To order go to:

1. <http://www.amazon.com> and type Frederick Aprim in the search bar.
2. www.xlibris.com/en/bookstore and type Frederick Aprim in the search bar.

COLLECTION
COMPRENDRE LE MOYEN-ORIENT





LES ASSYRO-CHALDÉENS
Mémoires d'une tragédie qui se répète
Joseph Yacoub

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LES ASSYRO-CHALDÉENS

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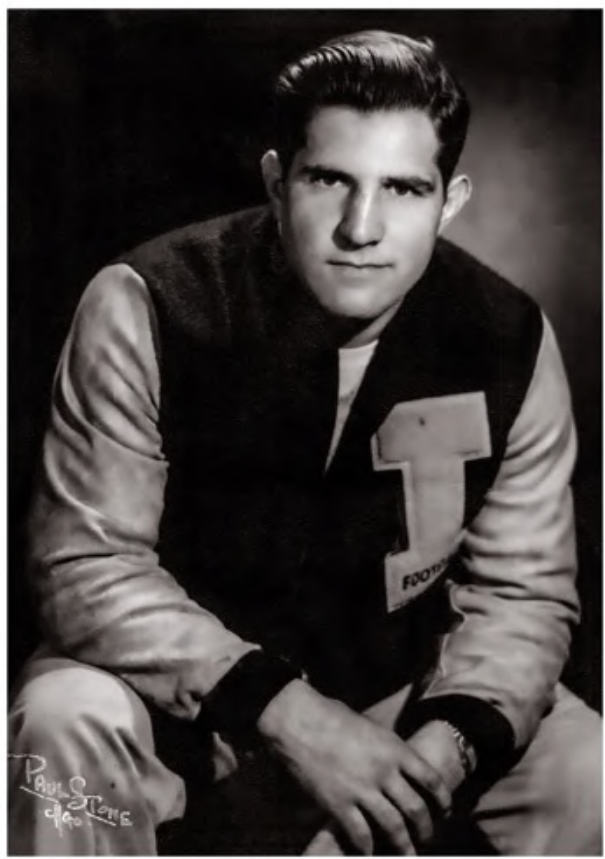
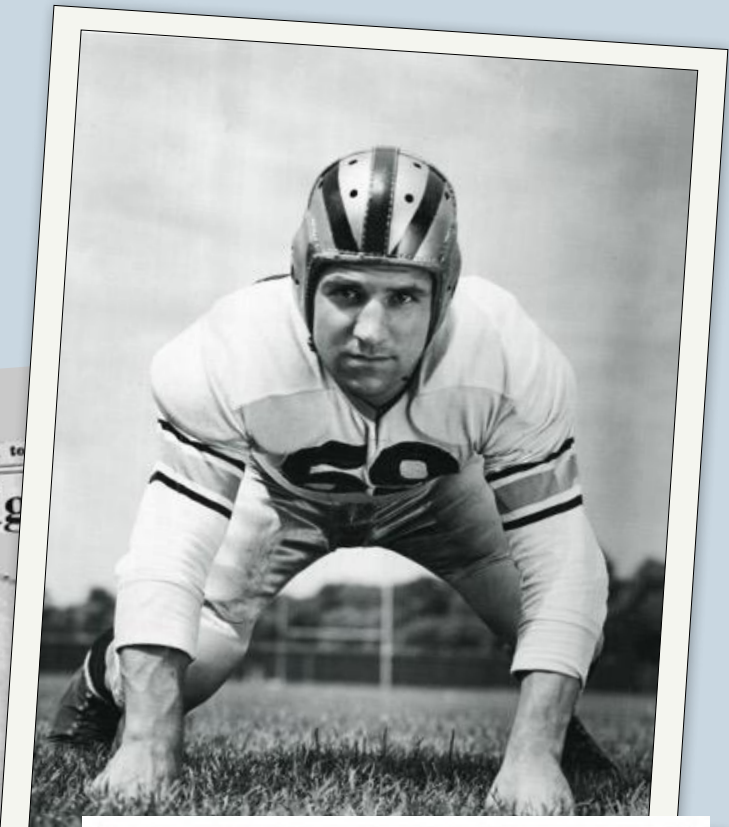
Joseph Yacoub

Dans ce livre, l'auteur évoque un cas unique, la tragédie assyro-chaldéenne de 1915-1918. Entreprise infernale et préalablement pensée, décidée au plus haut niveau de l'État, ces massacres se déroulent sur une large étendue en Cilicie et Anatolie orientale, ainsi qu'en Azerbaïdjan persan, dans les mêmes conditions et pratiquement sur les mêmes lieux que ceux des Arméniens. Des convois de déportés ont tristement jalonné les routes de Mardin, Diarbékir, Kharpout, Cheikhan, Sévérek, Ourfa, Ras-ul-Aïn, Deir ez-Zor et Sinjar. Plus de 250000 Assyro-Chaldéens trouvèrent la mort. Le drame des chrétiens de Syrie et d'Irak est toujours là pour rappeler le passé et raviver les mémoires. Le voyage du pape François en Irak en 2021 est venu réveiller les consciences.

