



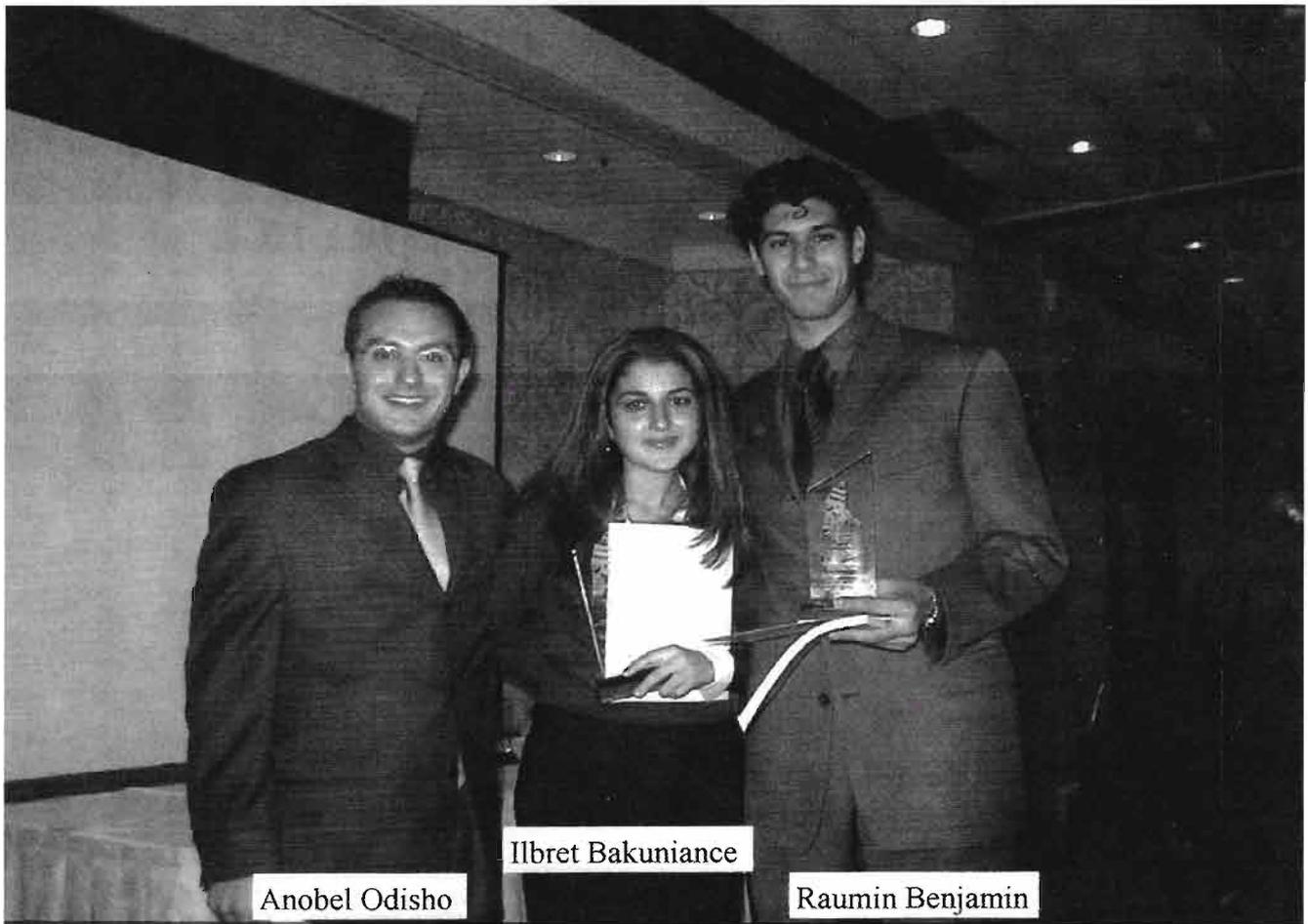
Established 1964

*Dedicated to the
Advancement of Education
of Assyrians*



NINEVEH

Third Quarter 2001 • Volume 24, Number 3



Anobel Odisho

Ilbret Bakuniance

Raumin Benjamin

Photo: courtesy of Zinda Magazine

**The winners of the 7th Assyrian Youth Excellence Pageant,
San Jose, California**

CULTURAL — EDUCATIONAL — SOCIAL

NINEVEH

THIRD QUARTER 2001
Volume 24, Number 3

Editor: Robert Karoukian

POLICY

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.

