

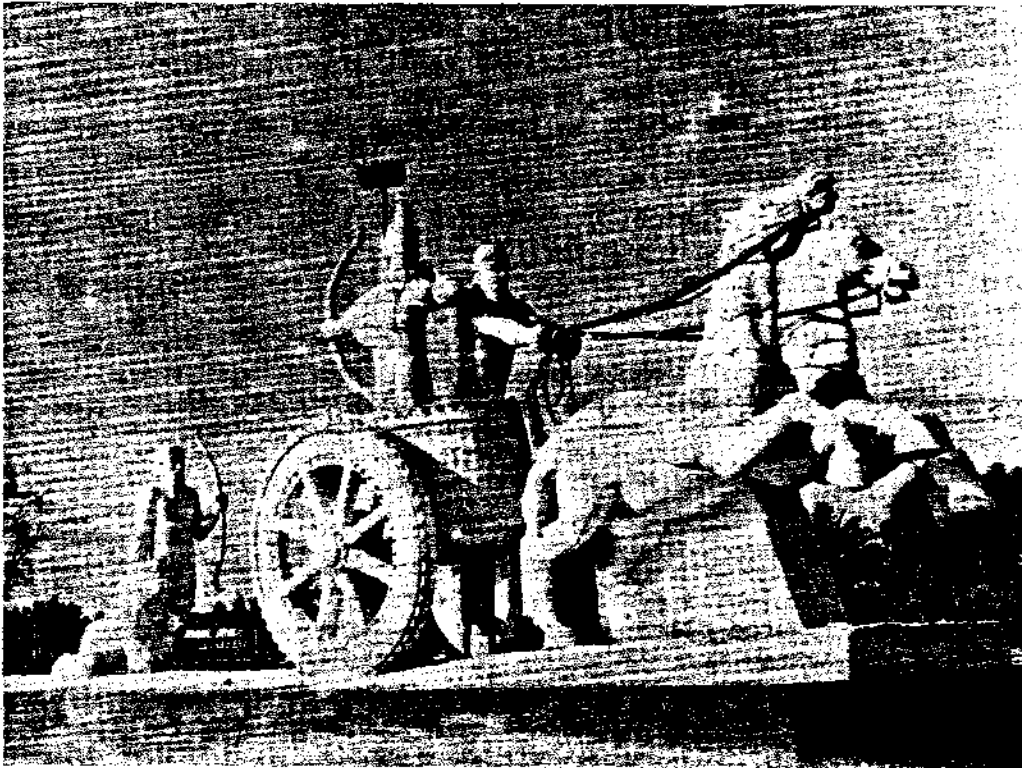


NINEVEH WEST

Published by the Assyrian Foundation of America - 1920 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94702

MARCH—APRIL 1978

Iraq Rebuilds Babylon



ASSYRIAN MONUMENT

About 50 miles southeast of Baghdad are the ruins of Babylon, the great city that was the center of civilization for fifteen centuries. Many historical personalities are associated with its name, such as:

Hammurabi, the great legislator and social reformer, who made it the center of civilization in 1750 B.C. Alexander the Great, who made it the administrative headquarters of his empire. He lived and died in Babylon in 322 B.C. Nabuchadnezer, who built the Hanging Gardens regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

The Iraqi government has appropriated funds and established a committee to rebuild the archeological ancient city of Babylon. The main emphasis of the project is to restore important monuments that will highlight the glory of Babylon and help the tourist to appreciate its significance. Restoration will cover the Ishtar Gate and temples, Nabuchadnezer's palaces as well as those of Hammurabi.

Editorial

A common theme of many Assyrians is the preservation of our language and culture. These self styled patriots are relentless in their demands upon organizations to respond to their cry.

It is sad to report that these people indulge in this gibberish to satisfy their ego and are not in the least interested in learning their language. Experience has shown, more than once, that Assyrians in general are not interested to learn their language. By learning we mean to achieve a proficiency in speaking, reading and writing the language.

