

NINEVEH

CULTURAL

EDUCATIONAL

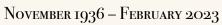
SOCIAL



Kha B'Nissan Celebration Year 6773

San Jose by AAASJ • Saturday April 1st 2023

In Loving Memory of **Daniel Aprim DeKelaita**









On Sunday, February 12, 2023, Daniel A. DeKelaita passed away at the age of 86. Daniel was born of ethnic Assyrian ancestry in Mosul, Iraq in 1936 during a period of political unrest following the British occupation. He immigrated to the United States in 1955 and shortly thereafter became a U.S. citizen. In 1960, he was drafted into the U.S. Army, serving 2 years in the 163rd Medical Battalion. Daniel later earned a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and Master of Science in Physics, completing studies at both U.C. Berkeley and San Francisco State University. He was a proud member of the Assyrian Community of San Francisco for over 50 years and advocated support for Assyrian refugees in the Middle East. He is preceded in death by his parents Aprim and Elishwa, and his siblings Saul, Jonathan, Warda, and Esther. He is survived by his wife Ineke and daughters Ingrid, Christina, Daniella, son-in-law Ken Hanson, and grand-children Johanna, Sierra, and Daniel Rethmeier and Kole Hanson, as well as extended family and friends. He will be deeply missed by the many lives he touched and his memory will live on forever in our hearts.

Daniel was laid to rest at Cypress Lawn Memorial Park, Colma, CA

On behalf of the Assyrian Foundation of America, we express our deepest sympathy to the family. Daniel was not just a regular member, he was a pillar to the Assyrian Foundation of America. Daniel will be deeply missed by the many lives he touched and his memory and legacy will live on forever.

To view Daniel's online obituary and to share memories and photos please go to: https://clcafamily.com/share-memories/daniel-deKelaita-obituary/CS-20220909-127694



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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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By Tiffany Wertheimer BBC News Image Source, Getty Images

Mashki Gate:

Stunning ancient rock carvings found in Iraq

Archaeologists in northern Iraq have made an exciting discovery - unearthing beautiful rock carvings that are about 2,700 years old.

They were found in Mosul by a US-Iraqi excavation team working to reconstruct the ancient Mashki Gate, which Islamic State (IS) militants destroyed in 2016. Iraq is home to some of the world's most ancient cities, including Babylon. But years of turmoil have seen many archaeological sites looted and damaged by militants and military action. The eight marble reliefs show finely chiseled war scenes, grape vines and palm trees.

They date back to the Assyrian King Sennacherib, who ruled the ancient city of Nineveh from 705 to 681 BC, the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage said, in a statement seen by AFP. The powerful king was known for his military campaigns, including against Babylon, and his vast expansion of Nineveh. It is believed the relics once adorned his palace, and were then moved to the Mashki Gate, Fadel Mohammed Khodr, head of the Iraqi archaeological team, told AFP.

The Mashki Gate was one of the largest in Nineveh and was an icon of the city's size and power. The gate was reconstructed in the 1970s but was destroyed with a bulldozer by IS militants in 2016.

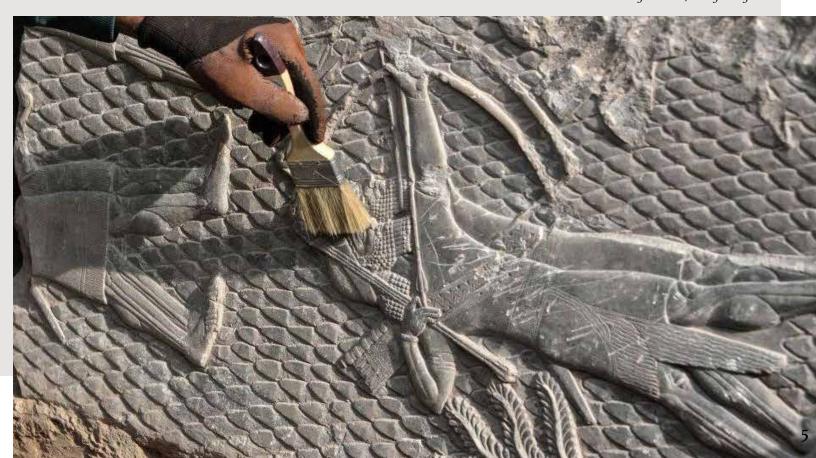
The militant group ransacked and demolished several ancient sites that predate Islam in Iraq, denouncing them as symbols of "idolatry".

Mr Khodr said that when the marble slabs were positioned at the gate, they were partly buried. The sections underground were preserved and bear the carvings seen today; whatever was above-ground was wiped smooth over the centuries. The excavation team, which comprises experts from Iraq's Mosul University and the

United States' University of Pennsylvania, is working to restore the Mashki Gate site to how it was before IS bulldozed it.

More than 10,000 archaeological sites have been found in Iraq. Neighboring Syria is also home to treasured ruins, including the site of the ancient city of Palmyra, where the grand Temple of Bel was destroyed by IS. in 2015. However, it is not only militants, vandals and smugglers who have damaged archaeological sites in Iraq. US troops and their allies damaged the ruins of Babylon when the fragile site was used as an army camp after the US invaded Iraq in 2003. A 2009 report by Unesco, the United Nations cultural agency, found troops and their contractors "caused major damage to the city by digging, cutting, scraping, and levelling".

This carving shows an Assyrian soldier pulling back an arrow, ready to fire
Image Source, Getty Images





AKITU ART EXHIBITION

by Atra Givarkis

This year's group exhibition of contemporary Assyrian Art is inspired by the Assyrian new year Akitu, the oldest recorded celebration of the new year. It is an exhibition of artworks inspired by Assyrian culture, tradition, history, language and collective memories connecting each member of our Assyrian community around the world to each other and nation's past to present struggles to exists and stay connected to its roots.

In my artworks, I explore the beauty of Assyrian calligraphy outside its traditional boundaries into world of painting. I like to play with shapes of each alphabet to form complex calligraphic compositions. My passion blooms in colors and details. In my recent artworks, my inspiration came from my memories of my hometown, Urmi, during springtime. I depicted serenity of rainy weather mixed with the smell of freshly plowed soil, wildflowers and herbs blooming in bunches. I am celebrating an ancient language and tradition together in my paintings. Each piece I create is simultaneously an extension from the past, where I have come from and what I have experienced and learned, as well as a preview of the future to where I am going.













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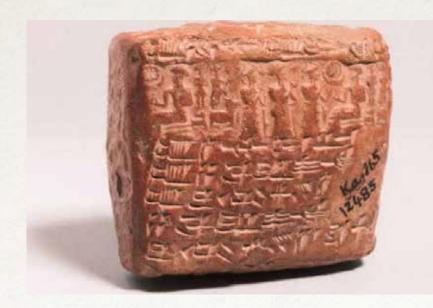












4,000-Year-Old Assyrian Tablet Discovered Is an Ancient Prenuptial Agreement

Courtesy of mymodernmet.com

Archaeologists in Turkey recently made an interesting discovery when examining a 4,000-year-old Assyrian tablet. The cuneiform engravings seem to indicate that it's is a sort of ancient prenuptial agreement, detailing everything from divorce to fertility issues.

Unearthed at the Kültepe-Kanesh UNESCO World Heritage site in Turkey's central Kayseri province, this prenuptial agreement gives incredible insight into marriage in Assyrian culture. The area was a settlement during the Old Assyrian Empire dating between 2100 BC and 1800 BC and over 1,000 cuneiform tablets were discovered in 1925. This particular tablet is on display at the Istanbul Archaeology Museum and is the earliest known mention of human infertility.

Professor Ahmet Berkiz Turp from Harran University's Gynecology and Obstetrics Department shares that, according to the tablet, the wife should allow her husband to hire a hierodule—a female slave acting as a surogate—should the couple not conceive within two years of marriage.

"The female slave would be freed after giving birth to the first male baby and ensuring that the family is not be left without a child," explains Berkız. As divorce was not an option for infertile couples in Assyrian culture, and monogamy was valued, this clause gave a way to continue in the marriage and grow families who struggled to conceive.

But that's not all. If grounds for divorce were met, the tablet laid out the terms of payment for both spouses. According to the study recently published by researchers in the medical journal of Gynecological Endocrinology, the inscription reads: "Should Laqipum choose to divorce her, he must pay [her] five minas of silver—and should Hatala choose to divorce him, she must pay (him) five minas of silver. Witnesses: Masa, Ashurishtikal, Talia, Shupianika."

It just goes to show that this complex Mesopotamian society struggled, and resolved, marital conflict in a way that's not so different from today.



The Assyrian Genocide Resolution HCR 2044 at the Arizona State House of Representatives



By: Linda Youkhana

Wednesday March 15, 2023 marked a historic moment at the State Capitol in Phoenix Arizona. The House of Representatives along with the Arizona State Senate both voted and unanimously passed Resolution HCR 2044 regarding the Assyrian Genocide of 1915 which was introduced by House Speaker Mr. Ben Toma at the House of Representatives & State Senator Mr. Anthony Kern at the State Senate.

Historically this Resolution is the first of many Assyrian Genocide Resolutions that has recognized the Martyrdom of the Assyrian Nation and Church Leader the Late Mar Benyamin XXI Shimun in a Paragraph written by our Holy Father His Holiness Mar Awa III Royel, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East.

The First and Second Reading of the Resolution were waved and went directly to the Third Reading then Voting at both the House and Senate of the State of Arizona.

Present during this auspicious occasion was H.G Mar Aprim Khamis bishop of the western diocese who began the proceedings with prayer both in English and in Aramaic. Also present, Father Kando Kando and Deacon Sam Abraham of Saint Peter's Parish in Glendale AZ. Father Khoshaba Sholimun and Deacon Dr. Youil Mamook of Mar Yosip Parish in Gilbert, AZ. Deacon Shmoil Bolis From St. George Ancient Church of the East in Glendale, and Elder Deacon, Dr. Steve Ovanessoff from Saint Apkar Armenian Church in Scottsdale representing the Armenian









Church and Community. Mr. Sam Darmo to which we extend our sincere gratitude for his tireless efforts in researching & compiling hundreds of documents that ascertain historical moments of the Assyrian Genocide of 1915 added into Resolution HCR 2044 presented on this day. Proud Assyrians of Arizona were honored and elated to witness and partake in this memorable event alongside several representatives of the Assyrian Democratic Movement, Assyrian Universal Alliance, Abnaa Alnahrain, Assyrian Aid Society and Assyrian American Association of Arizona and beloved faithful, renowned singer and devoted patriot of her Assyrian Nation, Linda George.

Assyrian American community in Arizona continue to work diligently alongside many elected government officials to ensure they do their part for their community and the best interests of their Assyrian brothers and sisters nationwide.

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REFERENCE TITLE: Assyrian Genocide; recognition

State of Arizona House of Representatives Fifty-sixth Legislature First Regular Session 2023

HCR 2044

Introduced by Representative Toma

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING THE ASSYRIAN GENOCIDE.

Whereas, the denial of genocide is widely recognized as the final stage of genocide, enshrining impunity for the perpetrators of genocide and demonstrably paving the way for future genocides; and

Whereas, the Ottoman Empire committed the crime of genocide against the Assyrian people, killing at least 300,000 innocent Assyrians and more than one million Armenians. Greeks and other Christians by way of mass executions, death marches, torture and starvation during the First World

Whereas, the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018 establishes that atrocities prevention represents a United States national interest and affirms that it is the policy of the United States to pursue a government-wide strategy to identify, prevent and respond to the risk of atrocities by strengthening diplomatic response and by effectively using foreign assistance to support appropriate transitional justice measures, including criminal accountability for past atrocities; and

Whereas, the majority of the Assyrian population was displaced from their homes and forced to escape to neighboring and faraway communities and countries, with many refugees fleeing to the United States. Today, 20 Arizona is honored to be home to a vibrant population of more than 25,000 21 Assyrian-Americans. This thriving community is a proud reminder of 22 survival and perseverance in the face of extreme injustice; and

Whereas, the most notable victim of this tragic period was the 24 ethno-martyr and Catholicos Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun XXI, the leader 25 of the Assyrian Nation and Church; and

Whereas, the Assyrian Genocide remains unrecognized by many 27 countries and organizations across the globe, including the United States. Therefore

- Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona,
 - the Senate concurring:

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- 31 1. That the members of the Legislature affirm that it is the duty 32 of the United States to:
 - (a) Commemorate the Assyrian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance.
 - (b) Reject efforts to enlist, engage or otherwise associate the United States government with denial of the Assyrian Genocide or any other genocide.
 - (c) Call on the government of Turkey to acknowledge the genocides against these mentioned populations, to issue a formal apology and to take prompt and meaningful steps toward restitution.

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⁽d) Encourage education and public understanding of the facts and relevance of the Assyrian Genocide in comparison to modern-day crimes against humanity.

^{2.} That the Members of the Legislature acknowledge that the Ottoman Empire's campaign against its Christian minorities that occurred between 1914 and 1923 constituted genocide against Assyrians, Armenians and 7 Greeks.

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Assyrians celebrate Akitu 6773 with song and dance

By Julian Bechocha Courtesy of RUDAW April 1, 2023

ERBIL -

Unusually cold temperatures did not put a damper on Assyrian, Chaldean, and Syriac celebrations of Akitu, the Assyrian-Babylonian New Year, in the northern parts of Iraq on Saturday, 4/1/2023.

Akitu marks the revival of nature in the spring and is dedicated to the rebirth of the ancient Mesopotamian god Marduk and his victory when he created the world out of chaos.

The festival, also known as Kha b-Nisan (first of April in the Suret language), is typically celebrated with large gatherings in the community's ancestral homeland of Duhok and the Nineveh Plains. Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syriacs play music and dance while wearing traditional costumes.

It is known as the world's oldest holiday.

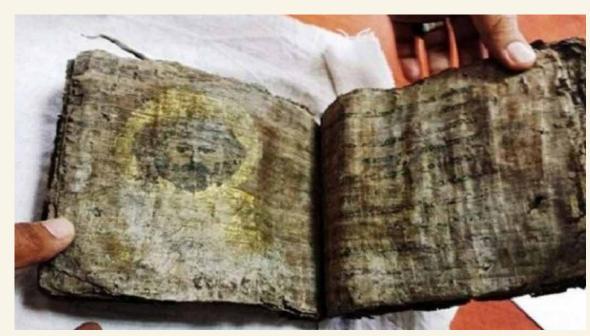
Iraqi and Kurdish leaders extended their congratulations to the Christian community and reaffirmed the values of coexistence and religious equality.