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From the Editor:

47^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale

The 47^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (RAI 47) was held in Helsinki, Finland 2-6 July 2001 with one day, 4 July, in Tallinn, Estonia. The theme was: *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*.

The RAI is an annual event where scholars from many different countries gather and present papers on various aspects of the ancient Near East. Each year there is a theme or general subject as a guide for the presentations. The theme may have to do with history, geography, language, religion, art, etc., and it may be interpreted in the broadest sense. Although the title states "Rencontre Assyriologique", there usually are papers from other regions of the ancient Near East including Anatolia, Syria, the Levant, and even Urartu, Iran, and Egypt.

As stated above, this year the theme was: *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*; there were some 94 papers, 15 poster presentations, and 3 workshops. There was even an evening of Sumerian music (with a Finnish twist) where Sumerian beer (brewed according to ancient Sumerian recipes) was served.

The papers were read in either English, French, or German. Some were very specific and dealt with certain texts, regions, or time periods while others were more general or comparative. Following is a sample of titles: *The influence of Mesopotamian erotic literature and sexual euphemisms upon Biblical literature*; *Woman and property in Old Assyrian commercial society*; *Male and female supernatural assistants in Mesopotamian magic*; *Gender variance in Mesopotamia: cross-cultural perspectives*; *A queen in public: the role of royal women in Neo-Assyrian art*; and a workshop titled: *Ritual and politics*. However, the most interesting were a paper by Ali Ahmad Aljubory, an Iraqi Assyriologist from Mosul, titled: *Akkadian and Arabic proverbs*; and a workshop led by Simo Parpola of Helsinki, Finland, titled: *Continuity*.

Upon discovering that Mr. Aljubory was an Iraqi Assyriologist, a number of Assyrians attending the RAI greeted him as fellow Mesopotamians. However, they received a surprisingly cold and hostile response. He was shocked to hear there were Assyrians still alive, and stated that he had never heard of Assyrians living in Iraq. He thought that we must be some kind of Aramaeans, or Syriac-speaking Christian Arabs or Kurds; and, when an Assyrian graduate student in Assyriology responded with evidence contrary to his statements, he became quite agitated and walked away. Even more interesting was his paper and its implication. He read several Akkadian proverbs and sayings and then gave parallels in (Mesopotamian?) Arabic as evidence of (cultural? literary? genetic?) continuity. This, of course, is not unreasonable. But, what is unreasonable, if not ridiculous, is to imply a direct link. Clearly, if there is any trace of ancient Assyro-Babylonian culture/literary tradition in Arabic, it was transmitted by our ancestors who carried it with them as they adopted Aramaic sometime in the 9th century B.C. Then, some 15 centuries later, following the advent of Islam and the arrival of Arabs in Mesopotamia, it was again our forefathers who translated literary, scientific, philosophical, and other works from Classical Assyrian to Arabic. He even gave examples from the Qur'an but failed to mention that it is well-known that the Qur'an was strongly in-



fluenced by Mesopotamian Aramaic, both in style and content.

The most interesting and relevant presentation of the RAI was the workshop titled: *Continuity*, led by Simo Parpola. Professor Parpola, who is an instructor in the Assyriology department of the University of Helsinki, is well-known to most Assyrians from his numerous publications. He seems to be one of a very small number of Assyriologists/Orientalists who do not take it as a personal insult when we call ourselves Assyrian; indeed, Prof. Parpola agrees!