Recently, Assyrian Foundation announced through this publication and on the local radio program that plans are underway to start classes in Assyrian for various groups depending on their age bracket and knowledge. Interested individuals were urged to furnish certain basic information so that classes could be organized to satisfy the needs of the community. We regret to report that for the last two months we have had not a single applicant or phone call from any Assyrian expressing an interest in these classes.

Assyrian Foundation has previously conducted classes, printed books in Assyrian, offered books for its members and community. We strongly believe that we have done what is within our means. If the community does not respond or cooperate there is not much that few individuals can do.

Community Service

The following information is provided as a service to the Assyrians of the Bay Area. We urge all our readers to participate and support these community services.

CHURCH:

Worship at the only Assyrian church in the Bay Area.

Mar Narsai Parish
Church of the East
3939 Lawton Street
San Francisco,
Rev. Nenos S. Michael, Archdeacon
(415) 564-9126

RADIO PROGRAM:

Tune in every Sunday for the Assyrian hour sponsored by the Assyrian Community Center.

Assyrian Radio Program
KBRG 105 FM at 12:00 noon
Youra Tamraz, Program Director

SOCIAL & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES:

Join the Assyrian Foundation and participate in its social and cultural activities.

Assyrian Foundation of America
1920 San Pablo Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94702

NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES:

For your reading pleasure we recommend:

1. BET-NAHRAN
P.O. Box 4116
Modesto, California 95352
2. The Assyrian Star
P.O. Box 59309
Chicago, Ill. 60640

Assyrian Foundation Activities

CONTRIBUTIONS

Assyrian Foundation of America gratefully acknowledges the receipt of the following contributions:

Building Fund

Mr. & Mrs. Saul Daniel	\$ 50.00	
Mr. & Mrs. Sankhiro Khofri	10.00	<i>should be 100⁰⁰</i>
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Samo	20.00	
Mr. & Mrs. Aprim Yonan	50.00	
Mr. & Mrs. Baba Shabbas	30.00	

Christmas Appeal

Mr. & Mrs. Sargon Shabbas	\$ 25.00
Mr. & Mrs. Akram Tattar	25.00

General

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Tamimi	\$100.00
Mr. & Mrs. Julius Danielzadeh	50.00
Mr. Francis Sarquis	10.00
Mr. Benedict Beit Ishoo	50.00
Dr. M. Vallo Benjamin	250.00
Sargina's House of Fashion	25.00