Who was Alex Agase?

Alexander Arrasi Agase (March 27, 1922 – May 3, 2007) was an American football guard and linebacker who was named an All-American three times in college and played on three Cleveland Browns championship teams before becoming head football coach at Northwestern University and Purdue University.

College: Illinois; Purdue
Position: Guard, linebacker
Born: March 27, 1922; Chicago
Died: May 3, 2007, Tarpon Springs, FL



1963 ELECTEES TO THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION AND HALL OF FAME

George Connor



ALEX AGASE
Illinois and Purdue

A world war helped Alex Agase to write his own special chapter in the history of football. In 1942, as an Illinois guard he earned All-America nomination through striking lineplay as sound as it was spectacular. In 1943, as a Marine Corps trainee at Purdue, he helped the Boiler-makers to a Western Conference title while, in the words of one expert, "blocking out tacklers like a reaper in a wheat-field." Again there were All-America nominations. Another change of uniform brought a new kind of action, combat in the Far Pacific. Twice wounded at Okinawa, Agase received the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. But the 1946 season found him back at Illinois, again on the forward wall, another Big Ten title, a Rose Bowl victory and, once more selection on major All-America lists. Now at



GEORGE CONNOR
Holy Cross and Notre Dame

In 1946 and 1947, when a marauding force from Notre Dame met no defeat and was tied only once, five men played in the opposing backfields most of the time, though only four had lined up there. The fifth man was George Connor, 235-pound Irish tackle, one of the fastest big men the modern game has known. Connor has gained wide recognition as an exceptional tackle at Holy Cross before World War II service, but achieved true stature later in the shadow of the Golden Dome at South Bend. Speed and durability were the marks of his gridiron greatness—speed that enabled him to break runners loose far downfield by blocking the last man, durability that defied the impact of conflict. In six of eight years that followed his college play, Connor was voted to the all-professional

Head Football Coach

ALEX AGASE

Alex Agase, 53, begins his third season as the Purdue University football coach, although he became acquainted with West Lafayette long before he entered the coaching profession.

A player and student here for a mere four months 30 years ago, Agase has been named to the all-time Purdue team, won one of three all-America recognitions as a Boilermaker, and played on the last unbeaten, untied Purdue gridiron team in history.

In becoming Purdue's 27th football coach, Agase left Northwestern where he was head coach for nine years. As coach of the Wildcats, he was named football Coach of the Year by the Football Writers of America in 1970 after guiding the Northwestern eleven to a second-place finish in the Big Ten. The following year the Wildcats repeated their conference second-place finish.

Agase started his collegiate career at Illinois, where as a sophomore in 1942 he won all-America honors as a guard. The next year Alex and several Illinois teammates came to Purdue as a part of the wartime V-12 program.

Marine Corps duty in the South Pacific interrupted his college education, 1944-45. On Okinawa he won a Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Following his discharge, he returned to his original school, Illinois, for his senior year.

In the fall of 1946, he led the Illini to a Big Ten title—earning his third set of all-America honors in the process—and then on to a 45-14 Rose Bowl rout of UCLA on January 1, 1947. In August 1947, he played with the College All-Stars in the annual charity game at Soldier Field, and then reported to the Cleveland Browns in the professional ranks.

The next six seasons saw Agase playing professional football, both with the Browns and the Baltimore Colts. It was after that sixth pro season that Agase turned to the coaching ranks.

Ironically, Purdue was one of the first places he began his job hunting but suffered two near misses at becoming a Boilermaker assistant in the '50s.

Agase began his collegiate coaching career at Iowa State University as line coach of the Big Eight conference school.

In 1956 Alex left Iowa State to join Ara Parseghian's Northwestern coaching staff starting a 17-year tour of duty with the Wildcats. He was appointed Northwestern's head football coach in 1964 when Parseghian became head coach at Notre Dame.

The only player in college history to be named to the all-time teams of two schools, Agase's playing exploits earned him a spot on the Diamond Anniversary All-Big Ten team. In 1963, he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

He has long been a prominent sports personality in the midwest. In 1970 he was one of ten finalists for the "Outstanding Chicagoan" award given annually by the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and he was also the 1970 recipient of Chicago's Medal of Merit.

Last December he was named to the Chicago Catholic League Hall of Fame and thus became only the second head coach to be so honored who had never coached or played in the league. The other was a gent who also coached in Indiana—Frank Leahy.

Agase and his wife Norma have three sons—Mike 24, Steve 21, and Paul 17.