"We reaffirm our commitment to protecting equality, human rights and liberties, and consolidating peaceful coexistence, mutual acceptance, and tolerance among all religious and ethnic communities in Kurdistan," Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani said, assuring Christians that the Region "will remain the homeland of everyone." K-Region Prime Minister Mansour Barzani also sent his best wishes to the community, "hoping that it will be a year full of peace, security, and prosperity, and an end to all tragedies."

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani labeledthe festival as "an exceptionally rich cultural and civilizational heritage... a testament of the value of our national diversity that consolidates our unity and prosperity."



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1000-year-old bible with the painting of Jesus (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

The 1000-Year-Old Bible Portraying Jesus Found in Turkey

Gold pages and images of biblical figures

by Andrei Tapalaga | Nov 9, 2022 | Religion |

Historical and especially religious objects have been hunted by contrabandists even since the 10th century, but the Turkish authorities have been able to track down a group of professional criminals that have been stealing valuable historic and religious objects for years now. In 2015, their hiding spot was discovered in Tokat. The objects found in their trove were supposed to be smuggled out of the country and sold for huge amounts of money.

Besides different jewels, swords, and paintings, a very worn-out and distorted

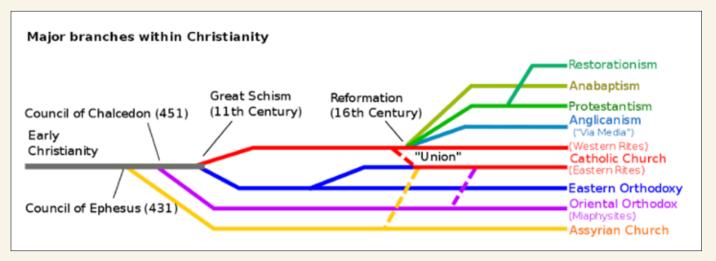
bible was found. The Bible itself didn't look very valuable until authorities discovered that every single one of its pages was made from gold. Specialists have taken a better look at the bible to assess its age and it seems that the bible is at least 1000 years old. This has been specified due to it being written in old Assyrian (Sureth), a language that since the 5th century had slowly died. The origin of the Bible is harder to define as old Assyrian was spoken in different locations such as Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. These contrabandists have been well known for stealing religious artifacts out of museums

and even churches that have such types of religious objects on display. The problem is that the criminals who found this object had not taken care of it, therefore deteriorating its quality even more. The Bible is beyond the point of being restored, but it's still a very rare and valuable piece.

Due to these smugglers, many historic objects go missing. This is due to the demand created by private collectors of antiques that would go as far as paying criminals to steal such objects for them. This is not because they want to obtain historic objects for a cheaper price, but because most of the rare historical objects within museums are not for sale, no matter how

astronomical the offers may be.
This piece is so rare that the Turkish
authorities are still trying to trace where
exactly it was obtained, would this be from
a museum or maybe even a new historical
discovery?

It is imperative to mention how valuable this find is, as it will offer new perspectives on the way Christianity evolved in the early centuries. The earliest information about Christianity can be found in the Codex from Leningrad, which offers information from as early as the 3rd century. A better understanding of the development of Christianity in the early centuries might give us a new perspective on it and the definition of its different branches:



Major Branches within Christianity (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Note: These are the major branches of Christianity, there are smaller branches that have been formed in the later centuries.

Many think that the first or "original" branch of Christianity is Catholic, but it's actually Assyrian. This is supported by the language in which this very old bible has been written!



An Interview with Michael Mikho: Host of Moor U La Moor

Elizabeth Mickaily-Huber, Ph.D.

EMH: Hello Michael. Firstly, thank you for agreeing to do this interview. To start off, can you please tell our Nineveh Magazine readers a bit about yourself and your background?

MM: I'm 33, born in Chicago to my parents, Sam and Sreenis (Serena) Mikho. I attended DePaul University and received a Bachelors of Science in Graphic Design. I currently work as a UI/UX Designer for a startup. I am also on the board of directors for the Assyrian American Cultural Organization of Arizona (AACO), as well as head of the Culture & Heritage committee. I have a younger brother named Canon who is equally patriotic and serves as the treasurer of the organization. Most importantly, I have been involved in our church, the Assyrian Church of the East, from childhood, serving the Lord and His church as a member, volunteer, and youth teacher over the years. I always try to spend my time equally between Assyrian nationalism and serving God. Giving all things their proper weight and not neglecting one over the other. All these things are a part of my identity and so I must live and act in that way.

My father came to America along with his sister from Iraq in the 70's and worked full-time as a bellmen in the Orington Hotel in Evanston, IL, while also studying computer science full time at DeVry College (now university). He worked hard to put himself through college while sending money back home to his widowed mother and sisters. My father

loved education and tried to instill in my brother and I the characteristics of hard work and how to be gentlemen, always making us aware of how to conduct ourselves with respect for others as well as our selves. "Sit up straight", "Don't have your back turned to someone", "Speak clearly and make sure to look people in the eye when talking to them". He prepared us for the professional world at a very young age, and we soaked it up simply out of respect and admiration for him.

When my mother came to America in the early 60's she was still a little girl. Two of her brothers had escaped the Baathists a couple years prior and settled in America to help make the transition for the rest of the family easier. Soon there would be thirteen people living in one apartment. My grandfather, who was knows as Rabi Aprim Benyamin ("Rabi Aprim") (though never a teacher was called Rabi because of his advanced knowledge in Sureth as well as other languages) had bought an apartment building. Over time, his three sons married and had families of their own. At that time families stuck together so, as they had children of their own, my mother being the youngest of all five of them, would take care of her nieces and nephews after coming home from Northeastern University where she was studying to be an accountant.

As for myself, my parents took a very active role in our upbringing. They payed attention to our

innate personalities and nurtured what they saw was good, pruning or mending as needed until we matured. Taking after my father, my brother Canon was the more have always liked a challenge. technical and analytic one, between the two of us. He could read something once and become an expert on the topic. Academics came easy to him and he excelled in it. I, on the other hand, had gravitated more toward the side of life that gave it beauty, culture, art, philosophy, and such. I first started with fine art, spending most of my time either drawing in my room or playing soccer with friends. Over time, I developed some still sketch portraits and developed a reputation at church for being the artist among our youth. People had been saying it so often that I thought to myself, "There's no way I'm the only Assyrian artist, is there? And so, began a quest to discover like-minded creative Assyrians. Since then, my desire to develop a rich and thriving Assyrian community, comprised of knowledge and beauty, has not subsided. It has taken shape through various projects and initiatives, involvement in organizations, and volunteering at church.

EMH: You came up with a great idea to teach Assyrians to use real Assyrian words as opposed to words borrowed from other languages. Please tell our readers about your Moor U La Moor ("Say and don't say") concept and what led you to create this platform?

MM: The program *Moor U La Moor* originated in the 60's and existed as radio and television segments in various Assyrians media programs throughout the world. My grandfather, Rabi Aprim, hosted one of those segments on the pres gala (radio), while living in Chicago. I had originally learned about the program through stories that my mother would tell me. She loved her father very much and so would glow up with a smile as she would tell me amazing tales about how he spoke eleven languages or about the work he had done for our church, writing various prayers and announcements to assist our clergy. The more I learned about my grandfather, the more I admired him. That alone peaked my interest about Moor U La Moor. What made me take action is more relatable, especially to second generation speakers. Growing up in America, speaking Assyrian takes a back seat, as we live in a society that heavily pushes assimilation and so our Sureth weakens. Many of us are ridiculed and made fun of for mispronouncing or using words

incorrectly. This is very discouraging and deters speakers from using Sureth at all. I, on the other hand,

When I learned that my Sureth needed work, I would teach myself to become more proficient. In that process, I started to suspect that some of our words sounded more Arabic that Assyrian and was disappointed in my parent's generation for using Arabic in their Sureth while criticizing us for using English in ours. When one considers all that, on top of the general fragility of our language, action must be taken and swiftly. So, I began working with friends, Robert Oushana, creator of www.learnassyrian.com, and Ninos Warda, author of many Assyrian e-books, to compile a list of words that we either suspected or were confident were borrowed. At the time, we had the content but I knew I couldn't produce the same kind of program (radio or television) because those mediums aren't as popular as before the rise of social media. I realized that I could reach more people on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. Fast forward a few years and Instagram created "the reel," which I felt was the perfect object for this kind of content.

EMH: What's your favorite Assyrian word and why?

MM: My favorite word to tell people isn't Assyrian is doonyeh (world), That's because its language of origin is neither Arabic nor Persian. In fact, it is borrowed from Hindi, specifically the Goojurati dialect. Assyrians know that we often borrow words from Arabic or Persian because we have lived among those speakers in Iraq, Syria, and Iran – this part is obvious. But people are always thrown off by Hindi. We forget that we also have strong historical connection in India due to the historical presence of the Assyrian Church of the East there. The words we borrow tell the story of where we've been. If we dive deeper into why words are borrowed we can learn more about culture in a beautiful way. There are 3 words that Assyrians can use to refer to the word for "world" that would not be borrowed, but native:

- 1. Tewil is used to represent the earth, as a planet.
- 2. Ur-ah is used to mean the world in which we live, categorized under humanities.
- 3. Alma is used to mean the people of the world, all

of humanity.

It's important to note that some sources attribute the origin of *doonyeh* to Arabic. The website Assyrianlanguages.org, however, sources the word's origin to Hindi. Though it is unclear to me which one is more accurate, I rely on our dictionaries as my primary source of linguistic truth.

EMH: Can you please provide our readers with a link so they can follow you?

MM: You can follow my page on Instagram @ murulamur https://www.instagram.com/murulamur/

EMH: In what ways do you believe that social media can increase Assyrian presence on the world stage?

MM: Social media is simply today's popular media. It has both advantages and disadvantages which are recognized by all professionals who use it. Social media is accessible and engaging. You can reach your audience wherever they are with a few clicks. You can also get them to interact with your project very easily relative to older mediums. However, social media is also very distracting. With the easy reach of your audience comes the onslaught of other accounts fighting to steal the attention of your audience. There's also the short attention span of the audience that is created due to a plethora of options. This is harmful to our memory function. My thoughts are that we, and by we I mean everyone, should not rely on social media. However, we should also not neglect it completely because it is a very effective way to obtain information. I would tell users to be very mindful of what type of content you train the algorithm to resurface to you through likes, comments, saves, and time spent. Conceptually the word to use to guide you is "focus".

As it pertains to Assyrians and the nationalistic work I do, though, I believe there's a place for Assyrians on the world stage, I don't wish to concern myself with what other people think about us. I'm too preoccupied with what Assyrians think about themselves, both as individuals of an Assyrian identity and as members of a collective ethnic group. When an Assyrian becomes excellent in his or her vocation and preserves a sense of patriotism, that individual will become a strong and valuable addition to our community. When our

community is filled with these types of people, then its strength will grow exponentially and the world will take interest.

EMH: How can social media be used to increase the interest of Assyrian youth in their unique language and heritage?

MM: The answer to this question will always be marketing. To those who understand what marketing truly means, this answer will suffice. One must meet one's audience where they are. Yesterday, it was Facebook, today it's Instagram, tomorrow it will be TikTok, and tomorrow comes faster than we can keep up. Time will pass and social media will have a new name, but marketing will still be the answer. It is how we come to understand the value a message brings to an audience. Knowing your audience is the key, and what you have to offer has to be something they want. If they don't want it, then you're dealing with a fundamental problem that requires more grassroots movements.

I don't presume to know how to use social media to reach our youth. I come from the camp of "if you build it, they will come". I had a vision for Moor U La Moor and I would see that vision realized despite the level of engagement I thought it would or wouldn't get. This is also a concept in branding and marketing that is often mentioned. Rather than trying to make your brand seem appealing to your audience, simply be true to the brands' core principals and the audience will be drawn to you, be it who you expected or not. I think part of why people find *Moor U La Moor* engaging is because it's bite sized. Posts range from 30 seconds to 1.5 minutes. Nevertheless, the audience gets the main point right away. It starts with a shock off the bat. "Moor aataa, u la moor baydakh" and right away the spectators find themselves shocked because they learn that they are doing something wrong. The correct Assyrian word for flag is aataa, although most people use the borrowed word baydakh.

EMH: You exhibit a strong and close connection to your Assyrian language and heritage. Has this always been the case? Or was there a pivotal moment in your life that brought that connection to life?

MM: It's more been a steadily growing sense of

duty to myself, as well as a love for the beauty of our language. My brother and I were always taught to speak Sureth at home, to the point where my parents wouldn't answer us unless we would repeat our sentence in Sureth as opposed to English. Over the years, I had to become more proficient in English and while that language got stronger, for some reason my Sureth got weaker. Perhaps it was negligence or lack of a formal structure (like school) which is required.

I also think that one big detriment is that, as we become working professionals, we build an English vocabulary of highly technical and modern words which are taught to us in a formal setting, keeping up with or even creating new words. How would an investor say "infrastructure debt asset" in Sureth? Or a designer navigate all the tools in Adobe software in our language? Or a medical professional use medical terms in Sureth? In the English-speaking world, if we had to talk about our jobs in Assyrian, we would often not find an adequate word in our language, and so it becomes more practical to use English, which is a sad fact. However, this is where we each need to step up and be proactive rather than complacent. I am not a linguist, not even close. I've never studied language and only in recent years have I been able to read and write in Sureth with decent competency. However, because I am Assyrian I need to make sure that I stay true to that part of my identity and take responsibility to grow my knowledge for this language that I love and that belongs to me.

EMH: What other projects do you have in the pipeline?

MM: Currently, I spearhead a book club at AACO where we learn about various aspects of Assyrian identity. We read books on ancient and modern history, modern Assyrian nationalism, culture, and so on.

EMH: You play the role of one of the the Magi (Three Wise Men) who went to see baby Jesus in the movie "The Passion of Blessed Mary" by Frank Gilbart. How did you land that role? What was going through your mind as you took part in one of the most touching scenes of the film?

MM: In fact, I was simply asked to serve and I did.

Originally, I was asked to help by filming behind the scenes footage and acting as a gaffer on the set, as I prefer to be behind the camera rather than in front of it, but they needed someone to play one of the Wise men and asked me, so I was happy to serve.

EMH: What was it like to be part of a film that has an all-Assyrian cast and is completely in the modern Assyrian language? It's quite a rarity, but I hope it will spur Assyrian cinematographers to continue pursuing themes that appeal to Assyrian audiences.