Guest Speaker

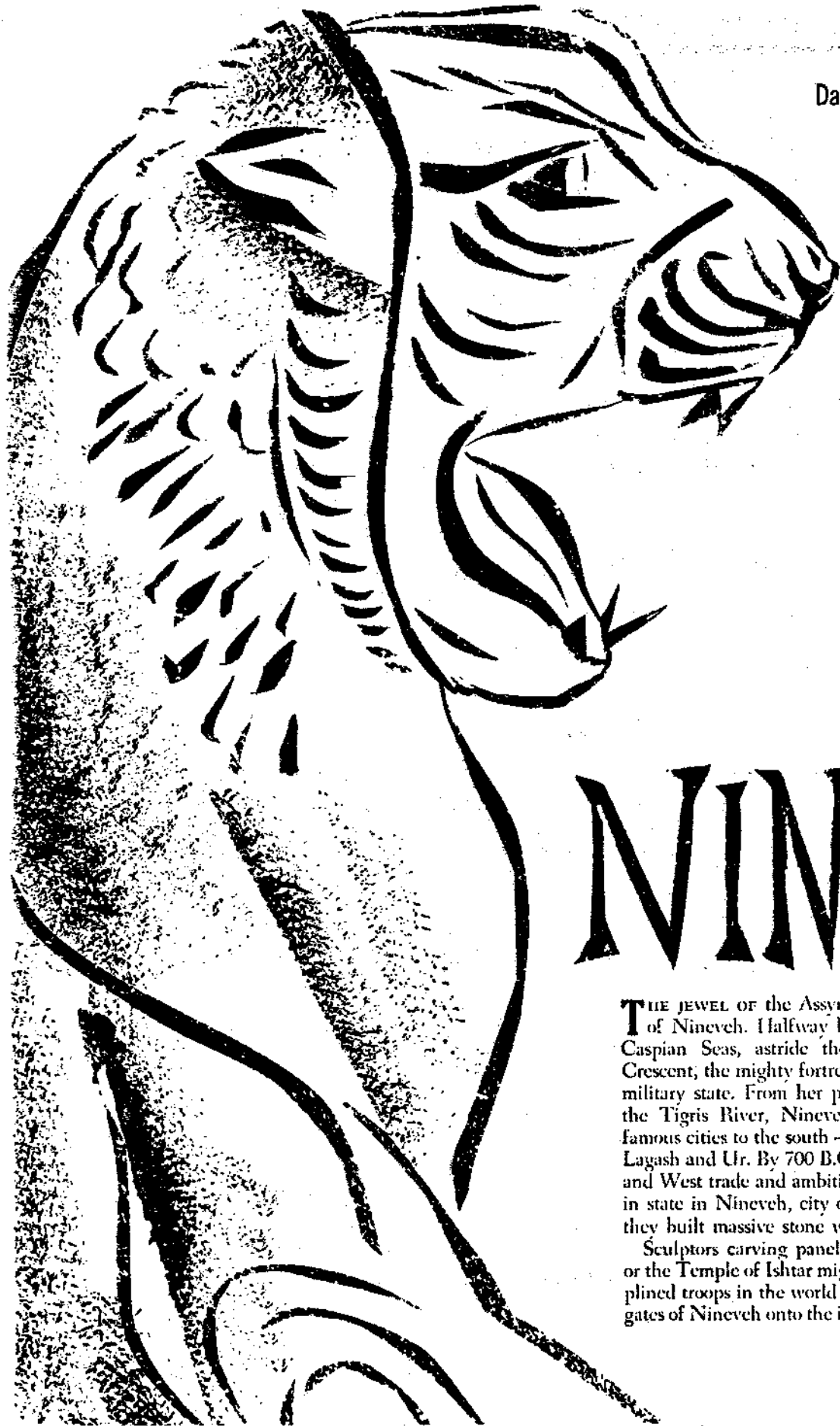
Dr. Ashur Mooradkhan was the guest speaker at the general membership meeting held March 11, 1978. He spoke in Assyrian and about Assyrians in Iran. He traced our history in Iran from ancient times to present day. Dr. Ashur presented some very interesting statistics about the Assyrian population, schools, professional and economic conditions in Iran. In our next issue we plan to print his lecture in the Assyrian section for the benefit of our readers who could not hear him in person. We thank Dr. Mooradkhan for his splendid talk and look forward to hear from him again. The Education Committee plans to have other speakers in the near future.

KHA BNISSAN

Assyrian Foundation celebrated the Assyrian New Year on April 1, 1978 with a dance party at its Cultural Center in Berkeley. In the next issue, Nineveh West will publish an article on the significance of this holiday and its history.

DONATION

Assyrian Foundation donated \$600 to the Assyrian School in Hasseka, Syria. Bishop Mar Youkhanan expressed his gratitude to the members of the Foundation for their continued support to the school.



Dauntless conquerors themselves,

Assyrian rulers

chose

the "king of beasts"

as the symbol

to adorn the walls

of their proudest city

NINEVEH

THE JEWEL of the Assyrian Empire was the capital city of Nineveh. Halfway between the Mediterranean and Caspian Seas, astride the northern arc of the Fertile Crescent, the mighty fortress city was the center of a feared military state. From her position on the upper reaches of the Tigris River, Nineveh extracted tribute from other famous cities to the south – Sippar, Babylon, Kish, Nippur, Lagash and Ur. By 700 B.C. Assyrian kings, rich from East and West trade and ambitious from far-flung conquests, sat in state in Nineveh, city of 71 palace halls. Around them they built massive stone walls manned by armed soldiery.