BOILERMAKERS/17

1975 Purdue Football



NINEVEH MAGAZINE INTERVIEW

Reminiscences of the Yonkers Community:

Dr. John Pierre Ameer
speaks with
Dr. Ruth Kambar



John Ameer, 1967 in Cheshire, Connecticut



John Ameer in His Office



Daniel Baba, Darius Baba, Jr., and John Ameer

In 2008, Gorgias Press published John (John-Pierre) Ameer's memoir, *Assyrians in Yonkers: Reminiscences of a Community*, the story of an Assyrian community formed by refugees from Urmia after the Assyrian Genocide of WWI. The book includes a chapter entitled, "Flight," which tells of the massacres (beginning in 1842/43), the subsequent evacuations, the relocation, resilience, and transformation of newly arrived Americans. Dr. Ameer reminisces about being raised in Yonkers, New York within the bicultural Assyrian and American community.

As a first generation Assyrian American, John experienced the closeness of this community as it maintained its Assyrian churches, organizations, and traditions, while accepting those of its new-found home. The sense of fraternity among these survivors also reveals their allegiance to the United States, the suburban neighborhood, and the education of the American-born generation.

The following interview excerpts are from the Yonkers Public Library's Assyrian Oral History Project, conducted by Ruth Kambar, PhD, Board Member of the Assyrian Studies Association and Michael Walsh, librarian at the Will Library.

John, is there any significance to your name, Jean-Pierre Ameer?
After my mother's family fled, she and her sister were put in a school in Marseille where they spent ten years. Then she came to the United States in 1934, hence Jean-Pierre. I didn't want to go through school with it so I changed it to John.

FAMILY

Do you have siblings?
They're named Eleanor and Franklin because they were born on FDR's birthday. The twins were born five years after me.

What were your parents' full names?
My mother's maiden name is Agnes Yaure and her sister is Nadine. My father is Eprim, and his father is Shleemon Ameer. Both of them were from the town in Urmia called Geo Tapa.

Did your parents have siblings?
My father had a sister, Catherine and my mother had a brother, Roland and a sister, Nadine. Roland was the oldest, then my mother, Agnes, then her sister, Nadine. There probably would have been more children, but my grandfather, my father's father, emigrated to the United States in 1910. When the war started, he couldn't get back.

Do you know the names of your grandparents?
I can remember my grandfather on my mother's side. His name was Abraham Yaure. My father's father was Shleemon.

CHURCH

Is your identity connected to a particular religion?
All Assyrians are connected to the Church of the East and in the 19th century many of them went in different directions. My mother's family went to the Lutherans because of the work of the Lutheran missionaries. My father's family went, like a lot of Assyrians, to Presbyterianism because of the American missions. There were also some Assyrians who became Roman Catholic because of Catholic missionary work. They began the 19th century, essentially, as a single religious group. There were a few dissidents, but that was it. It was by the end of the 19th century that Assyrians had gone in all kinds of directions.

...Assyrian missionaries— these Church of the East missionaries ended up all the way over to Japan and they had a significant impact, especially in China. There's a wonderful book called *The Monks of Kublai Khan* because almost every one of his [Kublai Khan's] advisors was a Nestorian cleric. The Mongol invasions broke all that up, but there are remnants of the Nestorian missionaries. Their remnants are among the Christians in India. They have a different name now, but there were a number of churches that were established by our people in India and, as I said, in China. There are some archaeologists that have unearthed tablets in Syriac in China. The Muslim Empire, the Abbasid Empire [Caliphate] that was centered in Baghdad, the Abbasids eventually sent an emissary to the Vatican and the emissary was a cleric of the Nestorian church, the Church of East. Another thing that Muslim empires, both the Umayyad and then later the Abbasid, were very very friendly to the Christian groups in the Middle East, like the Nestorians— like the Church of the East. And so, the Church of the East was very active in Baghdad and was permitted to be active. There was a very close relationship between the Hamayat and Abbasid Caliphates and the Church of the East. The Mongol invasions pretty much ended it. One of the consequences is that our people fled North and that's why they ended up in Northwest Persia in Urmia and in Kurdistan because they were fleeing the horrendous Mongol invasions. They were just very brutal. They not only brutalized the local Muslim populations, but they also brutalized the Christian population. That's how we ended up where we were.

A BICULTURAL ASSYRIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN YONKERS

Where were you born?
In Yonkers, New York, 1936.

Where did you grow up in Yonkers?
I grew up in Yonkers until I went to college, so I was at P.S. 19, Hawthorne Junior High School, and then Yonkers High School. I grew up in South Yonkers, which is where most of the Assyrian community lived. It could be called a colony in Yonkers. Very close. Very close.

Did your family go straight to Yonkers?
They arrived in Providence, Rhode Island, which was another immigrant receiving location. Besides Ellis Island, that was the other entry point, and they came to Yonkers because they already had relatives here. My grandfather was already here.

Do you know what drew Assyrians to Yonkers?
Yes, the manufacturing jobs. I'm just saying in the communities I was close to, the Assyrians formed these colonies. There was New Britain, Connecticut; Yonkers, New York; Elizabeth, New Jersey; and Philadelphia, and of course, the largest Assyrian community in the United States was Chicago. Turlock, California was another, more recent location. The recent Assyrians have focused in LA and in Arizona. In Turlock there's at least one and there may be two Churches of the East in Arizona. There's definitely one or two in LA.