MM: It was a very beautiful site to see everyone working together for such a fulfilling reason. It wasn't my first time on a set, and I was very aware of how difficult and detailed making a film is. I mean, it takes a lot of hard work to make a bad film, let alone a good one. So, I was overjoyed to see everyone working together with relative ease. Everyone pitched in and worked tirelessly. It was an experience that was filled with a lot of intense emotion. It was fun, exhausting, spiritual, and amazing. I'm just grateful to have been a part of it and proud of the leaders who made it all possible.

EMH: Are there any other topics or thoughts you'd like to share with our readers?

MM: I will speak to the reader here. To my brothers and sisters: I ask you all to "live with intent". If you say you are Assyrian, then be the very best Assyrian you can be. If you say you are a Christian, then what kind of person would you be if you didn't serve God with all your heart? Each breath we take is a gift and the next one is not promised so seize the day without delay!

EMH: Thanks for your time Michael! I'm pleased to have had this opportunity to learn more about you. God bless!!



MOUNT NISIR AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE **ASSYRIAN CHURCH***

Simo Parpola

Assyriologists in general have no problem with using terms like 'temple' and 'pagan' with reference to ancient Mesopotamia, but serious comparisons with Christianity, its belief structure and central concepts are on the whole carefully avoided and rejected as anachronistic and potentially dangerous (see, e.g., Frahm 2000-2001). In what follows, I hope to show that the Christian church was, despite appearances and repeated allegations to the contrary, built on foundations laid by Assyria, and the continuity and survival of Assyrian ideas in Christianity must be taken seriously. I am glad to be able to present this study in a volume honouring Gianni Lanfranchi, who for many years has steadfastly fostered interdisciplinary research of the ancient Near East and contributed so much to our understanding of it. Buon compleanno Gianni, e tanti anni di salute, buon lavoro e nuove scoperte!

Towards the end of the Deluge Story embedded in the Epic of Gilgamesh, the ark of Utnapishtim lands on top of a high mountain rising from the receding waters. For six days, the mountain holds the boat fast and does not let it move. Then, on the seventh day-Sunday-Utnapishtim emerges from the ark and starts performing offerings on top of the 'ziggurat' of the mountain-offerings that please the great gods gathering on the spot so much that they persuade Enlil to turn the hero and his wife into gods and grant them eternal life at the "mouth of the rivers".1

The name of the mountain on which the ark landed is written ambiguously (KUR.ni-MUS) and can be read either Nişir or Nimus. In his editio princeps (1875, 270), George Smith chose the former alternative, and this reading went unchallenged for 111 years until W. G. Lambert, based on the unambiguous spelling Nimu-us in an OB personal name, suggested that the correct reading was Nimus (Lambert 1986). Although the evidence is slim, it seems conclusive, and the mountain now appears as Nimuš in Andrew George's recent critical edition (2003) and in all post-1986 translations of the epic.

But why did the poet who composed the Deluge Story of Gilgamesh and included it in the Ninevite version of the epic choose Nimus for the landing place of the ark? Apart from the Gilgamesh epic, this mountain also appears (in the same ambiguous spelling) in the inscriptions of Assumasirpal II, and can be identified either as Pir Omar Gudrun (2,588 m), a very impressive peak 80 km northeast of Kirkuk, or as Pir-i Mukurun (2,625 m) in the same general area.2 However, there are many much higher peaks in the Zagros mountains, some of them rising over 4,400 metres,3 not to speak of Mt. Ararat in Urartu (5,137 m), so height alone cannot have been the reason. I suggest therefore that Nimuš was chosen because it was a relatively well-known mountain not far from Assyria (only 100 km from Arbela as the crow flies) and especially because its ambiguous spelling suited the hidden agenda of the poet. It is a double entendre meant at the same time to hide and reveal: on the surface, the ark lands on Nimuš; but on the allegorical level-the most important interpretational level of the epic-it lands on Nisir, a mountain 'hidden behind the surface'

The Allegorical Level of the Epic of Gilgamesh

In the course of the past two decades, it has become clear that the Gilgamesh epic and Mesopotamian myths in general were heavily coded texts involving a hidden level of understanding, towards which the reader was guided by means of various esoteric clues (intertextual allusions, puns, riddles, double entendres, ambiguous spellings, and enigmatic words and expressions) interspersed in the text.5 These clues were meant to be recognized and understood by readers intelligent and educated enough to do so, while escaping the ignorant and the fool, and unraveling textual secrets was considered tantamount to highest wisdom.6 Since inventing interpretational clues and working them into the text certainly was no easy task but must have required much ingenuity and effort, one can be certain that the allegorical level of the Epic was its primary and most important one, crucial to its understanding The surface story itself was of course also essential, but its religious and philosophical dimensions would become fully understandable only when read in light of the clues to the reader interspersed in the text. Tablet I of the Epic conspicuously begins with a reference to hidden wisdom:

He le[arnt] the totality of all wisdom, saw the hidden (nisirtu), uncovered the veiled (katimtu), and brought back a message from the time before the Flood.

These lines certainly refer to the revelations of Utnapishtim in the Flood Tablet, which are introduced with similar words (Gilg. XI 9-10): "I will disclose to you a hidden thing (amat nisirti) and tell you a secret (piristu) of the gods". Later on, Utnapishtim repeats the very same words when revealing to Gilgamesh the knowledge about the Plant of Life (Gilg. XI 281-282), and there is one more reference to "secret of the gods" in the same tablet:

I [Ea] did not myself disclose the great gods' secret; I let Atra-hasīs see a dream and so he heard the god's secret. (Gilg. XI 196-197)

There thus is a clear emphasis on secret knowledge in Tablet XI, which represents the culmination of Gilgamesh's search for eternal life. The word nisirtu, "hidden thing", does not occur anywhere else in the whole epic except the Prologue, which, as just stated, anticipates the content of Tablet XI.

It seems reasonable to assume that this emphasis on the word nisirtu was aimed to guide the reader towards reading the name of the mountain as Nisir and recognize it as a clue to an allegorical interpretation of the passage. The assonance of Nişir with nişirtu, the connection of the latter with the verbal root *nsr, "to guard, watch, restrain, control, protect, keep secret", and the fourfold repetition of the mountain name in lines 144-1468 all suggest that it had a hidden significance transcending the surface story. But what was it?

Rereading the deluge story with an eye for possible clues, two passages in particular catch one's attention.

See Annus 2000 and 2006; Glassner 2002; Kilmer 1982 and 1987; Noegel 1991, 1995, 1997 and 2000; Parpola 1993a, 1997 nn. 114 and 119ff., and 1998a; Weinfeld 1997-1998.

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The Ark = Ziggurat

Lines 58-63 of Tablet XI describe the extraordinary structure and dimensions of the ark; a perfect cube measuring one iku (= 10 nindan x 10 nindan = 8,100 m²) in surface area, 10 nindan (= 90 m) in height and 10 nindan each side of its square top, provided with 6 lofts, and divided vertically into 7 and internally into 9 parts. As Glassner (2002) has shown, this description makes the ark a replica of the ziggurat of Babylon, Etemenanki, the measurements of which are known from the so-called Esangil Tablet and inscriptions of Esarhaddon. The coincidence of the measurements cannot be accidental, since the dream sent to Utnapishtim before the Flood stresses the significance of the ark's dimensions:

The boat that you are going to build, her dimensions should all correspond: her breadth and length should be the same, cover her with a roof, like the Apsû.9 (Gilg. XI 28-31)

Why would the ark replicate the ziggurat of Babylon? Because the ziggurat, with its seven stages associated with the seven planetary spheres, symbolized the heavenly ladder by which the goddess Istar-the archetype of the human soul -crossed the boundary between heaven and netherworld, and hence the path to heaven for humans seeking salvation in the footsteps of the goddess.10 This was also the function of the ark that Utnanishtim was told to build:

Demolish the house, build a boat! Abandon riches and seek survival, spurn property and save life! Put on board the boat the seed of all living creatures!

The last sentence implies that ark was to offer salvation not just to Utnapishtim and his family but all the people entering it, including their descendants in future times (see below).

In addition to the ziggurat, Istar as paragon of the fallen and resurrected soul was also equated with the Mesopotamian 'sacred tree' rooted in the Apsû and often depicted as growing on a cosmic mountain symbolizing the visible world. 11 The tree had innumerable variants but essentially consisted of three superimposed triads or 3 x 3 = 9 constituent parts, recalling the nine compartments of Utnapishtim's ark. Each of its nine constituent parts was associated with a divine power or virtue essential to human perfection. The symbolisms of the ziggurat and the tree were intrinsically interconnected, so that the descent of the goddess through the planetary spheres could be visualized as gradual loss of her divine powers and virtues, and correspondingly her return to heaven as gradual regaining of the lost powers and

The cult of Istar was extremely powerful and widespread in Assyria, and although its adherents were sworn to lifelong secrecy about the details of the cult, 12 we know for certain that it involved belief in immortality and resurrection of the soul, and that the myth of Istar's descent into the netherworld and the relevant symbolism played a central part in it.13

The moment just before the outbreak of the Deluge is described in the Epic as

Šamaš had set me a deadline-"in the morning he will rain down breadcakes, in the evening, a torrent of wheat. Go into the boat and close your door tightly!"-that time had arrived... I watched the look of the weather: the weather was frightening to behold: I went into the boat and closed my door tightly. To the man who caulked the boat, the skipper Puzur-dKUR.GAL, I gave the palace with all its goods.14 (Tablet XI 87-96)

The skipper Puzur-dKUR.GAL mentioned in lines 95-96 does not appear in the Atrahasis myth on which the Flood story of the Gilgamesh epic was based,15 and therefore is an addition to the story made by the poet who composed the Ninevite version, the earliest manuscripts of which all come from Assyria and date from the early first millennium BC. There must have been a special reason for making this addition, for very few individuals mentioned by name appear in the epic, and many of these names, written in unusual way, involved hidden meanings to be discovered through meditation and exegetic analysis.16

What is noteworthy about this particular name is that it is otherwise totally unknown, and its reading, like that of the mountain Nimuš/Nisir, is ambiguous. George (2003, 514), following Michalowski, proposed to read it Puzur-Enlil, which is theoretically possible, since Enlil was often referred to as "the great mountain" (KUR GAL). However, the problem is that even the name Puzur-Enlil is not known from elsewhere, and it is difficult to see why the poet would have wanted to name the skipper after Enlil, the main architect of the Flood. The same is true of the other theoretically possible reading proposed earlier, Puzur-Amurru.17

Literally translated, Puzur-dKUR.GAL means "the hidden or concealed place of the great mountain". I submit that its esoteric reading, masked under the ambiguous spelling, was Puzur-Aššur, a name of three Assyrian kings, the first of whom (Puzur-Aššur I, c. 2050 BC) was considered the founder of the Assyrian dynastic line.18 "The great mountain" was one of the most prominent epithets of Aššur as the creator of the physical universe (symbolized by the cosmic mountain),19 and the name Puzur-Assur thus carried an important ideological message: the Assyrian king is Aššur's "hidden place" in this world. Indeed, according to the Assyrian royal ideology, the king was not only Aššur's representative upon earth; he was his very image radiating heavenly light to the darkness of the world.³⁰ Conceived by the divine spirit (Istar), he also was the son of god, the good shepherd leading his flock to the right path, and the expert skipper steering the ship of state to a safe haven in

The passage is thus a covert etiology of Assyrian kingship, the origins of which are here pushed back to antediluvian times and linked to the last antediluvian king, Utnapishtim. The "palace with all its goods" entrusted to Puzur-Aššur is the ark, which safeguarded the continuity of the institution.²² Any educated Assyrian reflecting on the passage would have been able to recognize the point, whereas it would almost certainly have escaped most non-Assyrian readers, to whom the name of the skipper meant nothing. It can therefore be regarded as certain that the Standard Babylonian version of the Gilgamesh epic was composed in Assyria. 23 It is possible that the ambiguous spelling Puzur-4KUR.GAL was chosen to obscure the Assyrian origin of the Standard Babylonian version; more likely, however, it just served as an additional clue meant to direct the reader's attention to the mountain on which the ark was to rest

Palace = Church

In Assyria, the word "palace" (ēkallu) not only referred to a palace as physical building, but to the entire royal household with all its tens of thousands of employees, administrators, domestics and dependents, and in practice was the equivalent of our "state". But this state differed from ours in that it was not secular. The king was the high priest of Aššur; his queen was the earthly image of the queen of heaven, the "holy spirit"; his cabinet ministers were images of the great gods (the hypostatized powers of God); and his governors, military commanders and retainers, many of whom were castrates, emulated the androgynous "heavenly host".24

The word ēkallu also had a more specific religious meaning. In Assyrian royal inscriptions, it often referred to the temple of Marduk in Babylon, Esangil, which was varyingly called "his (Marduk's) palace", "the palace of your (Marduk's) divinity", "the palace of heaven and earth", "the palace of the gods", or "the palace

Tallqvist 1932, 50-51.

23

^{*} The bibliographical abbreviations are those of The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (CAD). The Epic of Gilgamesh is cited after George 2003, with occasional modifications to the translations given there.

The phrase "at the mouth of the rivers" (pi nārāti) is still commonly believed to indicate that Utnapishtim was after his deification transferred to a place near the delta of the Euphrates and Tigris, possibly the island of Dilmun (see George 2003, 519-521), although W. F. Albright already long ago demonstrated that it does not in this context refer to the discharge of rivers but to their source, "the subterranean fresh-water ocean [Apsû] from which the rivers flow, the home of Enki/Ea" (Albright 1919, 165). The phrase is a double entendre making use of the homophony between pú "mouth" (st. estr. pi) and piu "source, spring" (cf. il-lu A.KAL = Inu, plu, namba'u, Diri III 130a-c), and refers to the streams of water issuing from Ea, the god of wisdom. It is important to realise that Gilgamesh meets Utnapishtim in a shamanistic "ascent to heaven" which was synonymous with "descent into the Apsů" (see Parpola 1993a 194-196, and note Gilg. XI 42. "II shalll go down to the Apsû, to live with Ea, my master") The whereabouts of Utnapishtim after the Flood is therefore not to be sought in this world but in the transcendent source of wisdom and light located beyond it (see Parpola 1993a, 173), that is to say, in the highest heaven, with God himself.