The workshop was a presentation of the ongoing *MELAMMU* project (The Assyrian and Babylonian Intellectual Heritage Project), which "investigates the continuity, transformation and diffusion of Mesopotamian culture in the Mediterranean world until the advent of Islam. The central objective of the project is the creation of an electronic database. The project also organizes interdisciplinary symposia focusing on different aspects of cultural continuity in antiq-

uity." This is a very important issue and one that has been mostly ignored up to now. There are numerous primary sources, in Akkadian, Hieroglyphic, Aramaic, and other ancient languages, documenting Assyrian history until the final years of the empire. However, we seem to enter a "dark age" from the time of the events leading to the fall of the Assyrian empire to the first few centuries of the Christian era. "Dark age", because primary sources are scarce or unknown and the secondary documents, like those of Greek writers, are themselves secondhand and imprecise. This period has also been ignored by western scholars since "Assyriology" covers the period until the fall of the Assyro-Babylonian political states; so, the Mesopotamian area is more or less ignored until the early centuries of the Christian era. It is clear that to study this period, scholars with different specialties will need to cooperate. This includes Assyriologists, Aramaists, Greek and Byzantine scholars, scholars of Persia and early Iran, Syriac and early Eastern Christianity scholars and others. This is what makes the *MELAMMU* project so important; it intends to bridge the gap in our history from the end of the empire to the early Christian period, and to do so it has recruited many scholars with diverse specialties including Dr. Edward Odisho and Dr. 'abdu massih Saadi, both Assyrians from Chicago. The proceedings of the *MELAMMU* symposia are published as booklets. To purchase these booklets or other publications of the University, and for further information on this or other projects of the Assyriology department of the University of Helsinki, visit the following web-sites:

www.helsinki.fi/science/saa
www.helsinki.fi/science/saa/melammu
www.aakkl.helsinki.fi/proj/melammu

For me, however, the highlight of RAI 47 was meeting Juliet Arvakhi and Zack Cherry, Assyrian graduate students in Assyriology, at the University of Helsinki, Finland, and at Uppsala University, Sweden, respectively.

Assyriology used to be an obscure and exclusive specialty that only allowed membership to western orientalists — Hormuzd Räsäm was a notable early exception. Indeed, it seemed that the field, with its mysterious cuneiform script, was beyond the comprehension of any modern Assyrian. And, if it wasn't enough that the Bible told us that our ancestors were not much more than blood-thirsty pagans, the Assyriologists were (and many still are) telling us that we are in no way related to the ancient Assyrians. So, it seemed that what the Assyriologists were studying and saying had nothing to do with us, nor what we said or did, with them.

There were some Assyrians who studied our history on their own; and some became quite knowledgeable and wrote books from what they had read in English, French, German or other languages. However, these authors were largely unknown even to the Assyrian community. And their opinions and theories, regardless of their merit, if presented to the western 'scholars', would be dismissed, since they (the Assyrian authors) did not have advanced degrees from western institutions. On the other hand, westerners with such advanced degrees, even in unrelated fields, with very little formal knowledge of Assyrians or Assyrian history, have always felt quite justified in expressing their opinions in scholarly and not-so-scholarly publications. Most recent example of this outrage

was the article posted on the internet by Dr. Kelley Ross, a philosophy instructor at a community college in Los Angeles who admits to only having taken a single course in Middle Eastern history while in Lebanon. In that article, he succeeds in insulting Assyrians of all time periods. He calls our ancestors blood-thirsty barbarians who "killed more Jews than Hitler....", and the modern Assyrians as confused fools who should be happy to be Christian and not dream-up bogus descent from the ancient Assyrians —see article by Mr. Fred Parhad in this issue.

More recently, however, things have started to change. Since the massive migration of Assyrians from the Near East to Western Europe and North America in the past thirty years, many have attended colleges and universities, graduating with advanced degrees. Initially, as expected, majority were entering the professional fields such as medicine, law, engineering, etc. But, as they have settled in their new homes, a growing number has started entering such fields as fine arts, social sciences, literary arts and humanities; namely, areas needed for our nation's cultural and spiritual nurture and well-being.