Was Assyrian spoken in your childhood home?
Oh, yeah. Assyrian, sometimes called neo-Aramaic, but the

most common designation is Syriac. We spoke it. I was fortunate because my father's grandmother [Repka Ameer] lived with us until 1944, and she spoke no English so I got to learn Syriac very well because I had to speak with her.

What traditional practices did you have in your Assyrian-American household?

There was a great deal of activity associated with our church, the Assyrian Presbyterian Church. There would be activities that would bring you to the church about three or four times a week, activities associated with the older group, associated with women associated with young people, and so forth. There are also, from time to time, activities in the Assyrian American Association. But interestingly enough, if you look back on that, most of the Assyrians who were Presbyterian were all members of the Assyrian American Association, but didn't spend as much time there as those who were still members of the Church of the East [Mar Mari Parish]. I'm not sure why that's the case, but that was the case. We were always together.

What's your favorite Assyrian food, John?
Dolma.

Chalama, Durpee?
Peppers and tomatoes. I can't remember the name for peppers and tomatoes [biebauri and baudumjioni]- I even make it.

Do you make chada?
My wife, who's Puerto Rican, has learned to make chada and my mother made some of the best chada I've ever had. Margarita [John's wife] makes it as well as my mother. Only Assyrians have a taste for chada. It's incredible. To anybody else, they'll say "What the heck is this?"

It's great with tea.
Yes, exactly!

Do you think the Assyrians who came, that first generation, prepared foods differently than they would have in the old country? Do you know whether they lost any of that?
No. I don't think they did because the foods were all Assyrian foods—I mean rarely with anything else. Bushala, and on and on.. You know that cookbook that Irene Baba, and who was the other person who put it together?

From Westchester, or the one from Chicago?
No Westchester. The Assyrian cookbook.

I don't know who did it, but I know Joe Eshoo did the cover.
He did and Irene was one of the two authors [the other is Susan Nweeia]. At any rate, that's the same food they have in Urmia and in Kurdistan— as is true of all the ethnic groups that came to the United States.

In your memoir, you write about how you would go to the markets on Saturdays to purchase food, etc. When I was a child, my mother would drive all the way from Yonkers to Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn to get our spices and ingredients. Were you able to get them in Yonkers?
We couldn't get any of the ingredients that you're talking



Yonkers Assyrian Presbyterian Church Choir, 1953:
(from left to right) Nanci Badel, Mary Soleiman,
Irene Baba, Sue Nweeia and Daniel Baba, Norman
David, John Ameer and Darius Baba Jr.



Before the Yonkers Assyrian community had its
own church, the Assyrian Presbyterian Church
congregation held services on Jackson Street at
the Hungarian Church

about in Yonkers other than tomatoes and vegetables and stuff. To get all the ingredients that you were talking about, we had to go to Brooklyn. Originally, there was a group of Middle Eastern import shops. They were originally on the Hudson River in the eastern part of Manhattan, but with the construction of the highway and so forth, they got moved out and that's when they went to Brooklyn. My understanding is that those stores still exist in Brooklyn.

As you know I taught in Worcester and because Worcester has a large Armenian community and a large Assyrian community, not the Church of the East, but Syrian Orthodox, there are three or four stores in Worcester where we can get whatever we need.

The Syrian Orthodox were headquartered, essentially, in what is now Northern Iraq and Southern Turkey and of course they got driven out by the same genocide. While we were becoming the Church of the East, they were becoming a different segment, which is now called Syrian Orthodox and there is also a Catholic segment that was centered pretty much in Lebanon and in Western Syria. There are not too many of our people that belong to that group, but there are a few.

Tell us a little bit about Assyrian picnics.

Well, you remember, we'd go mostly to Trevor Park in Yonkers, on the Hudson River. Unlike a lot of other people, when the Assyrians went to these picnics, they kept the same food they had in Urmia. The only thing they would add on the picnics was a lot of kebabs, but they would still have the dolma and they would still have all of that traditional food. There would be chada and so forth.

Some of us would bring their samovars.

Always. I owned one until I gave it to my daughter, but we had a samovar. I don't remember any Assyrian house without a samovar. That came because of our connection with Russia. The Russian Orthodox were very interested in the Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox. There was even, and I didn't learn this until recently, in the late 19th century some thought about moving the entire Assyrian community, north to Russia because it would obviously be more comfortable for us to be with other Christians.

The other reason was there were two Kurdish/Turkish genocides in the 19th century. The biggest one was in 1893-94, and so the Assyrians really thought that they had to get out of that area. The largest community was in Kurdistan and I don't think they were part of the thought about moving north, but they were also suffering persecution. In fact, in that 1893-94-95, it is unclear as to which of those years, but anyway in those years the Turkish/Kurdish genocide was so powerful that most of the Assyrians in Kurdistan fled to Urmia and stayed in Urmia for a few months and went back to Kurdistan. That's how vicious life was. What it was, and we know now because it's still going on, is the Kurds wanted their own country and they didn't want any minority groups in that country, so they were thinking of doing a cleansing prior to their getting a country. They still don't have their country, but that's why we suffer.