² RIMA 2 204, 34-39; see Streek 2001 and George 2003, 516. Note that the word "mountain" exceptionally appears together with the determinative KUR (KUR-ú KUR.ni-MUS) in Gilg, XI 143, as in RIMA 2 204, 36 (KUR-e KUR.ni-MUS), thus supporting an intertextual connection between the two texts. In the Syriac tradition going back to The Book of the Cave of Treasures, traditionally attributed to Ephrem Syrus (c. 306-372), the ark came to rest upon the top of mount Kardo (Gudī Dağ, Assyrian Nipur), a 2089 m peak 120 km NE of Nineveh (Budge 1886, 32; 1927, 114). On the landing of ark in Syriac tradition see further Lang 2010,

The highest peak is Zard Kuh (4.450 m) near Najafābād/Kišēšim, about 310 km from Assur. As recognized by Annus (2000), in the gnostic flood story included in the Nag Hammadi treatise The Hypostasis of the Archons, which "by no means is a rewording of the biblical flood story but clearly a mythological piece of Mesopotamian origin", the ark lands on a mountain named Sir. Despite objections of George (2003, 516 n. 252), this is strong evidence that the intended esoteric reading of the mountain in the Gilgamesh epic was Nisir.

⁶ Cf. Gilg. XI 196f.; Daniel 5:5-11; and see Parpola 1993b, 57-59, 1993c (esp. xiv-xix), and

Cf. Parpola 2001, 182 and 188f.

⁸ Note that the name is in these lines written without the determinative KUR, as if it were an adjective qualifying the word "mountain" (written KUR-ii), rather than its name.

Roofing the ark "like the Apsů" means that it was to be veiled in mystery, note en-gur LAGABNHAL = apsû, A 1/2: 233 (where LAGABNHAL = "water hole" with inscribed "secret"); hal.an.kù "heavenly secret" = apsû, YBC 5026:18; and amat apsî ša kîma upê šapât, "the word of the Apsů which is as impenetrable as a cloud", SBH 55:12 (all cited CAD A/2 s.v.

apsú).

16 See James – van der Shuijs 2008, 63–74; Parpola 1993a (p. xv and nn. 111–117, 133) and 2000, 199. In Assurbanipal's hymn to Mullissu/Istar of Nineveh, the goddess herself is addressed as "ziggurat, the pride of Nineveh".

See Parpola 1993a and 1997, xxxiv.

¹² See KAR 139 r. 2–8. translated and commented upon in Parpola 1997. n. 132.

¹³ See Parpola 1997, xlvii-xlviii.

This passage is misunderstood in George 2003, 514. Puzur-dKUR.GAL was not a "shipwright" (naggāru / naggār eleppi) but a "boutman, shipmaster" (nallāḥu), who did not

actually build the boat but directed its construction and made sure it was watertight. He could not have stayed behind to "close the hatch from the outside" and take possession of the "remaining possessions" of Utnapishtim (thus George) because everything the latter possessed had already been loaded aboard the ark (lines 81-85). Hence "the palace with all its goods" can only refer to the ark. The verb pehú does not basically mean "to seal" but "to clog, shut, block"; in line 95 it is a terminus technicus for making a boat watertight (cf. du-u DUs = pehû sa eleppi, A VIII/1: 136), and in line 96 it means closing a door tightly.

See Lambert - Millard 1969, 93.

⁶ See Parnola 1998a.

¹⁷ Cf. George 2003, 514. Amurru (^dMAR.TU) was intrinsically associated with the Deluge through the spelling of his name (cf. mar.urus [= TU] // abūbu, SBH 105:22f and Langdon BL No. 13:12f; also 4mar.uru₅ = Adad ša abūbi, CT 24 40:48).

¹⁸ See Galter 1998. According to the Assyrian King list, Puzur-Assur I was the fourth king before Irisum I, who ruled c. 1974-1935 BC according to the chronological scheme of Veenhof 2003, 57

²⁶ See Parpola 1993a, 185; 1997, xv; and 2010, 36.

In SAA 9 no. 2.2, the prophet, speaking for Istar, declares to the king: "Have no fear, Esarhaddon! Like a skilled skipper I will steer the ship into a good port". This is an allusion to the palace as a "ship of state tossed on the angry sea" attested in Mesopotamia since the Sumerian times, and to the king's role as the ship's "skilled skipper", guided and protected by the goddess; see Parpola 1997, n. 296, for other examples of the ship of state metaphor in Assyria and classical antiquity, and Murray 2004, 168 and 249-253, for the church as "ship" and Christ as "(master) mariner (mallāḥā, gūbernēṭā) who has conquered the raging sea" in early Syriac Church, an image also applied to the faithful Christians ("skillful pilot, watchful mariner", Lent 1915, 181, 191, 192). Cf. Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41 and Luke 8:22-25. For Istar as the holy spirit of god and the heavenly mother of the king see Parpola 1997,

According to Berossus, the pilot of the ark was taken to the gods along with Xisuthros and his wife, but in the Standard Babylonian version, only Utnapishtim and his wife are deified. Thus by implication Puzur-KUR GAL took care of the ark and the people and property within it after Utnapishtim's removal to the "mouth of the rivers". He must not to be confused with Utnapishtim's post-deluge boatman Ur-šanabi, who plays an entirely different role in the epic and has nothing to do with the ark.

of the gods, image of the Apsû, replica of Ešarra".25 Besides Esangil, the main shrine of Aššur (Ešarra) was also called "the palace of the gods".26

The semantics of Assyrian ēkallu, "palace", thus were exactly the same as those of the biblical Hebrew, Jewish Aramaic, Syriac and Arabic words for "temple,

- Hebr. hékāl "palace (of Nineveh, Babel, Ahab, king); temple (passim); temple of Jerusalem" (Koehler-Baumgartner 1958, 230b)
- JAram. hêkāl, hêklā "Palast; das Tempelhaus; das Heilige im Tempel (im Gegensatz zum Allerheiligsten)" (Dalman 1938, 112b)
- . Syr. haikal, haiklö "palace; temple; the temple at Jerusalem; that part of a church which is for the people = Eng. nave" (Payne Smith 1903, 103a)
- Arab. haikal, pl. hayākil "Tempel; großes Gebäude; Altar" (Wehr 1958, 926b)

Although these words, all of them certainly loanwords from Akkadian, also mean "palace" or "great building" in general, their primary meaning is "temple, church". This implies that Assyrian ēkallu, too, had strong sacral connotations consonant with the overwhelmingly religious nature of Assyrian kingship and the king's sacerdotal, salvific and redemptory roles.27 In fact, the Assyrian royal palaces were sacred buildings designed after celestial patterns and in many respects comparable to temples.28 Some of them had Sumerian ceremonial names otherwise given only to temples and shrines, for example Esarhaddon's armoury in Nineveh, which was named éš.gal.šid.dù.dù.a = ēkal pāaidat kalāma, "the palace (Sum.: the great shrine) controlling everything", and included shrines for Aššur, Ištar of Nineveh and "all the gods".29 The powerful cult of Istar, with its network of cult centres and temples spread all over the empire and headed by the queen as earthly image of the goddess, was an extension of the palace organisation and certainly the most important part of the Assyrian 'church'.3

A Church Built on Rock

Against this background, it is possible to understand the allegory of the landing of the ark. The 'ziggurat'31 on which Utnapishtim performed his offerings is the prototype of the Assyrian church-"a church built on rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail" (Matthew 16:16-18).32 The mountain on which it rested was called Nişir because it involved a mystery: it was God himself, Aššur, "the great mountain", revealed to the world in his son (the king) and in the eternal institution of kingship. By making the mountain "seize" the boat and prevent it from shaking, the poet signals that God himself had saved the church from destruction and founded it

Those who knew and understood this mystery were "keepers (nāṣiru) of the secret of the great gods", "the secret of Istar", or "the secret of heaven and earth".34 I submit that the term nāsiru, "keeper of secrets", used by the adepts in the faith including the king, his political and religious advisers and the devotees of Istar at large, 35 is the origin of the terms nasurai, nosrôyô, nôsərî, nasrānī and an-nuşairīya, by which the gnostics and Christians are referred to in Mandaic, Syriac, Hebrew and Arabic. The term mūdû, "one who knows" (opposite: lā mūdû, "one who does not know")36 often found in Assyrian texts containing esoteric information, was an alternative term for nasiru, and I believe it is the origin of the self-designations of the Mandeans (mandayyī, from manda "knowledge") and gnostics (gnöstikoi "knowers", from gnāsis "knowledge"), which originally were largely synonymous with naşurai and the other designations of Christians. It is well known that early Christianity, like Gnosis, was a mystery religion whose secrets were not divulged to outsiders who had not received baptism.

The Secret of Eternal Life in Assyrian Religion

In the lines following the landing of the ark (Tablet XI 160-300), Utnapishtim reveals the secret of his salvation. This long discourse would require a long commentary, but its essence can be compressed into three well-known Christian

- Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48)
- . Keep awake then, for you never know the day or the hour (Matthew 25:13)
- . The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal love (Romans 6:23)

In the soteriology of Utnapishtim, mankind is evil, and all sinners will be wiped out by God. Only those who enter the ark (i.e. the church), spurn riches, practice virtues and wisdom, and eventually attain perfection can be saved like himself. However, virtuous life requires constant vigilance, "staying awake". Put to test, Gilgamesh fails it and is forced to realise that he cannot find life by his own efforts. It is only by divine grace³⁷ that he gets a reward for his toils: his guilt is washed away and he receives knowledge of the rejuvenating Plant of Life.34

Ascetic self-denial, prophecy, and fanatic search for immortality were the dominating features of the cult of Istar.39 The same is true of Gnosticism and early Syriac Christianity,40 and hundreds of pages could be written on the similarities between Assyrian and Syriac ascetisism, especially the stylite phenomenon, which definitely had Assyrian roots.⁴¹ Space however forbids elaborating on this issue

Strikingly, the image of the early Syriac church, as reflected in the hymns of St. Ephrem, is a mountain reflecting the ark in its disposition. It is divided into three levels, the topmost for the "perfect", the middlemost for the "righteous", and the lowermost for the "penitents", who will have to climb the ladders of the mountain in order to reach the highest level and the paradise, symbolized by the Tree of Life that grows on top of this imaginary mountain.43

6 CAD M/2 163-168

The Assyrian Roots of the Christian Church

How are the similarities between the Assyrian, Christian and gnostic systems of

The answer is simple. Both Christianity and Gnosticism are lineal descendants of the Assyrian church, whose belief system, temples and priesthood remained virtually intact until the beginning of the Christian era and centuries after it, despite the fall of the Empire.44 Their Assyrian background is obscured by the radical change of the underlying frame of reference, but emerges clearly enough from a systematic review of the available evidence.

Christianity originated in Galilee and the hinterlands of Samaria which were annexed to Assyria in 733 and 722 respectively as the provinces of Megiddo and Samaria.45 Large parts of the latter's population were deported to central Assyria and Media and replaced by deportees from Babylonia (Babylon, Cutha, Sippar, Uruk), Elam and Arabia.46 who were numerous enough to leave traces of their native language in the local dialect.⁴⁷ The immigrants mixed with the local population and with time embraced the Samaritan cult of Yahweh, while keeping their own religion and continuing to serve their own gods as well.48 As is well known, at the time of Jesus, the Galileans and the 'ethnically unclean' Samaritans (rabbinic Kūtūm, "Cuthaeans") were a despised segment of population looked upon with aversion and suspicion by 'ethnically clean' Jews.49

The home town of Jesus, Nazareth, is situated some 50 km due north of Samaria/Sebaste. 20 km northeast of it lies a village named Arbel, and barely 3 km east of Arbel lies Magdala (Migdal, Magdal), the home town of Mary Magdalene.9 None of these towns are mentioned in the Old Testament, and based on their names, I venture the suggestion that they were settlements or monasteries constructed by the Assyrians to spread the tenets of the cult of Ištar to the conquered provinces. Nazareth (MHebr. Näsərat, Syr. Nosrat, Arab. an-Näsira) has no known etymology but resembles Akkadian nişirtu, 'secret' (see above), while Arbel (Gr. Arbēla, now Hirbat Irbīd) is identical with the name of the main cult centre of Ištar in Assyria, 51 and Magdala replicates the Aramaic name of Dur-Katlimmu, the capital of the Habur area where many Samaritans were deported.52

According to Matthew 2:23, Joseph, after his return from Egypt with Mary and baby Jesus, "withdrew to the region of Galilee; there he settled in a town called Nazareth (Ναζαρέθ). This was to fulfil the words spoken through the prophets: 'He shall be a Nazarene (Ναζωραῖος)'."

Already Lidzbarski (1920, xvi ff.) drew attention to the philological difficulties which prevent Ναζωραΐος meaning "a man from Nazareth" (Syr. noṣrōnō, Arab. nāṣirī), and suggested that the evangelists placed the childhood of Jesus in Nazareth to explain the tradition that he was a 'naşurai', that is, an adept in the Mandean faith (cf. above).54 Personally, I would not exclude the possibility that Jesus did spend his childhood in Nazareth, but regard it as certain that he indeed was a 'nasurai' initiated in the secrets of Assyrian religion. This is evident not only from his teachings and entire career,55 but above all from his relationship with Mary Magdalene, the "penitent whore", which is explainable only against the background of Mesopotamian religion, where the mystical union of the "good shepherd" (the king) and the "holy spirit/penitent whore" (Istar) provided the paradigm for man's

An important gnostic teacher and near contemporary of Jesus also appeared in public with a "penitent whore". This was Simon Magus from the village of Gitta in Samaria,57 who had as his permanent companion a woman named Helen, a "lost sheep" whom he had redeemed from prostitution in Tyre. 58 The Church Father Ireaneus (c. 130-202) has some remarkable things to say about the relationship of Simon and Helen and the followers of Simon:

He was in the habit of carrying her about with him, declaring that this woman was the first conception of his mind, the mother of all, by whom, in the beginning, he conceived in his mind [the thought] of forming angels and archangels. For this Ennoea leaping forth from him, and comprehending the will of her father, descended to the lower regions [but] was detained by those powers and angels who had been produced by her. She suffered all kinds of contumely from them, so that she could not return upwards to her father, but was even shut up in a human body, and for ages passed in succession from one female body to another... Thus she, passing from body to body, and suffering insults in every one of them, at last became a common prostitute; and she it was that was meant by the lost sheep.