Sculptors carving panels for the Palace of Sennacherib or the Temple of Ishtar might pause to watch the most disciplined troops in the world as they marched out through the gates of Nineveh onto the imperial highways leading toward

the subjugated territories of Babylon, Syria and Egypt. Civilians, too, traveled the Assyrian roads — provincial governors, diplomats, envoys from client states, traders. Mailmen, bearing tablets of dried brick with impressed cuneiform characters, conveyed messages to and from the farthest limits of the empire.

Looking inward from the top of the ramparts, the sentries had a marvelous panorama spread before them. The city lay along an axis paralleling the Tigris, while a tributary stream, the Khoser, bisected it laterally. Near the western wall rose the heights of Nineveh, a rocky plateau 90 feet above the plain and a mile long, the summit of which gave a commanding view to the walls and beyond on every side.

The heights belonged to the kings and gods of Assyria. At the northern end stood the Palace of Ashurbanipal, at the southern end the Palace of Sennacherib, and between, the Temple of Ishtar and other public buildings. Here the king of Assyria took his ease, ruled his realm, and performed his religious duties to the tutelary deities of the nation.

The area below the Khoser was for the most part given over to the rude dwellings of the common people, the Warren of humanity to be found in any metropolis, ancient or modern. A feature of lower Nineveh was the reputed Tomb of Jonah, who preached repentance to its inhabitants after his adventure with the whale.

Thousands of people thronged the streets of Nineveh. Nobles in brilliantly dyed gowns of linen and cotton contrasted with the roughly clad lower classes. Hard-bitten veterans of sanguinary battles swaggered along swinging their swords, fingering their daggers, jostling past meditative priests of the Ishtar cult. Merchants called out their wares from the stalls, most of them Arameans, the masters of finance who controlled the trade of the Fertile Crescent. Suddenly a buzz of excitement would begin. The crowds would separate on either side of the main thoroughfare, and



Stately palace of Sennacherib towered above walled Nineveh.

the king would ride through surrounded by his flashing retinue of officials, secretaries and guards. He was on his way to war or hunt, to palace or temple.

The Assyrians were able to build solidly because, unlike the Babylonians who had no material better than the clay of the low-lying Plain of Shinar, they quarried stone in the foothills of their mountains. They put sturdy foundations underneath their main buildings, although they still tended to use brick for the superstructures. Like the Egyptians they had no labor problem because their victorious armies kept them supplied with forced laborers.

The majestic Palace of Sennacherib, rising several stories

on the heights above the Khoser, had hundreds of rooms — from the imperial living quarters to the mint where bars of silver from Cilicia were coined into *shekels*. The arsenal of the palace was filled with weapons of iron, the metal that turned the tide toward the Assyrians in so many conflicts with foes who had not yet emerged from the Bronze Age. The Assyrian military used iron not only for daggers, spears and arrow tips, but also for the devastating war chariots that created havoc on the battlefield and for the towering siege engines that battered down fortifications in places as far apart as Babylon and Egypt.

Assyria was more than the Sparta of the Middle East. Even King Sennacherib, who carried fire and sword to the very hearths of his enemies, enslaved multitudes, turned the waters of the Euphrates across the ruin he had made of Babylon, and left his name as a byword for inordinate cruelty — even this stern monarch furthered the development of a high culture. The oldest surviving aqueduct is the one Sennacherib ordered constructed to bring fresh water from the mountains into Nineveh.

His grandson, King Ashurbanipal, became one of the memorable patrons of all time, a Louis XIV of antiquity who bestowed pensions on writers, artists and scholars. This monarch gathered a splendid library of 40,000 clay tablets and employed an academy of scribes to edit them and to record for posterity everything from primeval legends to medical prescriptions. Ashurbanipal's editors, among their other gifts to humanity, produced the definitive text of the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh, doing for the earliest of all heroic poems what the classical Greeks were to do for Homer.