Did you participate in any of the Assyrian dances and do you have particular music you like?

Yeah, but it's not Assyrian. None of it's Assyrian. It's primarily Armenian, and yeah, we used to— of course. Every wedding we'd be dancing all the time. Assyrians had never developed their own music. They used Armenian music and Turkish music. That's what we heard growing up. The music we heard, and you remember at the weddings, the band that was brought in was always an Armenian band.

Do you remember Jerry Caram?

Yeah, of course. He lived a block away. So he played with two men. He

played and sang with two men. I know one of them because he was a good friend of my father, but his name now eludes me. He was from Philadelphia. Jerry played an oud. Boy, he sometimes played an oud. The fellow I'm talking about, from Philadelphia, played the drum. What did they call it? It looked like a tambourine, a big tambourine. What was it called? A dumbeg. The third fellow played a clarinet.

How about Assyrian games, John? Did you play the game with lamb knuckle bones when you were a kid?

I remember my father and a few of his neighbors doing that but I never did. It didn't last long, so it was gone by the time I was old enough to understand what was going on. I have my grandfather—the other game that a number of Assyrians played. What do you call it? It's like checkers. Backgammon. My father— no one ever beat my father. He was incredible. I learned backgammon. I never beat him.

EDUCATION

Did you attend University?

I got a scholarship and went to Yale University.

What was the focus of your study?

Well, I was following in the family footsteps. I was going to be a minister. I majored in philosophy and political science. I was heading for seminary and I actually did go to seminary, but I didn't finish. I stumbled into teaching, which I did until May— this past May.

When did you become interested in Assyrian academic studies or activities?

As long as I can remember because the Assyrian community in Yonkers talked a lot about their background. What they talked very little about, and it was only after I grew up that I began to investigate this, they talked very little about the Genocide of World War I. That was rarely a topic of conversation, but they talked a lot about what was going on in the villages and all of that happened before the war. The war was obviously incredibly traumatic, as it was for the Armenians. So we learned an awful lot about life in Urmia, up until World War I—up until 1917.

What did you teach?

I taught Social Studies for a few years. I also taught English; well my primary focus was Social Studies, especially history. I was also an administrator in the high schools.

Where did you teach?

I taught for a year at Yonkers High School, two years at Cheshire Academy in Connecticut, and two years in Saint Mark's School in Dallas. Then, it was like sixteen years, from 1969 to 1985 I was at the Harvard School in Los Angeles.

You're also just retired from Clark [University] is that correct? Will you talk a little about what you did while you were there?

May 31st I retired. At Clark, I taught undergraduate classes. The main class I taught was Complexities of Urban Schooling. I also taught simultaneously, and actually, I still am teaching graduate courses for teachers at Worcester State University. My primary course there is Foundations of Education.

Do you know about your parents' schooling?

My father had very little because it was interrupted by the war. There were, in all of the villages in Urmia, schools that the American missionaries had set up in the 19th century, so he had some basic schooling. My mother's, obviously, was disrupted because the family, during World War I, fled first to Tiflis [Tbilisi] in Russia, and then she went to France— as I said— for ten years, and while she was at a boarding home there, a Lutheran boarding home, she attended the local French public school.

Do you know anything about the education of your grandparents?

They also had access to the same. On my father's side, they had access to those same village schools. On my mother's side, her father and his brother, because of the Lutheran missionaries, ended up getting university schooling in Germany. My grandfather majored in business in the schools there. His brother Lazar ended up in seminary and became a Lutheran minister.

ASSYRIAN AMERICAN DIASPORA

What does it mean to you to be Assyrian?

It was incredible. I would not have wanted to be in any other kind of community. The closeness of the community was just wonderful. The mutual support—all of that. It was very very tight-knit, but in a positive sense; it wasn't exclusionary, but it was tight-knit. It was just a wonderful, supportive kind of community.

To what do you attribute that?

Mostly the two things actually— one is that's the way they lived in Urmia and two: the Genocide, of course, made them even closer because we're talking about survivors.

How do you think living in the Assyrian Diaspora impacts you in any way?

Having grown up in the diaspora enabled us to be bicultural, and I think that's a great asset. To a lot of people that also meant bilingual, but mostly bicultural. Those of us, who in my generation, and maybe yours, I don't know, but my generation is able to see ourselves both as Americans and as Assyrians. I think that is a great asset to have that bicultural experience.

Can you describe the flight from Urmia in WWI?