For this purpose, then, he had come that he might win her first, and free her from slavery, while he conferred salvation upon men, by making himself known to them ... Those who place their trust in him and Helena [are] free ...; for men are saved through his grace, and not on account of their own righte-

The mystic priests belonging to this sect both lead profligate lives and practise magical arts, each one to the extent of his ability. They use exorcisms and incantations... The successor of this man was Menander, also a Samaritan by birth, and he, too, was a perfect adept in the practice of magic. He affirms that the primary Power continues unknown to all, but that he himself is the person who has been sent forth from the presence of the invisible beings as a saviour, for the deliverance of men... His disciples obtain the resurrection by being baptized into him, and can die no more, but remain in the possession of immortal youth.59

Although condemned as heresy, this account makes it clear that the teachings of Simon were fundamentally the same as those of Jesus and perfectly in accord with the central tenets of early Christianity and the ancient Assyrian church. The descent, humiliation and deliverance of Helen/Ennoea imitates the Assyrian myth of Ištar's Descent and Resurrection (SAACT 6), itself based on the Sumerian Inanna's Descent to the Nether world and continued by the gnostic Sophia myth explicated in the Nag Hammadi treatise Exegesis of the Soul.60

²³ Space forbids elaborating on this issue here. Let me just point out that the Assyrians, who since the early second millennium had composed their belles-lettres in Standard Babylonian, were perfectly able to compose literary masterpieces of the quality of the Gilgamesh epic on their own, with or without the help of the Babylonians.

²⁴ See in more detail Parpola 1995 and 1999.

²⁵ É.SAG,İL É.GAL-Šú; Borger Esarh, Uruk A₁ 4, A₃ 20, RIMB 6 Esarh, 11:9 and 15:19; é-saggil É.GAL EN-ti-ka: Asb. L4 ii 30'; É.SAG.II. É.GAL DINGIR MES; RIMA 3 Shalm, III 5 v 6; Esarh. Bab C i 32, iii 22; C2 i 21', iii 9', D i 15, iv 16; Asb. C i23, J2: 12, T i 21; RIMB 6 Asb. 2:14, 14:8; é-sag-gil É.GAL DINGIR.MES: Borger Esarh. AsBbA2 r. 42, Bab. A i 29, ii 44, E iii 39, BM 78223 i 29 and ii 44, Asb. IIT 50; é-sag-gil É.GAL DINGIR.MES ma-at-lat ABZU, Borger Esarh, Bab, Aiii 47 and C v 2: MAH 15777 ii 6: £.SAG.İt, £.GAL AN,KLA // £.MIN Ê.GAL AN-e û er-se-ti, RIMB 6, Šamaš-šum-ukin 1:17. Note that the ziggurat of Esangil (Etemenanki) had exactly the same measurements as the ark of Utnapishtim, which was "roofed like the Apsů" (Gile, XI 31: see above).

⁵⁶ É.SAG.İL É.GAL DINGIR.MES: OIP 2 118:4f (Senn.); KAV 171 r. 12 (Sin-šar-iškun).

²⁷ Parpola 1998b.

²⁸ Parpola 1999, 24-25.

²⁰ RINAP 4 1 vi 42-43, 2 vi 7-8.

³⁰ See Parpola 1997, xv; 2008, 20 and 99; and 2012, 619-620. An example of the expansion of the cult of Istar over the entire Near East is the integration of the cult of Kybele of Carchemish into it. In a recently found cuneiform text from Burmarina near Carchemish, Kybele is written with the "fish" sign (4KU6), which later became the symbol of Christian faith (Radner 2005). For Istar as the goddess of wisdom (corresponding to gnostic Sophia) see

Note the pun involved in the word ziggurratu, which meant both "mountain peak" and

² Cf. Chapter VI of Murray 2004 ("The Rock and the House on the Rock," esp. 218–238). 33 ana KUR.ni-MUŠ ītemid eleppu / šadū KUR.ni-MUŠ eleppa işbatma ana nāši ul iddin, Gilg.

XI 142-146. Note that the verbs sabātu "to seize" and nadānu "to give, let" normally require an animate subject, and that the verb nášu basically means "to quake, shake, sway", not just "to move". Hence the poet did not just mean that the mountain did not let the boat "float free again" (thus CAD N/2 114b) but that it did not let it shake. Cf. Lang 2010, 144-145.

³⁶ E.g., Assurbanipal näsir pirišti iläni rabūti, AfO 13 205:4; ummānu mūdū nāsir pirišti ilāni rabūti, BBR 24:19; āšib blī mummu nāşir pirišti ilāni rabūti, VAB 4 256 i 33; [mār bārē] nāsir pirišti ili u šarri, SAAB 3 10:13'-14'; pirilta ša Ištār u[şur] ...piriltaša lā tattaşarma lā tašallim, KAR 139:14, r. 7, nişirti äšipüti uşurma mamma lä immar, BAM 322:90; nişirtu šamů u erseti usur. RA 62 53:4.

E.g., ummánī lē'ûti mūdē pirišti, Borger Esarh. 83:29; nisirti apkalli lā mūdû lā immar, CT 25 50 + CT 46 54:20: mūdù mūdā likallim lā mūdù lā immar. JRAS 1925 pl. 4: 66.

Utnapishtim and his wife must be understood as symbolizing the masculine and feminine aspects of God.

Gilgamesh finds this plant in the depths of the Apsû, and it pricks like thorn (XI 283-293). I suggest that it is an allegory for the study of sacred scripture (the "tree of knowledge" of biblical wisdom literature) and its 'rejuvenating effect' ("its name is 'the Old Man has grown young'", XI 299) should be understood in the sense of spiritual rebirth. Cf. John 3:3-4: "Jesus answered, 'In truth, in very truth I tell you, unless a man has been born over again he cannot see the kingdom of God.' 'But how is it possible', said Nicodemus, 'for a man to be born when he is old?": also cf. Luke 18:17 // Matthew 19:14 // Mark 10:15, "Truly I tell you. anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it". I understand the reference to the serpent that swallows the plant (X 304-306) in terms of the role of the serpent of Genesis as the bearer of gnosis about the tree (see Lancellotti 2000,

³⁹ Cf. the prophecy SAA 9 9:8-16 modelled after the refrains in Gilg. X (219-225, 251-253) and showing that the devotees of the cult modelled their life after the toils and tribulations of Gilgamesh. Note also the allusion to Gilgamesh's toils in Tablet 19-10. For Gilgamesh as an ascetic see Parpola 1993a, 192

See Rudolph 1987 and Voobus 1958 and 1960.

⁴¹ Cf. Lucian, De Syria Dea 28-29: "A man goes up one of these pillars twice a year and stays at the top of the pillar for the period of seven days. And they say ... that he speaks with the gods on high and asks boons for all Syria. But others believe that this is also done because of Deukalion [~ Utnapishtim], in token and memory of [the] flood ... When he comes to the end of his climb, he ... draws up what he needs, wood, and clothes and food, of which he frames a seat like a nest; thereon he sits and abides for the space of the aforementioned seven days. And many come, putting ... coins into a vessel that lies near the pillar, everyone saying his name. Then someone that stands beside the pillar calls it up; and ... he prays for him... And he never sleeps. For if ever he falls asleep, a scorpion going up awakens him and does him piteous harm; and that is the pain that is laid on him for sleeping". This description of an established ascetic practice in a Syrian temple dedicated to an Assyrian goddess and still housing statues of Assyrian kings around AD 180 agrees so perfectly with what is known about the Syrian stylites (Peña et al. 1975) that direct continuity must be assumed. Note the reference to the Flood especially the reference to the ascetic's endeavour to stay awake for seven days in accordance with Gilg, XI 209-246, an endeavour shared by the paragon of all later stylites, St. Simeon Stylites (c. 390-459), see Bent 1915, 119.

⁴³ Murray 2004. 258-260. Cf. 848 above and Annus 2006.

⁴⁴ See Segal 2001; Parpola 2001, 191.

⁶⁸ RLA 11/7-8: 623; Oded 1979, 30, 66 and 70; Eph'al 1982, 105-107; 2 Kings 17:6, 24; Ezra

⁴⁷ For example, the word for year was /šat/ in Northern Israelite (cf. Akk. šattu) but /šanah/ in Judahite, and the diphthongs /ay/ and /aw/ were contracted to /ê/ and /ô/ in Northern Israelite (cf. Akk. $ay \ge \tilde{e}$ and $aw \ge \tilde{u}$) (Rollston 2005).

^{48 2} Kings 17:25-41; Purvis 1968.

⁴⁹ Cf. John 1:46, "'Nazareth!' Nathanacl exclaimed; 'Can anything good come from Galilee?"

⁸ See the map in Rainey and Notley 2006, 352. The coordinates of these towns are 32°42'07"N 35°18'12"E (Nazareth), 32°48'40"N 35°28'12"E (Arbel), and 32°50'20"N 35°29'55"E (Magdala). (Correct the coordinates for Arbel [32.45/35.25] in Siewert-Mayer

Note that, in addition to Arbel near Magdala, there were as many as three more Arbelas in the same general area! 1. Arbēla (gr.) = al-Fūla (ar.) = Castrum Faba (lat.) = Merḥavya (he), coordinates 32.35/35.15 (Siewert-Mayer 1994, 120b, 326b, 512a, 1082a); 2. Arbēla (gr.) = Rhabaël (gr.), coordinates 32.00/35.15 (ibid. 120a, 1350b); and 3. Arbēla (gr.) = Bet Arbel (he) = Irbid (ar.), coordinates 32.30/35.50, now in Jordania 30 km SE of the Sea of Galilee (ibid, 120b, 248a, 808a). 2 Kühne - Luther 1998.

⁵³ The allusion to the prophets is usually explained to refer to Isaiah 11:1, "Then a shoot shall grow from the stock of Jesse, and a branch (nësær) will spring from his roots". Other possibility often quoted is Judges 13:5, but it is generally admitted that there are difficulties with these explanations

[&]quot;That is, an adept in the faith, skilled in the white magic of the priests and concerned largely with the healing of men's bodies as well as their souls... Jesus, too, according to Mandean theologians, was a Nasurai, but he was a rebel, a heretic, who led men astray betrayed secret doctrines, and made religion easier" (Drower 1937, 3). The Mandeans of today live in southern Iraq, but their oral tradition is that they came "from the North" (ibid. 9). 55 Cf. Parpola 1997, n. 211. I maintain that the parallels adduced there are valid, despite the objections of Frahm 2000-2001, 42, and many more could be added.

⁶ See in detail Lapinkivi 2004.

^{57 19} km W of Samaria/Sebastia, see Siewert-Mayer 1994, 593a s.v. Gitta (coordinates 32 20/35 00)

Acts 8:9-25; Justin, Apology I 26:1-3.

Ireaneus, Adversus Hereses, 1 23:1–5 (http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/irenaeus-

⁶⁰ See my analysis of the Descent of Istar and the gnostic treatise Exegesis of the Soul in State Archives of Assyria 9, xxxi-xxxvi.

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A Brief History of the Maronite Church



By Michaeil A. Younan

Writing the history of the people who lived after the fall of the Assyrian Empire in 612 B.C. is very important to enlighten the readers of this subject. The Assyrian Empire extended particularly toward Syria to the shore of Mediterranean Sea. (word Syria is derived from the older "Assyria").

The policy of the Assyrian kings was moving peoples of the occupied regions and inhabit them in the Land of Ashur (Assyria), and bring Assyrians in their place and inhabit them in the occupied regions. This method led to the presence of Assyrians in that geographical region even after the Roman rule, which ended in the year 467 A.D. Even the Assyrian empire ended administratively, politically and militarily but the Assyrians remained in Hakkari, Midiat, Nusaybin/Nisibis, Tur-Abdin and Urhai (Edessa in Greek and SanliUrfa in Turkish) along the current Turkish—Syrian border, and south to Aleppo, Antioch, Hama, Homs and Syrian desert (Badiat-Al Sham) and coexisted with "Mandaean ethnic groups. The Greek historians called this geographical region with multiple names such as: Mat Assur, Aram-Naharain and Padam-Aram.

The Assyrian founded small kingdoms (Malkouta) in Urhai, Nusaybin and Haran by the name "Osroene" and made the city of Urhai its capital ruled by a dynasty of kings by the name "Abgar". King "Abgar Ukama V" (circa, 9-46 C.E.) whom himself and his kingdom where Evangelized and adopted Christianity after Jesus Christ ascension. The Assyrians were the first gentile people to embraced Christianity in the mid of the first century.

Thereafter, Christianity spread in the aforementioned geographical region.

In the mid of 4th century, an Assyrian priest by the name Youkhanna Maron who was living near Orontes River, left his town in the vicinity of Antioch, Aleppo and Celeucia and lived in a hermitage in the remote mountain. There he founded a diocese under the authority of ancient Patriarchate of Antioch. There was also a pagan cult of the god Nabu near the village of Kfar-Nabu. St. Maron Beatified the Temple and turned it a *house for Christian worshipers* to worship God alone. Then he resumed his pastoral duties. With time, the number of his students increased and they began to call themselves "Maronites" after the name of their teacher. Saint Maron's lifestyle had a great influence on his students who followed him.

In the year 410, Saint Maron died, his students, (the monks) built the *House of* "Maron" in the year 452, located between Aleppo and Hama, his students of (the House, Beith Maron) were strong supportive of Christological doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. They held to the teaching that Jesus Christ was both God and Man, Having two natures, one divine and one human.

From the beginning, the Maronite Church used in its Liturgies and Eucharist Syriac dialect (Unfortunately misrepresented as Syriac language) Syriac is the western dialect of the Assyrian mother language used by the inhabitants of western Euphrates River due to the fact that the Alphabet of the Syriac dialect was not innovated yet until mid of 8th century. The truth is, the Maronite Church used the old Assyrian language (Pshitta, meaning simple translation). Thereafter, they used the Arabic language as of the 7th. century. The Gospel is read in Arabic (written in Syriac characters, *Karshuni*)

After the Chalcedonian Ecumenical Council in 451, the "Jacobites", under the Byzantine sphere (opponents to the decisions of the Chalcedonian Council) differed with the Maronite Monks over Christological issues. The Maronites were subjected to persecutions some of which were bloody and painful incidents (there is no need to

mention them here, history bears witness to them). As a result, the Maronites began to migrate gradually to nearby the northern mountains of Lebanon. They were welcomed by their Maronite brothers who had preceded them from the aforementioned geographical region in Syria today. Thus, the Maronite Church spread in the Levant during the reign of Emperor Moric (582-602) and continued its affiliation with the Archdiocese of the Holy See of Antioch. There is also a Maronite Monastery east of the city of Hama on the Orontes River valley (wadi nahr al-Asi).