The most magnificent achievement of Assyrian culture was in the field of art — the carved figures with which sculptors decorated temples and palaces. By filling open spaces with scenes of battlefield and hunting ground, the Assyrians bequeathed a rich legacy to archaeologists.

The sport of kings in ancient Assyria was not horse racing. It was the lion hunt. The rulers of Nineveh furiously pursued the big cats through the hills above the Tigris River, finding a unique thrill in the dangers of the chase. It is still possible to feel that thrill, across the chasm of time, by following a royal excursion into Assyria's lion country. The shouts of the beaters echo from the thickets where they are flushing the lordly quarry. The hunters surge forward tense with expectancy and raise an excited shout at the sight of a tawny coat.

The place of honor belongs to the king, who meets the charge of the lion head-on with his lance or fires arrows from his chariot while his charioteer guides a triad of foaming horses across the plain.

This picture of the Assyrian lion hunt is still fresh and clear because it still exists — in stone. Assyrian sculptors portrayed the royal huntsman at every moment of the action, beginning with the pursuit and ending with the kill.

Sometimes the hunt is depicted from the side of the hunted, for the Assyrians regarded the lion as a gallant foe worthy of a monarch's lance. There is empathy, almost sympathy, in the way the artist's chisel captures for all time a split second of violent action — the snarling lion at bay, the wounded lion turning savagely on its pursuers, the dying lion making one last convulsive swipe with its massive paw.

The masterpiece of the genre, and one of the finest

NINEVEH

objects in the entire gallery of animal art, is "The Dying Lioness" from Nineveh, now in the British Museum. The observer feels a thrust of immense power in this work as, mortally wounded and paralyzed by arrows, the lioness raises herself on her forepaws in final, agonized defiance.

Tableaux like these adorned buildings throughout the Assyrian Triangle, the natural fortress formed by the confluence of the Tigris and Zab Rivers, the base from which a fierce, aggressive people overran most of the civilized world from the Persian Gulf to the Nile.

The first Nineveh scholar was Sir Austen Henry Layard, amateur antiquarian anxious to find evidence of the city mentioned with grim maledictions in the Old Testament. Layard was 22 when he left London in 1839 for a job in Ceylon. Fortunately, he broke his journey to explore the Middle East, and, with financial assistance from the British consul in Constantinople, began to dig along the Tigris in 1845. How Nineveh was retrieved from the rubble of two-and-a-half millennia is the story of Layard and his lions.

Across the Tigris from modern Mosul he made one of the most dazzling strikes in the history of archaeology. The spades of his workmen turned up the foundations of great buildings, giant stone figures of winged lions and bulls, thousands of feet of carved alabaster friezes, countless artifacts of bone and metal, and the collection of "books" in the Library of Ashurbanipal.

Layard's examination of the evidence revealed to him one basic motif of Assyrian art: the lion hunt. The motif seems to have fascinated Assyrian artists as much as the dangerous sport fascinated Assyrian kings, and the scene is portrayed over and over, with adept variations and developing technique, on the panels from Nineveh. Subsequent study has only reinforced Layard's conclusion that "the triumphs of the king over this formidable animal are deemed no less worthy of record than his victories over his enemies."

Layard fastened on the essential fact that the lion symbolized Assyria in its combination of courage, violence and sovereign disdain for any adversary that stood in its path. The lion roamed the hills and plains while lesser beasts fled before it. Just so did the Assyrians roam the Middle East, forcing capitulations from neighboring peoples.

But history played a sardonic trick on these masterful conquerors. They shook the ancient world; they created a terrifying reputation among the nations; then they simply disappeared. The very location of their capital city passed out of memory after the year 612 B.C. — after it was stormed by a coalition of enemies, sacked, burned and leveled to the ground.

So Nineveh lay, buried in rubble and time, ignored, forgotten, lost, until Henry Layard raised it from the dust. ■

ARAMCO WORLD

FEBRUARY 1962

PROMOTE YOUR CULTURE
BECOME A MEMBER
OF
THE ASSYRIAN FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

Backgammon Tournament

Many are who claim to be the best backgammon players. Time has come to select competitively the champion of the Assyrian Community in the Bay Area. We invite all to join our first tournament that we hope to hold annually from now on.