There were two directions that the people fled: One was, as I said, the smaller one that went north to Tbilisi; the larger one, the great migration, and the sad migration, was the one that went south. They went south, heading toward the British lines, which were around modern Baghdad. An awful lot of Assyrians died on that flight, southward. In fact, I mentioned—I don't remember if it was in my book or in an article—I wrote about an Assyrian mother—just as an example of who crossed a river and couldn't get back to rescue her child who was on the other side— on the other bank. She couldn't make it. There was just an awful lot of that. People speculate on the numbers and there's just not enough evidence to be clear on the numbers, but I would think that at least twenty-five percent of those who fled southward didn't make



Daniel Baba, Norman David, John Ameer, and Darius Baba, Jr.



John Ameer, proud of his alma mater, Yonkers High School



John Ameer & Monument to Fidelia Fiske at Shelbourne, MA (1)

it. They got to the British lines and, as you know, the British set up a camp at Baqubah, east of Baghdad for the Assyrian refugees.

Following the war—the end of the war—there were some Assyrians and most of these Assyrians wanted to go back, but the British who, in typical colonial imperialist fashion, didn’t want us to go back because they wanted to establish positive relations with the Iranian government. They thought our going back would interfere with that. Some Assyrians did eventually get back, but the British did something really kind of ridiculous, when you think about it. Your family may have been involved in this. My father’s family was sent to eastern India. They were shipped to eastern India where they stayed for about six months and then they were free to go back and most of them ended up in France and Marseille and then from there to the United States. A few stayed in Europe. I have some relatives on my mother’s side who ended up staying in Germany, but most of the Assyrians then came to the United States and Canada.

Did you ever have a desire to visit or have you visited Urmia?

I would have loved to have gone to Urmia, but because the United States’ policy toward Iran has been utterly destructive, useless and ridiculous that has not been possible. As you know, the United States in 1953 destroyed democracy in Iran and led to the coming of Khomeini, at which point there was no chance of ever going back. There were a number of Assyrians that went back when the Shah was ruling; there was some big celebration of the history of Iran in —what used to be Isfahan. But no, I didn’t get to do that. I’ve never been. I would have loved to have gone back to Urmia.

What do you know about the Assyrian Question, the concept of an Assyrian homeland?

It’s not possible. The Assyrians that are still in the Middle East are aware, I’m sure, they’re aware that their only survival lies in coming to the west and that’s been true since 1917...I understand it’s a sad case for us, so it’s both a sad case— the origins are sad—but the lives we’ve had in this country are positive.

What traits do you think you’ve inherited from your family and your Assyrian American upbringing?

That’s a tough question. My family were, because of their rescue, very patriotic about the United States. That’s something I inherited, but I’ve had a tough time with it recently. The other trait is the especially important one: the sense of community. See, we grew up with this wonderful sense of community and that I think we’ve gone away from. We’ve taken that with us wherever we’ve gone because that Assyrian community, as you know, was wonderful...wonderful.

John, is there anything we did not ask you that you would like to say today?

I wish that many, many more of your generation and the generation after yours had a knowledge of the Assyrian history, the history of the Church of the East, including the wonderful contributions we made to the Abbasid Caliphate. The Church’s moving completely across Asia and having a significant impact on several civilizations. I’m astonished how few Assyrians of your generation, and the one after yours, have all of that wonderful, wonderful history. It’s just an amazing, exciting kind of history. Go beyond the stories. Go back to the second or third century AD and from then on the Church of the East was an incredibly powerful institution with remarkable influence and achievements. I just don’t find many Assyrians of even my generation that are aware of that. It may be that the Genocide overwhelmed all other memories that might be part of it.

List of Assyrian Foundation of America Donors

The below list includes donations received from 03/01/2021 through 05/31/2021 only! Any donations received after 05/31/2021 will be included in the next issue of the Nineveh Magazine.

Thank you for your generosity and support.

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Esther Lang	\$ 100.00		
Furat Babilla	\$ 100.00		
Helen Karoukian	\$ 1,000.00		
(In memory of my Husband Edward Karoukian)			
Hubert &Blendina Adams	\$ 50.00		

**The amounts listed are charitable donations only and exclude subscription fees and membership dues.*

IN MEMORY OF CHARMAINE MORAD-DANIEL

Charmaine relocated to Turlock, California when she was seven years old. Her father and mother were well known and respected as one of the first Assyrian families to immigrate to the United States. At the age of 13, Charmaine tragically lost her father and immediately felt the responsibility to step in as the leader of her family. Even though she was too young to legally work, she found a way to receive employment at a local cannery. She used her money to support her mother and take care of her household. She kept this mindset throughout her life and always made sure her family was taken care of.

On June 11, 1983 she married the love of her life, Hubert Daniel and had their first daughter on November 29th 1984 followed by her youngest daughter Jina on January 15. On February 1st, 2021 Charmaine passed into Glory, and is now in the presence of her Lord, her best friend, Jesus. The fight to keep Charmaine here was a fight between Heaven and Earth. Charmaine fought a good fight, finished her race, kept her faith, and is now embracing her exceedingly great reward in Heaven.