Following the 3rd. Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in the year 680, the Maronite church elected the First Maronite Patriarch by the name "Youkhanna Maron Al-Serugi" from the Monastery of Saint Maron on the Orontes River valley. Afterward, the Patriarchat Seat was moved to several towns in Lebanon, and finally settled in the town of Bkerke. The Maronite Church and people had a long history of suffering and tribulation.

In the year 1182, the Maronite Church entered in full Communion with the Roman Catholic Church but preserved the Rite of the Antiochene Church and its own traditions as an Eastern Church.

After 1454, the Holy See of the Roman Apostolic Catholic Church began to address the head of the Maronite Church "Patriarch of Antioch", thereafter, "Patriarch of Antioch and all Levant" (Al-Mashriq). As an example witness, that the Maronite people, with all due respect, are of Assyrian origin. While living in the mountains of Lebanon, there was a Maronite family by the name "Assemani" one of their children, born in 1768, by the name Yosip, This blessed family raised their children with good faith and education. Yosip graduated from "the Maronite College" in Rome (Pontifico Collegio del Maroniti) He was appointed to work in the Vatican Library as a Librarian. He was delegated to different countries to collect ancient Assyrian rare books. After he was ordained Metropolitan, he began to translate three books from Assyrian language into Latin Language. He was educated in Assyrian, Arabic and Latin Language. He was assisted by Yosip, his brother's son, and by Mar Estephanos Assemani, Metropolitan of the city of "Epiphania" (old name) in Syria. "I apologize for misspelling in translating the names from one language to another"

All of the above, is preserved in the Vatican, in the "Bibliotheca Orientalis' Archives.

Had there not been any interference by the Roman and Byzantine emperors, and the Roman Catholic Church, *the Church of the East*, (the mother Church, Eita d'Madinkha) would not have split into several Eastern Churches. All of the aforementioned events and disagreements in the seven Ecumenical Christian Councils which happened from the year 325 to 787, in each Council, new controversies emerged in the one Church of Jesus Christ.

Where it not for that, the Church of the East (the mother Church) would have been only one historical and original designation *the Church of the East* as it was in the first three centuries of believers of the Assyrian people (indigenous Assyrian Christians).

This divergence on part of the believers of the Maronite Church, affected all aspects of life with the Assyrian Church of the East, with all due respect.

This is the historical truth and reality. But the church has been adopted by several labels made by capricious of human being or clergies who submit to other forces (the strong weakens the weak for his own interests). This is the case with sister Churches, to name only our own Churches such as: the Syriac Church, the Maronite Catholic Church and the Chaldean Catholic Church. Thus the *Church of the East* became victim of Christological controversy. The history of Christianity is, from its infancy, a history of debates and divisions to present days!

I coexisted in Lebanon with many believers of the aforementioned sister Churches with affection and respect, because I believe that we are all of Assyrian origin: people, historical race, nationality, land, civilization, language and culture whether we like it or not. The clergies and prelates of our Churches, should explain the real facts and history to our respected faithful for general benefit. We all face same ordeals, future and destiny.

Respectfully,

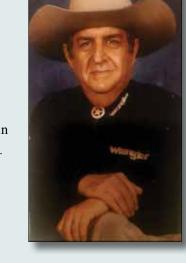
Michaeil A. Younan California

In Loving Memory of Solomon Sliwo (Sawa) Solomon

DECEMBER 1944 – APRIL 2023

Solomon Sliwo (Sawa) Solomon passed away on April 2, 2023, at age 78. His Memorial Service took place on April 15, 2023, in Lebanon, Tennessee. He was interred in Mt. Juliet Memorial Gardens.

Solomon was born on December 18, 1944, in Baghdad, Iraq, from a Timari ancestry. His great grandfather was Malik Youkhanna Badawi of Timar. In 1962, Solomon moved to the United States, settling in northern Michigan. Four years later, he moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana where he earned a B.A. in Liberal Arts in 1969. In



1985, Solomon moved to Chicago where he developed an intense interest in Modern Assyrian History.

In the following years, his articles began appearing in Assyrian publications in the U.S. and Britain, but most especially in *Nineveh Magazine*, for which he was a regular contributor. In the early years, he received much encouragement from Julius Shabbas, one of the founding members of the Assyrian Foundation of America. The subject of Solomon's articles almost always included rare photos of Assyrian personalities, events, and places related to modern Assyrians. Solomon also published several books: <u>The Assyrian Levies</u>, <u>A Short History</u>, <u>A Family History</u>, <u>Prominent Assyrians</u> (published in 2001). He also contributed several chapters found in the book Modern Assyrian History that was published in 2002. Additionally, Solomon volunteered for Tennova Healthcare for over 15 years.

Solomon was married to Joan who passed away in 2015. His stepson Timmy passed away in 2016. Solomon is survived by his sister Khatoon in Fort Wayne, Indiana, his brothers, Jospeh and David in Tampa, Florida, his stepson Tom in Lebanon, Tennessee, 19 nephews and nieces, and 44 grandnephews and grandnieces.

The crew of *Nineveh Magazine* will always remember his many wonderful contributions to the publication over the years. May he rest in peace. He will be sorely missed.

Books in Review

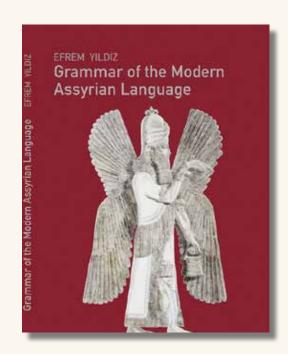
Rabel Betshmuel Selected Works 2000-2020







Efrem Yildiz
Grammer of the Modern Assyrian Language







Professor Joseph Yacoub and his wife Claire Yacoub

Professor Yacoub on the French Recognition of the Assyrian Genocide

By Abdulmesih BarAbraham Courtesy of www.AINA.org

The French Senate passed a resolution on Wednesday, February 8th (AINA 2023-02-09), calling on the government to recognize the genocide of the Assyrian-Chaldeans of 1915-1918 and to make the day of April 24 a joint day of commemoration for the Armenian and Assyrian-Chaldean genocides. After the discussion the resolution was adopted by 300 votes to 2.

In the shadow of WWI, the Assyrians (also known as Chaldeans and Syriacs), living in sountheastern region of the Ottoman Empire, too were deported, expelled and massacred by the Ottoman Empire, in the same manner as the Armenians. France recognized the genocide of the Armenians in January 29, 2001.

The proposal for the resolution under the title *On the recognition of the genocide of the Assyro-Chaldeans of 1915-1918*, was tabled by Senator Valérie Boyer (Member of the Republicans - LR) and co-singed by LR Group leaders Bruno Retailleau and Hervé Marseille. It gained immediate support from more than 70 senators when it was recorded into the Senate on January 6, 2023.

The five-page explanatory section of the resolution cites Professor Joseph Yacoub as an expert. According to Professor Yacoub, this "genocide and looting of land and property was accompanied by severe attacks on the cultural heritage: Historical monuments were destroyed and left abandoned, churches desecrated, and schools demolished. Libraries of rare books and valuable manuscripts were squandered and destroyed, such as those of the Chaldean diocese of Seert or the Assyrian patriarchal seat in Kotchanes, a small village in Hakkari now abandoned, or the monasteries of the Syriac Churches in the Tur Abdin region."

I had the opportunity to talk o Professor Yacoub right after the resolution passed. He was not only present among the Assyrian personalities and representatives of various institutions following the historic Senate session, but also had a decisive part along the process to this resolution, In this interview, he speaks about the importance of this decision and the process that lead to it.

Abdulmesih BarAbraham AB: Professor Yacoub, thank you for your readiness to this interview. Please allow me first to congratulate the Assyrians in France and in particular you as a scholar and expert for pushing for the recent recognition of the Assyro-Chaldeans Genocide by the French Senate, which was accepted by an impressive majority. It seems it was the first time in France that the question of the genocide of the Assyrian-Chaldeans has been submitted to the Senate, followed by a vote.

Professor Joseph Yacoub JY: First of all, thank you very much dear friend Abdulmesih.

Wednesday February 8, 2023, is not an ordinary day. We are facing history. The motion for a resolution to recognize the Assyro-Chaldean Genocide of 1915-1918 was examined in a public session by the French Senate and adopted by an overwhelming majority of votes casted: 300 for and 2 against!

We owe this to the initiative of these noble children of France: Senator Valérie Boyer and Senator Bruno Retailleau, whose perseverance and tenacity have paid off. We salute in the same vein the continuous work accomplished by our dear and faithful friend François Pupponi, former MP of Val d'Oise and former mayor of Sarcelles. We express our deepest thanks and gratitude to these three pioneers.

How to explain this positive vote of the senators and how to analyze it?

The current dramatic news related to the Eastern Christians in Iraq, Syria and Turkey undoubtedly contributed to this. In this context, the situation of the Assyro-Chaldeans, a community that suffered persecution, migration and dispersion, has led us to re-visit the history. In doing so, parallels were drawn between the persecutions by the Islamic State (ISIS) and the genocidal and ethnocidal tragedy committed by the Ottoman Empire in 1915-1918.

This explains why this tragedy has gradually entered people's consciousness, and French politicians have seized upon it to place it in the public debate, since 2013, hoping to bring it to a successful conclusion.

AB: Indeed, the decision marks a historic event. Reading the explantory section of the passed resolution, you are particulary cited there. This speaks for your engagement in the background in the preparation of this resolution. Could you elaborate on this.

JY: It is the result of a long work of research and memory, which today finds a favorable echo.

Let's start at the beginning. In my opinion, there can be no recognition without prior knowledge, knowledge being the mother of all battles, then comes communication. This work focused on our people, small in size, began in the 1980s. This renewal has two components: intellectual and political.

At the intellectual level, this meant serious academic research, which consisted of consulting unpublished rare documents and archives of various Western countries, to which must be added literature in Aramaic-Syriac and Arabic, written by eyewitnesses. It was then necessary to classify them in a synthetic way and to analyze them in the light of the international norms adopted on genocide, thinking in particular of the work of the lawyer Raphaël Lemkin. This work made it possible to break the silence surrounding the Assyrian question by giving it a solid basis and a foundation that validates it. It now enjoys a scientific status. This has resulted in publications in the form of books, studies in periodicals and numerous press articles and interviews. Since then, symposia and conferences have followed one another, with echoes in the media.

At the political level, the research work was accompanied by fieldwork aimed at public authorities (local, departmental and regional elected officials and government authorities) and the media. Here, we must mention the tireless work undertaken by the Assyro-Chaldean community, particularly in the Val d'Oise Department, which, having fled Turkey from 1980 onwards, had kept the memories of the suffering and calamities endured by their people in 1915.

The role of the associations is important to note. Active for 35 years, interlocutor of the public authorities, the two oldest associations, *Association des Assyro-Chaldéens de France* (AACF) and *Union des Assyro-Chaldéens de France* (UACF), must be mentioned for their activities of publicizing the question, as well as the role of the Assyrian diaspora in the world (Germany, Sweden, the United States), which drives a growing fight on this subject, the motto being: Not to forget! In this context, I must also mention the work done by people like yourself, dear Abdulmesih.

Thus, gradually, a broad consensus has emerged to position the issue in the public debate.

AB: Following your writings and published book over the last years, they appeared in very prestigious publications. Key themes are history, culture, religion and the genocide of Assyro-Chaldeans. Just about two weeks in the run-up for the decision of the French Senate, an important article of yours was published in the internationally renowned Le Figaro under the title *The official recognition of the Assyrian-Chaldean genocide is a duty of memory.* In it, you appeal to the long French tradition of solidarity with Oriental Christians. What historical circumstances do you base that solidarity on?

JY: Indeed, to grasp the significance of this act of recognition, we must go back in time in order to discover that France has always shown solidarity with the oppressed minorities of the Middle East and has shown particular benevolence towards the Assyro-Chaldeans.

Here, the past is remembered in our memory. With respect to the genocidal and ethnocidal tragedy of 1915-1918, France had taken a particular interest. Political and religious circles, intellectuals and the media had denounced these massacres. Let us recall that between 1915 and 1925, the Assyro-Chaldean question was an international topic, widely debated, even if the memory of their tragedy was somewhat obliterated between 1925 and 1970, to reappear from 1980 on.

Author of numerous works and a canon of Beauvais, Eugène Griselle (1861-1923), was an active advocate of the cause of the Assyro-Chaldeans in 1917 through his publications and his actions. Denys Cochin (1851-1922), MP of Paris, minister, writer and member of the French Academy, published an article in Le Figaro, on July 13, 1919, entitled *Pour L'Arménie* (for Armenia), in which we read: «A new massacre of Christians is imminent. The rest of Urmia>s women and children are in danger. The Nestorian and Armenian people ask for help immediately. Any delay may be fatal.» Further he added: «Turkish fury did not distinguish between the Greek Orthodox, the Catholics, the Nestorians, the Chaldeans, or even the Yezidis, who are neither Christians nor Muslims and preserve, it is said, sacred books of fabulous antiquity, and the worship of the gods of Nineveh and Babylon.»

Men of letters have also been noted for their defense of the Assyro-Chaldeans, such as Frédéric Masson (1847-1923), perpetual secretary of the French Academy.

It should also be remembered that Frenchmen fell with the Assyrians in June-July 1918 on the Turkish-Persian front, in Urmia and Khosrava. We think in particular of Mgr. Jacques-Emile Sontag, son of Alsace, and Mathurin L'Hotellier, son of Brittany, along with two Assyrian martyrs: François Miraziz and Nathanaël Dinkha.

That being said, France's relationship with the Eastern Christians and the Assyro-Chaldeans date from before the tragedy of 1915, connections having been woven over the centuries. James (Yacoub) of Assyria in Tarentaise and Abraham of the Euphrates in Auvergne already mark a presence of Mesopotamia in Gaul in the 5th century. The historian Gregory of Tours in the 6th century (540-594) evokes these Orientals present in France who welcomed the Merovingian king Gontran in Orleans. Moreover, these Orientals spoke Aramaic, the language of Christ.

The nineteeth century inaugurates a crucial period. Through its works, France contributed to resurrect a people and its civilization, namely Nineveh and Babylon, long disappeared under the rubble. Thus, the funerary slab that enclosed it was lifted, to borrow this beautiful metaphor from Doctor Paul Caujole, head of the French Ambulance in Urmia. A world that we thought had become forever mute, collapsed and lifeless, is now coming back to life.