Date and Time:	Sunday, May 21, 1978 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Place:	Assyrian Foundation Cultural Center, Berkeley
Entry Fee:	\$5.00 per player
Qualification:	Open to all
Prizes:	1st Prize \$50.00, 2nd Prize \$25.00
Refreshments:	Bar will be open to serve refreshments & sandwiches
Registration:	You may register by phone, call:
	Martin Jacob <u>566-5675</u>
	Baba Adam <u>341-1273</u>
	Joel Elias <u>527-0869</u>


Sometime ago a close friend asked me, why don't I come forward and contribute to the Assyrian cause. My answer then, was simple. What is the use?

A negative attitude represented by those three words has kept me and many other Assyrians from the scene, but in no way out of it. Because in our hearts, we still carry sincere feelings and devotion for our nation. Our faith in our people is strong and will not be shaken by the useless emotions of some of those involved who have discouraged us in the past from contributing our share.

Today, I look at the issue from a different perspective. I see the struggle of our people to survive as a nation by preserving their language, heritage and culture. I see it as a struggle where every Assyrian should get involved. Each person should play some kind of a role to make our goal achievable.

We have a great culture that we should all be proud of. This precious culture can be preserved and sustained if every talented Assyrian contribute his fair share. As individuals we must strenghten our knowledge of world affairs and earn a solid education to prepare us to play a role in the events that determine our future.

It is time that we all come forward and take an active part in the process of preserving our nation. Together we can do the job much easier.



Congratulations

Saturday, April 22nd was a happy day for Samreda Baba and John Sargoni. They were joined in holy matrimony at the Mar Narsai Church of the East in San Francisco. Reception was held at the Royal Coach, San Mateo. Samreda is a loyal member of the AFA. We of the Foundation extend our best wishes to John and Samreda and wish them a happy union and bright future.

Obituaries

Mr. AZIZ AZIZ

Mr. Aziz of Beirut, Lebanon passed away in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on April 10, 1978. Survivors include his wife, four children, father and three sisters who reside in San Francisco. Our sincere condolences to his family. God bless his soul.

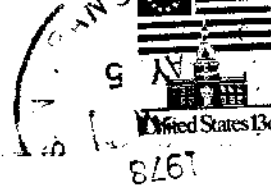
Mr. NIMROD AMIRKHAS

Mr. Nimrod Amirkhas passed away on April 17, 1978 in San Jose, California. He is survived by his wife Axenia and his daughter Yulia, wife of Dannis Amirkhas. Members of the AFA extend to his family their deepest sympathy.

FROM:

ASSYRIAN FOUNDATION OF AMERICA
1920 San Pablo Avenue
Berkeley, Ca. 94702

TO:



NINEVEH WEST

A SCREAM

In the middle of the night
I hear a scream, a knock
Open the door
Turn on the light.

A body with no soul standing in shock
Give me shelter
I hear
Take me away.

Old man why all this fear?
What is the matter?
I am blind, can't see my way
Lost my son and my daughter.

My man, I will do my best, I swear
Fight my way, find your beloveds

No tears
No fear, you have my trust
I will do what's fair
And just.

Sargon R Michael



Writing was a Babylonian invention, which came in time to serve the purposes of a complex civilisation: Laws, annals, epics, discoveries in astronomy, botany, zoology.

Our time-measures, from the 60-second minutes to the seven-day week and twelve-month year are all Babylonian inventions. This is a late cuneiform text on a marble slab engraved with huge images of Assyrian king and priests, found at Nimrud, near Mosul.

NINEVEH WEST
needs
your support

NINEVEH WEST

Prepared, printed and distributed
by the EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Youel A Baaba	Chairman
Nathan Nasserl	Member
Sargon Michael	Member
Ashur Michael	Member