She served as a member of the Assyrian National Council of Stanislaus, which included 16 Assyrian organizations and churches, until she was elected and served as President over the past three years. She gladly sacrificed much of what she had and her life, for her Assyrian people and nation. She was always ready and willing, with a big and generous heart, coupled always with a smile, to reach any one who was in need of her Assyrian people, churches, or those who were working for our Umta's purpose. She always worked tirelessly trying to bring all to love each other, and to unite with each other as Assyrians.

Under her leadership, she enabled her widespread network to benefit Assyrians. She used her government connections to bring recognition and acknowledgment to our people, such as the California State Capital acknowledging Assyrian New Year in 2019. She connected Assyrians to government leaders from local mayors to members of congress and teamed up with Operation Compassion to deliver groceries to Assyrians in need during the pandemic. Additionally, she was working with the Stanislaus County School district to build Assyrian Language classes to strengthen our chances of keeping our language alive.

She continually used her role to benefit Assyrians in a variety of ways including helping ill Assyrians get the care they need, solving complicated immigration issues, providing assistance to those in need, and identifying avenues of legal counsel. She made her large network work for the good of Assyrians. Charmaine was voted Women of the Year by the Assyrian National Federation in 2004.

In addition to balancing a family, serving the community, and becoming a pillar of wisdom and strength for Assyrians, she also had an amazing career. She was a well-respected leader for the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department. Her professionalism was second to none and she reached the high rank of Supervisor of Records. Charmaine was extremely articulate and her words would captivate, grow, and encourage you. She used her position and rank to connect with various government leaders. Charmaine would frequently visit the state and national capital buildings to connect with members of congress and the US Senate.

Over her 35+ years at the Stanislaus County Sheriff's dept, she impacted many lives as a friend, mentor, leader, and motivator. She led by example and taught her employees how doing the right thing will take you far in life. Charmaine's dedication was recognized in the numerous letters of gratitude the Sheriff's Office received from the public due to Charmaine's genuine compassion for others. She also received many awards and accommodations during her career in recognition for her hard work, excellent service, and dedication to the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department. Charmaine was instrumental in ensuring Stanislaus County was properly represented with the California Department of Justice and California State Law Enforcement.

Charmaine was known at the Sheriff's department as someone who could complete impossible tasks. Her strong will, commitment, and intelligence set her apart and built the strong reputation she holds today. When her Assistant Sheriff retired, he honored her by giving her the stars he wore which represented the high office. He wanted her to know that because of the impact she made, she deserved them more than anyone else.

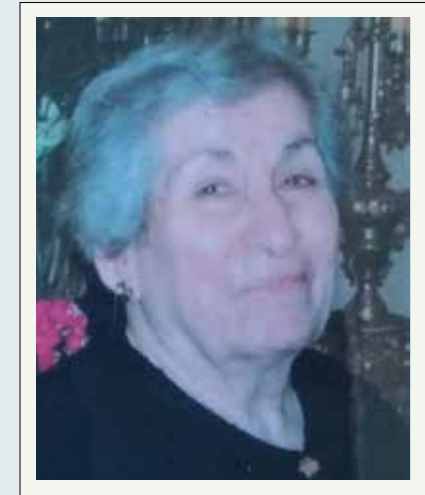
Even after her formal retirement, she never stopped working. She served on the Board of Directors for Community Health Centers of America over the past 4 years and was set to take on the role of Chief Lesion Officer in April.

She was one of a kind; Charmaine will be remembered for her solid faith, kind and giving heart,



IN MEMORY OF JANE (POLUS) BABILLA

Jane (Polus) Babilla was born on December 1, 1929 in Habaniya, Iraq to Aghasi and Judith Babilla.



Aunt Jane passed away on March 19, 2021 to join her parents, Aghasi and Judith, as well as her husband, George, and her five brothers, Charles, Albert, Hubert, Joel, and Penoel, in eternity.

She is survived by her sister, Anita Sibthorpe, her son, Ben Polus, her daughter, Bernadette Baba, in addition to six grandchildren, five great grandchildren, and several nephews and nieces.

We will cherish your loving memories, forever..!

Furat & Nahrain Babilla,



IN MEMORY OF
JULIET MATTI YONAN
1930-2021

Juliet Matti Yonan was born November 29, 1930 in Baghdad, Iraq to her proud parents, Matti Yonan and Nelly Amirkhas. Her parents had three children: Alfred, Marcel, and Juliet.



As a young lady she attended the famous Kasha Khando, an all Assyrian, boys and girl's primary school. In 1946, she married Aprim Yonan and moved to Habanniya, Iraq where many Assyrians resided at the time. They had 4 children: Jermaine, Janet, Hamlet, and Albert. In 1958, the family moved back to Baghdad in the Tel-Mohammad area, close to the Assyrian Athletic club, where many Assyrians also resided. In 1967, the family immigrated to the United States and lived in the Bay Area.

Juliet was an excellent seamstress and made clothes for herself, her children, and for her grandchildren. She began working various jobs in order to assist her husband in supporting the family.