In this respect, the role of the French consuls in Mosul, in particular Paul-Emile Botta and Victor Place, was decisive. As early as 1847, archaeological pieces arrived by river to Le Havre to be placed in the Louvre Museum.

AB: You just cited the article on the front page of the Le Figaro from July 13, 1919, in which the French readers were informed that "a new massacre of Christians is imminent. The rest of the women and children of Urmia are in danger. The Nestorian and Armenian people ask for help immediately. Any delay may be fatal ... Turkish fury did not distinguish between the Orthodox Greeks, the Catholics, the Nestorians, the Chaldeans, or even the Yezidis." Can we say that at the end of WW I the French authorities and public were aware of the deportations and massacres took place in East Anatolia and along the Border of Persia?

JY: Yes, that is absolutely correct. Studying the French documents of the time and by scrutinizing the accounts and testimonies, we can see that the orders came from above, conceived by the Ottoman central power, the overall organization was methodically planned, the acts premeditated, and the execution systematic. The Dominican Hyacinthe Simon, who witnessed the massacres in Mardin, wrote in 1919: "The spring was not in our mountains, but in the capital; and I will deny the existence of the sun rather than the truth of this axiom: "The Young Turks of Constantinople have massacred the Christians of Turkey."

Speaking of responsibilities, another Dominican, Jacques Rhétoré (1841-1921), who was also present in Mardin, challenged the Turkish authorities for their crimes in these terms: "These ministers of Constantinople who decreed the massacres, and these high officials who accepted the mission carrying them out."

Even the daily American press reported. The New York Times for instance published on January 13, 1915, an article entitled: Christians in great peril, reporting on the precarious situation of the Christians of Turkey. The subtitle pointed to a clear ideological intention of the government and its desire to homogenize the country by turquifying it. Talaat Bey declared, the newspaper wrote, "that there is room only for Turks in Turkey".

As for the massacres of Christians in Persia, conducted on the orders of the Turks, we can quote the American Presbyterian missionary Dr. William A. Shedd, who clearly blames Turkey during its occupation of the Urmia region from early January until May 20, 1915: "The Turks recruited large Kurdish forces from the region of Sujbulak and from the eastern districts of Turkey; with minor forces from Urmia and Salamas they assembled against Khoi and came to join the Turkish forces in Van under the leadership of Djevdet Bey. (...) During the months of Turkish occupation, there was never a moment of real security for the Christians. (...) During this period, the Turks were guilty not only of the actual failure to protect the Christians, but also of the direct massacres committed under their orders."

It was the same in 1918 on the Turkish-Persian front, where French diplomacy was very active.

AB: Could you briefly remark on the position of France with regards to the demands of the Assyro-Chaldean delegations consisting of civil and religious leaders from all denominations during the post-war peace conference held in Paris 1919-20? Was France attentive to their demands?

JY: Yes, at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, many Assyro-Chaldean delegates, both civil and religious, presented themselves, demanding autonomy for their homeland. One of the texts presented, we found it at the Municipal Library of Lyon, as a document of President Edouard Herriot.

AB: It seems France had very extensive knowledge of and interaction with the Assyro-Chaldeans and their Churches, which certainly served as a historical reference for the present Senators and facilitated their decision. But, what were the key arguments of the resolution that at the end of the day convinced the overwelming majority of the Senators?

JY: In my opinion, it was the discovery of the genocide of 1915-1918, along with that of the Armenians, that was the driving force.

AB: A Le Figaro article cites Senator Pierre Ouzoulias clearly saying that Assyro-Chaldeans were co-victims of the Armenian Genocide, but their genocide needs to be recognized on its own. In addition, Senator Valérie Boyer was cited talking about France's role as a protective power towards the Christians in the Ottoman Empire and history that goes back to the capitulation in the 16th century. Could you explain this in more detail?

JY: Indeed, the 16th century saw the beginning of the era of Capitulations with the Ottoman Empire, by King François I and Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent. Since then, agreements have been concluded which allowed France, through its diplomatic and cultural representatives, to play an important role in the East, particularly in the field of education, until today.

France has also established since the 16th century, missions in Persia, where Assyrians have lived for more than 2000 years.

AB: How did the French press comment on this recognition and the Senate's decision?

JY: The event was widely and positively reported by the French media. I will mention in particular the daily newspaper Le Figaro. The journalist Jean Chichizola, deputy editor-in-chief, devoted two articles to the event, one before the vote, the other after the vote, whose titles and dates are as follows: "Towards a recognition of the genocide of the Assyro-Chaldeans" (February 6) and "The Senate recognizes the Assyro-Chaldean Genocide" (February 10)

AB: The resolution calls on the government to recognize the genocide of the Assyro-Chaldeans of 1915-1918 and to make the day of April 24 a joint day of commemoration for the Armenian and Assyro-Chaldean genocides. How are the chances that the French government accepts this call? The reason I raise the question is that German government up to know did not act on the Genocide Resolution passed by the Bundestag in 2016.

JY: At the outset, what is important to note is that the resolution adopted by the Senate recognizes the Assyro-Chaldean people as a distinct people, as well as its tragedy. In other words, the Senate text goes beyond commemoration, calling for the inclusion of this genocide as such. By emphesizing it as non-collateral to other massacres, that is to say, as singular, which cannot be confused with others. However, if we look at the texts recognizing the Armenian Genocide, adopted by the US House of Representatives and the <u>German Bundestag</u>, we see that they recognize, indirectly if I may say so, the Assyrian Genocide (under different names), which nevertheless remains confined to the explanatory memoranda, without going further. Hence the importance of direct recognition, as the French Senate is doing today, is very important.

It was therefore important to make the Assyrian-Chaldean Genocide a separate theme, to do justice to it and endow them with the status as a distinct people, with their own uniqueness, added to that of our Armenian brothers.

For years, personalities have been fighting for the recognition of the Assyro-Chaldean genocide, in the name of truth and to honor the memory of the victims. Members of Parliament are now working to have a text tabled in the National Assembly. Steps are underway.

We hope that the French government will give a favorable response to this resolution.

With this resolution, a new page is opened which marks the passage of the Assyro-Chaldeans from a people classified on the margins of history to a people now included in history.

Professor Joseph Yacoub is honorary professor of political science at the Catholic University of Lyon and was the first holder of UNESCO's Chair of "Memory, Cultures and Interculturality." He is an expert on minority issues, human rights and Eastern Christianity. He is the author of numerous books and articles on the Assyro-Chaldeans and the Oriental Christians. His most recent book (co-written with his wife Claire Yacoub) is Martyrs par amour en Perse. Mgr Sontag et ses trois compagnons (Martyrs for Love in Persia. Bishop Sontag and his three Companions). Joseph Yacoub is born in Hassake, Syria. His parents, originally from Iranian Azerbaijan (Salamas district), suffered during the Turkish genocide of Assyrians during World War I. taking refuge in Georgia before settling in Syria in 1921.

The interview was conducted in French and translated.

DÉBATS • INTERNATIONAL

«La reconnaissance par le Sénat du génocide des Assyro-Chaldéens est un événement historique»

TRIBUNE

Joseph Yacoub

professeur honoraire de sciences politiques à l'Université catholique de Lyon

Joseph Yacoub, professeur de science politique, se réjouit dans une tribune au « Monde » de l'adoption le 8 février par le Sénat d'une résolution reconnaissant le génocide des Assyro-Chaldéens commis par l'Empire ottoman en 1915-1918.

Publié hier à 06h30, mis à jour hier à 06h30 | Lecture 3 min.

Article réservé aux abonnés

e Sénat français a adopté le 8 février par une écrasante majorité des votes exprimés la résolution présentée par <u>Valérie Boyer et Bruno Retailleau</u>, portant sur la reconnaissance du <u>génocide des Assyro-Chaldéens</u>, commis par l'Empire ottoman en 1915-1918. C'est à l'évidence un événement important et historique. Pour la première fois en France la question du génocide des Assyro-Chaldéens est soumise à un examen public, suivi d'un vote.

L'actualité dramatique des chrétiens d'Orient en Irak, en Syrie et en Artsakh a sans doute contribué. Dans ce cadre, la situation des Assyro-Chaldéens, communauté qui a souffert des persécutions, de l'errance et de la dispersion, fait qu'on a remonté l'histoire.

Ce faisant, on a établi un parallèle entre les persécutions par l'organisation Etat islamique et la tragédie génocidaire et ethnocidaire des Assyro-Chaldéens par l'Empire ottoman en 1915-1918. Ceci explique que cette tragédie a progressivement fait son entrée dans les consciences, et des politiques s'en sont alors saisis pour l'inscrire dans le débat public.

Grande tragédie appelée « Seyfo »

Il faut rappeler que des propositions avaient été soumises à l'Assemblée nationale au cours des dix dernières années, même si elles n'ont pu franchir les différentes étapes. Pendant des années, <u>François Pupponi</u>, ancien député du Val-d'Oise et ancien maire de Sarcelles se bat pour la reconnaissance du génocide assyro-chaldéen, au nom de la vérité et de la mémoire des victimes.

Que s'est-il passé? Le début du XX^e siècle est à l'origine de leur drame et restera dans leur mémoire collective, celui de la grande tragédie, appelée *Seyfo*, c'est-à-dire «l'épée ». L'étendue des ravages et le champ des blessures sont énormes. Le drame de 1915-1918 a profondément bouleversé leur vie et déstructuré leur société. Les hiérarchies sociales et religieuses ont été ruinées et complètement désintégrées. Ce fut le point de départ de leur dispersion dans le monde.

Archives de 1984: Le massacre occulté des Assyriens d'Irak

Rappelons qu'entre 1915 et 1925, les Assyro-Chaldéens étaient une question internationale largement débattue, même si la mémoire de leur tragédie s'est en quelque sorte estompée entre 1925 et 1970, pour réapparaître à partir de 1980.

Ces massacres ont eu lieu sur un périmètre très large, en Anatolie orientale, au Hakkari, à Mardin, Diarbékir, Kharpout, dans le Tur Abdin, au nord de l'Iran, précisément en Azerbaïdjan, sur le front turco-persan, dans les mêmes conditions et presque sur les mêmes lieux que les <u>Arméniens et dans un dessein analogue</u>, qui visait, selon des objectifs arrêtés, à homogénéiser l'Empire et « turquifier » le pays.

Les ordres venaient d'en haut

Ce génocide n'est pas une terre inconnue. Nous possédons en effet une documentation abondante, en plusieurs langues, qui relate au jour le jour ce qui s'est passé et montre que ces massacres furent des actes «combinés et concertés» par les autorités ottomanes et qu'il ne s'agit nullement d'actes isolés ou incontrôlés. Elle émane le plus souvent de missionnaires sur place, de journalistes, de rapports diplomatiques établis par les Etats et par de nombreuses personnalités qui, très tôt, avaient attiré l'attention sur ces massacres.

Cours en ligne, cours du soir, ateliers : développez vos compétences

Découvrir

Un exemple. Un Français Eugène Griselle (1861-1923) a intitulé son ouvrage en 1918 : *Syriens et Chaldéens, leurs martyres, leurs espérances, 1914-1917* (<u>Bloud et Gay</u>), dans lequel il décrit les massacres et donne la parole à des témoins oculaires assyro-chaldéens.

Lire aussi: Qu'est-ce qu'un « génocide » ?

Ce génocide était accompagné d'atteintes graves à l'héritage culturel. Des monuments historiques ont été détruits, des églises et des cimetières profanés, des écoles démolies, des bibliothèques et leurs riches manuscrits dilapidés. C'est ce qu'on appelle un ethnocide. Plus de 250 000 Assyro-Chaldéens-Syriaques – ce qui représente plus de la moitié de la communauté – ont péri des mains des Ottomans, des irréguliers kurdes et d'autres ethnies qui furent utilisées à ces fins.

En lisant les documents de l'époque et en scrutant les récits et les témoignages, on constate que les ordres venaient d'en haut, conçus par le pouvoir central, et l'organisation était méthodiquement planifiée, les actes prémédités et l'exécution systématique. Le Français Hyacinthe Simon (1867-1922), témoin des massacres à Mardin, écrit dans un rapport de 1919, remis aux frères dominicains : «Le ressort n'était pas dans nos montagnes, mais dans la capitale; et je nierai l'existence du soleil plutôt que la vérité de cet axiome : "Les Jeunes-Turcs de Constantinople ont massacré les chrétiens de la Turquie". »

« Et demain, qui parlera l'araméen »

Parlant des responsabilités, Jacques Rhétoré, présent également à Mardin, met en cause, dans son rapport remis en 1920 également aux frères dominicains, les autorités ottomanes en ces termes : « Ces ministres de Constantinople qui ont décrété les massacres, ces hauts fonctionnaires qui ont accepté la mission de les exécuter. »

Que stipule cette résolution? Elle contient quelques réflexions sur la mémoire et l'histoire qui contribuent à l'identité des peuples, tandis que l'oubli et la négation portent atteinte, écrit-on, au respect de la dignité humaine. Aussi, demande-t-on à la France de ne pas faillir «à son devoir historique et moral de protection des minorités chrétiennes d'Orient pour ne pas faire rougir l'histoire!» et on ajoute: «Et demain, qui parlera l'araméen, la langue du Christ parlée par les Assyriens, les Chaldéens et les Syriaques?»

En termes de recommandation, la résolution invite le gouvernement français à reconnaître officiellement l'extermination de masse, la déportation et la suppression de l'héritage culturel de plus de 250 000 Assyro-Chaldéens par les autorités ottomanes, entre 1915 et 1918, comme un génocide. On l'invite aussi à condamner publiquement ce génocide et à faire du 24 avril, qui est la date retenue de commémoration annuelle du génocide des Arméniens, celle aussi du génocide des Assyro-chaldéens.

Avec cette résolution, une nouvelle page s'ouvre qui marque le passage des Assyro-Chaldéens d'un peuple classé en marge de l'histoire à un peuple désormais inséré dans l'histoire.

¶ Joseph Yacoub est le coauteur, avec Claire Yacoub, de « Martyrs par amour en Perse. Mgr Sontage et ses trois compagnons » (Salvator, 2022).

Joseph Yacoub (professeur honoraire de sciences politiques à l'Université catholique de Lyon)

Interview with Sabri Atman

Former President of Seyfo Center in Sweden Fehmi Barkarmo has interviewed Sabri Atman where the reader gets an insight into the organization's activities and plans for the near future.

Q: First, you came to Europe from America after a long time. As far as I know, you held almost 30 meetings and speeches in different European countries for two months. Before you start your impressions here, could you briefly summarize Seyfo Center's work mainly in the US?