She helped her older brother, Alfred (now deceased), to immigrate from Tehran, Iran to the United States, to live close to her. Later, her older sister, Marcel (now deceased), her husband Sargis, and their two boys, Douglas and Johnson (married to Hadeel), immigrated from Baghdad to The Netherlands.

Juliet's husband Aprim passed away in January 1982, a tragic and untimely loss to her and the whole family as she was a widowed at the young age of 51. She has now joined Aprim. It is certain that they are both looking down from a much better place, free of pain and in the presence of our Lord.

Juliet is survived by her grandchildren, Atur and Nineveh Shabbas, David and Jennifer Yonan, as well as Albert and Jonnie's adopted daughter Nicole. She is also leaving behind great grandchildren Amarissa and Matthew Shabbas, Remington and Augustine Yonan.

ہم نے اس کے بعد سے ہمیشہ، ایک دفعہ، دیکھ، پھنسا، ب
کہ یہ سچ ہے۔

"وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُبَدِّلُوا كَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الذِّمَّةِ فَعَلَّيْكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَلَفُوا مِنْكُمْ بِمَبَادِلِكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُلُوبِ عَلَمٌ ۚ فَذَكَرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ عَاكِفُونَ" (سورة الاحزاب: ٨٠)

[illegible][illegible]

فَبَدَّلْهُمُ آيَاتٍ

يَا لَيْلَ دَسَوَتَا ۲۵۸۲- تَجَلَّيْ مَلَكُومُ ۲۵۸۳ حَبِ كَفَلِي ۲۵۸۴
دَسَوَمَكَن مَجْمُومَتَا ۲۵۸۵ حَبِ كَم مَتَمَمُومَتَا ۲۵۸۶ حَبِ
"يَا مَهْدَوِي ۲۵۸۷".

فَصَدَّقُوا بِالَّذِي فِي يَدَيْهِ يُجَلِّبُنَا مِنْهُ خِطَابًا لِّتَتَذَكَّرُوا
أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا كُنَّا بِلِقَاءِ رَسُولِهِ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ غَافِلِينَ

دو آدو مېټو ډېمټو:

[illegible]

مَدِينَةُ حَفْظِهَا:

"أفيم دلتقلا دلتقا ادم عتلا لى مسو هه جمتك صوهلسم، لب تبذلا
اذهوم ملبلسم، دتجمب مكدمب لم لسدلا. ملبلكسم، بملسم
لم دلصم اسم لم لا بللا داهلا.

[illegible][illegible]

: ၂၆၅

[illegible]

مہمڈی بی مہمڈی ک

حَبِّجْ تَهِيكْ حَبِّجْ تَهِيكْ (دَمَلَكْ دَمْ دُخْمُذْ)

[illegible]

ذہبیہ یکتہ دہ مذہدہ

[illegible]

حَبِيبٌ: (the Pleiades constellation) the seven stars. **مَجْلَدٌ**: Libra
 مَلَكَةٌ: Zodiacs. **مُجَلَّدٌ**: دوسو دهمه، نوک و شش دهمه.
 دَهْدٌ: دویسوه دهمه، **دِهْدٌ**: صد دهمه، **دِهْدٌ**: صد دهمه.
 دِهْدٌ: دهمه، **دِهْدٌ**: صد دهمه، **دِهْدٌ**: صد دهمه.
 دِهْدٌ: دهمه، **دِهْدٌ**: صد دهمه، **دِهْدٌ**: صد دهمه.
 دِهْدٌ: دهمه، **دِهْدٌ**: صد دهمه، **دِهْدٌ**: صد دهمه.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

میں اپنے ہدف

الحكمة ٥٨٥ ذليمة من لثام الجاهل

تلاہ نطیشہ یملہ - یخلف

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

William Saroyan (1908-1981), an American of Armenian parentage, was a renowned playwright and short story writer. This Assyrian translation, from the original in English, is printed with permission of the WILLIAM SAROYAN FOUNDATION, 1905 Baker street, San Francisco, Ca. 94115-2012.

50.....بَابُ الْقِيَامَةِ

تَبَدُّلُ وَكَلَامِ هَذِهِ

[illegible]

43.....مَعْدِيكَ مَعْدِيكَ

جِد: مَهْ جِهْ مَهْ

41.....فَدُمُومِي ٨٥٠٠٠٠

جَبَد: 20 جَبَد

يُكَلِّمُهُمْ وَيُتْلِي الْقُرْآنَ ۚ لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ عَنِ السَّجْدَةِ إِذْ يَسْمَعُونَ قَوْلَ رَبِّهِمْ لَعَنَّاكَ أَفَتُؤْمِنُ بِبَاطِلٍ مُنْذَرٍ ۚ



Kalkhu (Nimrud)

جُلُسہ (مہمذہج)



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HAPPY
NUSARDIL!



Celebration of Nusardil in Nahla,
Assyria (2015)



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