A: Of course. I have been in America for ten years. Without interruption we carry out Assyrian Genocide Seyfo work together with our team there. Our work is going very well. Conferences and similar enlightenment activities were held in all cities and states where our people live. By translating many books into English, we have reached tens of thousands of people.

We have good relations with Armenian and Greek institutions. We lobby as much as we can. A significant level of awareness has been achieved in the United States, both among our people and among the American public, about the Assyrian genocide of Seyfo.

Our activities have paid off. As a result of these efforts, many American states recognized the genocides in 1915 and in Simele in 1933. In the coming period, we will increase the number of states that have recognized the Assyrian Genocide.

Q: It is obvious that you, together with members and sympathizers of the Seyfo Center, have persistently pursued activities and achieved several concrete results in the United States, but how would you describe the situation on the European continent after a two-month tour of Europe?

A: First, I met friends who have not lost hope after all and are still embracing the activity. This gave me great hope for the future.

But I also noticed fatigue and some resignation on the part of some individuals and institutions. Some institutions have ceased to be centers of attraction. I did not meet any young people from these institutions, and this is a very frightening development. There are many reasons for such a development, the description of which goes far beyond this interview. I can only say that some of the reasons are



beyond us while others are due to external factors.

That a mentality that tries to sustain itself by making up "newspaper news" about and creating antagonisms between different segments and circles that are doing important work on the national front within our people, distancing itself from friendship and solidarity with neighboring peoples and seeing itself as the only legitimate representative of our people has become dominant in certain institutions among our people is startling and worthy of reflection. It is particularly important to be aware that such parallel thoughts and activities that serve the interests of the Turkish state are far from unifying among our people.

There are similar developments in other European countries. Fatigue, pessimism, inability to regenerate, etc. But such a situation and environment also create leaders and collectors. I hope we can stop this bad trend.

In two months, I had many meetings and speeches. In all these events I received very warm attention and positive response from the public and participants. I am very pleased with this.

Many activities that could be implemented in many European countries took shape in my mind. It is time to take the activities about the Assyrian Genocide to a higher level.

The situation our people and institutions are in is not encouraging, but it is not right to spread pessimism. It is not the time to complain about the darkness. It is enough for everyone to start with themselves and light a candle. When this is done, it will appear that our path is illuminated, and the darkness will flee from us.

Many thanks Sabri and we look forward to hearing more successes in your work.

On Children

Kahlil Gibran - 1883-1931

And a woman who held a baby against her bosom said, Speak to us of Children.

And he said:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,

which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

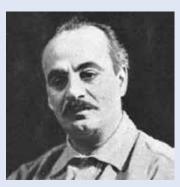
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

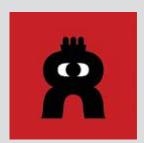
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.

From The Prophet (Knopf, 1923). This poem is in the public domain.



Kahlil Gibran, author of *The Prophet*, was born January 6, 1883, in Bsharri, Lebanon.



The Rebellion - A Manifesto for Contemporary Assyrian Artists

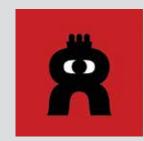
I am ancient in my desire to make original art. I feel alone, but not lonely, in creating. Artists of Assyrian decent should inspire new thinking and create reverse assimilation via the creation of art. I offer the points below in support of new contemporary art created by Assyrians seeking global engagement.

- 1. We reject the direct replication of ancient art for the purposes of self-expression and creative output.
- 2. We reject closed-minded views that favor traditional European expressions of art and beauty over abstract art.
- 3. We reject banal art. If it doesn't contribute to higher levels of practice, then you shouldn't be looking at it.
- 4. We reject that we were and reaffirm that we are.
- 5. We accept that borrowing, integrating and respecting other worldly cultures only makes us stronger. Engage with art in its totality, not just with Assyrian art.
- 6. We accept the notion that nationalism in art is akin to the sun: get too close and you burn out; stay too far and you become cold.
- 7. We accept that art is a bridge that connects the Assyrians to the world and the world to the Assyrians.
- 8. We accept that wearing crazy and colorful socks makes us feel braver and more unpredictable, leading us to uncharted waters and in turn, greater success in life.
- 9. We seek beauty, simplicity and craftsmanship when making art. If we don't have it, we invent it! We are deeply committed to originality.
- 10. We spread art to all four corners of the human experience: spiritual, physical, emotional and mental.

Art and immortality march together, arm in arm.

Signed:

Rabel Betshmuel



مُدَوْدِوهِ ٤ - حَوِيْتُ مِنْ يُمُعِيْ يُمُوْتِي دُدِّيا

ئەن ئەمىدۇتى دۇستى دۇستى ئىدى ئىدى ئەلىكى مىمەردى دۇرى ئەرىتى دۇرى ئىلىدۇنى ئىلىدۇرى ئىلىدۇرى كى دەرىكى كىدەدى ئەن ئەمىدە كەرىكى دۇرىكى ئەرىكى ئەرىكى ئەرۇۋە ئەرىكى ئەرۇۋە ئەرىكى ئەردىئى ئەلىدۇرى ئەرىكى ئىلىدۇرى دۇرىكى ئەركى ئەرتى ئىدۇرى دۇرىكى دۇرىكى ئىرى ئەرىكى كەردىكى مىمەردى ئەرۇۋى ئەرىكى ئىلىدۇرى ئىلىدۇرى ئىلىدۇرى ئىلىدۇرى ئىلىدى

1. كِرْ قَحَكِم خِعَجَةٍ فِعِيقَتْمْ (شِودَقْتُمْ) كَيْحَقَمْ فِمِيقَمْ حِعِيقَمْ وَظِكَتَذْفِهِمْ فِكَ تُمَمَّ وَفُقَدْهِمْ تُخَوْتُهُمْ.

 2. كِرْ شَعَائِس عَيْجُسَدَةً، هميةٍ، دِهُوفَة دِكُعب عمِع وُودًا لَجُنَعَةُ عَمْدًا مَادَوْفَقَيْدٍ بُحَمْوَهُ عَيْدٍ دَاؤُوفَة مِحَافِقًا مِعَامُ وَعُرْدًا لَجُنَا اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَل عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهِ عَل عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهُ عَلَيْهِ عَلَيْهُ عَلَيْهِ عَلَا عَلَا عَ

٤. کِر شَدَبُس دَبْعَثْ لَدْمْنْ نُهُ دِکْر بُلْهُ لِي لَا بُهِدِيْه ثُهُ دَوَدْهُ هُذِا خُهِهُ دُعِمْ، بُلهُ هعبسهم لَهُ عَدْ عُهمهم الله عَدْ الله عدبسهم الله عدبسهم الله عدبسهم الله عدبسه الله

4. مَيْرُ حَكُمُ وَشِيهُم يُسِفِى مُورِبُ هُعِب حَفِم، مَكْرُ هُعَذِم كَوْلَافُورٍ.

5. يعتثن مؤس دبرق مهمستومه معنهده وهدوه وهدوه المعتشق المديد وهد المحدد كرا عمد شنته والمعالم المعالم ال

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9. بېنې بېرە خوقدد ئەخبىئەم، مەرقىدەم، خىدد، ئېدىم، دۇمد، يې ئى قىلنى ئېسى، قىل ئىگە دىدىس ئىسى! قىل دۇمىس كىدخىدەم،

10. يحد قَدْهِس كَبْمَعْهُ كَبْدْتَكِمْهِـُـمَتْ وَمَتْمَّهُ دِيهَنَعْهُ لَتَعْتَهُ: دَوسَقَـمَهُ، فِكِذْقَـمَهُ، يَجَمُقُـمُهُ ومُّوقَـمُهُ.

بُعقة مكَلَعبقبهم هِ دُسعب غِم يَسدُقِي... عبدُه صديدٌ..

تبد:

ذحيمك جمهيمك

٨٥٤ تُـهُم: تـهڥ لْبَحِبِعَهُ كَ

Translated by: Yousip Audesho

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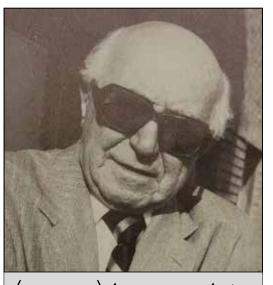
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ביל: מקהול יסיד מביבל

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حكوبا عسب معتما (1918-2001)

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ار حصَّعكا أه حُعدُرًا

المان سے جسم ،» معلعه علمه علمه عنهم المحن عدمه المحن

مجن لر: «له دليه بمونيه مدة شيء مل عهد مع محدد لحم مدير ميله مايله مدير معدم المعدد لحمد معدم مدير ميله مايله يبه ممحنه لمن مح تحدة حين احته علمتع بها تخ متبطر و ماید در مناسل مناس مناس ما مناس ما مناسل مناسب ما مناسل مناسب من ميله حديني مجهدأة مجهولات عدد حجمة علم الماس مرابع لماس الماس مه، مس بی حسیقه بیلی حدیدی مأسید. مقلم والحمير الإولاني ومود المحمود المعالم المعالم المحالي المحالي المحالية المح عقر جه کلمیه مجه پیدنه هم انبه مناسب حه شده کامیده مناسبه مخلفی مخلف مخلف مناسبه مخلف مناسبه ما مناسبه ما مناسبه مناسب مناسبه مناسبه مناسبه ما مناسبه مناسبه مناسبه مناسبه مناسبه مناسب حصلع ہذہ سلم محتمد محسمی محتمد مامسیم کے بیام ملنة حدادهمديد. محلميك سميتك دله صعيدم كاقلا تعلیک جلائدہ دوبات محملات مسلم نوست معمودًا ألعب سے لے جے زدولا معموقلی مصدے لک أ معدلم جلاله عنه من مله علم علم محلم محلمه مد مل مُلِم منه لے حسبقت حجمت محسن محسن الله مللم وحروب المعام الم سدلای مسل شدیه، مُسل کانسته لای حد لی حدادنی جبه. محصلاطبع الم دلحابه له حام سعاد علمانه عبه العلا محتم محتصله ئاصبنوره نده ملن حلمه عليه محلبكمه حُمنى مىلى دىمالىخىم ملامنىمى.»

.... ممدم دیعلم در مهم فکم کستنگی سیاه دیماهاسی دعلام در معکن درمان در مهم کشوری در معکن در م

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محدة من الله المراجعة المراجع

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انعد مدحمه احبحه مخدده

«عبه الم ميه عصمه، حد منه هدبنا لم معده عر حاصه حواله دله عدم لم دهده المده المده المهده المهده المنه المهده المهده المنه المده المهده المنه المراه المده المنه المده ا

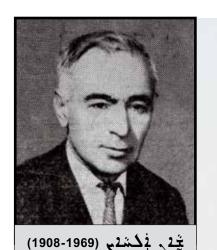
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م د جُدِد د كذبذ

حىد: ئۆرى بۇرشىدى

ينفي چيتهموري سنكيم، كولجيوري سكره ذكع هذذكع محتَّمَةُ دِهُه سَهُذُهُ حَمِدُجُهُ، عَبِيمِكُمْ صَحَكَ سَجَ جَدُوٰدَكُمْ هذبجهٔ دچتهٔ محودید، میودیده دوک جدیکته حكه في مديهود حود كه موريد عميق عربي ومديد ٥سؤسمَة دِلِعنمَة يلجُجُه، حؤهدبود ويعتد يهضه كجندوية في ومد ووجشد، هميه مده بدويد وبك موحشد دومت حدد بدغيك عقعت، حديقه حدد بحرصك عيمود حبّه عمية مدّت معجيّه، حكم حكمته مدّم ومحمود يعفيًا حِدْمِيا حِنْهِ جَهَدُا، حَفَيْ دِمُوجُا دِيْمِهُ مَجْهَدُا وَحُوهِ مِنْ لَحِيدُ مِهِ وَدُهُ ، لَمُدُّدُ عُمِ وَعُمِ مِنْهُ مِ يُحِدُّ ا

ذكفت! عوج! سدر وسيرا دِوْل يُدِمْم لِي مِهِم مَولِكِي، لَفِلْدُوهِ مِم حِفَيْم عوبيكِيْ عوص كلفها، هَمْ موذ كُنْت دُوهنهم، حيددُم عبيم، كفيهوديم، حددمام كته مددوكتم، تهدفه وكد مودنمه حفِدكِه حديثة وحرة ومره مِددَّة، تَسِدَم كِد كِلهِم كَمُدَكِّة وجبدُهُ كِيت جُبُ مِنْهُ مِنْمُدُهُ، مِعمومِيهُ مِفِس كسوكموي حميدُهُ

ذكفت! عوح! سدي وسيبا عَمْ لِحَدْد حِدَد مِكْمِ جَوَدْد، حِجْدُوهِ صِكْمٍ عَنْم حِيضُود موح سود كمودوية مبةود، كشدّية كوكوبة حمّدود وقد فكيد ودفع وجوجه، خلقد حليق حديقه وغفه منقع للوجع دلا وهم هذُبُه، حد سَمَ تدميهمُ دِسَةِ حمُبُه حكم جدومة منه كندوي، دومية يمشدن مكه حضدوي وَد لِنَهُ مِعمدي حسمتجة، محمودة كيوم مر عجبة جَمَ ١٥٥٤، جَمَ ذكفت، عَلَفُك كِتُنوي، وَهِم يَم كُلِيم كَنْتَنْبَقِي حجمده لمر ١٥مهم فدندمي، لكه ندلا دمه دلمنده ذكفت! عوح! سدي وسببا





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حددوهيم ب محكوسم ب عدههم

ذبت تتما ١٨٥٤٠٨١. بهر. مر دِجْڌِ١ ڊهذبذ١. בינ: מלפנא יטיח סגיגא حىم: يُدِد بُكشد، مُدَهْدِهِمْ}، حَمِيْتُهُ شَهُ لِأَهْتِهُ لُهُهُدِيهُ ذُدِّيهُ. צמה לסובבים מסא. حدد: ذحدمك حسمتعددمك (٥٥٥ كعد: موهف كجوستوك) ביה: מלפנא המפ בצלא



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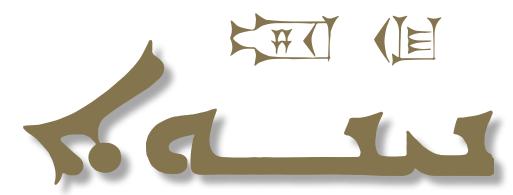
Calligraphy by late Rabi Issa Benyamin















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