We have also started taking classes in Assyrian history and Assyriology and realize that there is no mystery; we can learn the cuneiform script and the associated languages just as well if not better than any western scholar —see the article by Mr. Zack Cherry in this issue. More importantly, we realize that Assyriologists are as human as any other person, with likes and dislikes, national/ethnic/political/religious beliefs/motives and biases, that may be reflected in their writings. The Iraqi Assyriologist who spoke at this RAI is a perfect example; he clearly is motivated by national political goals, and he is less than objective in his interpretations and writings, especially concerning the modern Assyrians, whose very existence he denies. This is why it is so important for us to enter the field of Assyriology and influence its direction, because, we can not expect others to be sympathetic to our cause —Dr. Parpola and a handful of other scholars are the exception.

We must also redefine Assyriology. For us, Assyriology is the study of our history, culture, religion, language, etc. It is not limited to any specific time period or geographic location. It includes everything from prehistory to the present and the Near and Middle East as well as our new homes in the west. We must not allow scholars or pseudo-scholars, whether western or eastern, to divide us or our heritage according to their criteria based on religious, dialectal, geographic, political or other differences.

The next *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (RAI 48) will take place in Leiden, The Netherlands, 1-4 July, 2002. The theme is *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia*. This is a very important and relevant topic and we hope many Assyrians will attend and participate.

For information and on-line registration, visit the following web-site:

www.let.leidenuniv.nl/rencontre/

You may also write to:

RAI 48
TCNO - Assyriologie
Universiteit Leiden
P.O. Box 9515
2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands

Transliteration (Latin Script)

Transcription (Modern Assyrian Script)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. <i>a-na¹ din-ḥa 4-KAM</i>
 <i>LÚ.GAL ku-um-re ša KUR-aš-šur-a-a EN-ja</i>
 <i>IR-ka¹ za-ak-ki-i URU.NINA-a-a</i>
 <i>ina UGU 25 MU.AN.NA.MEŠ</i></p> | <p>1. نذد دیند ٤ کاب
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| <p>5. <i>ša šar-ri-i GIŠ.GU.ZA ku-um-ru-ti-ka us-se-bi-la</i>
 <i>lu šul-mu a-na LÚ.GAL ku-um-re EN-ja</i>
 <i>ku-um-ru GAL-u KUR-aš-šur-a-a gít-ma-lu</i>
 <i>LÚ.SIPA it-pe-šu mi-gir DINGIR na-šir kit-ti</i>
 <i>ra-im mi-šá-ri e-piš ú-sa-a-ti</i></p> | <p>5. ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب
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| <p>10. <i>a-lik tap-pu-ut a-ki</i>
 <i>sa-ḥi-ru dam-qa-a-ti zi-ka-ru ke-nu</i>
 <i>a-ša-rid kal ku-um-re</i>
 <i>DINGIR a-na LÚ.GAL ku-um-ru-ti ša KUR-aš-šur-a-a</i>
 <i>šu-mu ša LÚ.GAL ku-um-re EN-ja iz-za-kar</i></p> | <p>10. ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب
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| <p>15. <i>AD TUR ù za-qi-qu qá-aš-du</i>
 <i>qi-nu-me ša DINGIR an-nu-u-te GAL.MEŠ</i>
 <i>ša AN-e KI.TIM</i>
 <i>ra-i'-i-mu-te ku-um-ru-ti-ka</i>
 <i>a-du 1 LIM-šú a-na LÚ.GAL ku-um-re EN-ja</i></p> | <p>15. ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب
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| <p>20. <i>a-dan-niš a-dan-niš lik-ru-bu</i>
 <i>tu-ub lib-bi tu-ub UZU</i>
 <i>UD.MEŠ GÍD.DA.MEŠ lid-di-nu-šú</i>
 <i>ši-bu-tu lit-tu-tu lu-šab-bi-ú-šu</i>
 <i>1 ME MU.AN.NA.MEŠ lu-bal-li-ṭu-šú</i></p> | <p>20. ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب
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| <p>25. <i>ina IGI DINGIR a-na EN-ja ak-tar-ba</i>
 <i>UD-mu MI a-na UGU TIL.A</i>
 <i>ša ZI.MEŠ-ka a-na DINGIR a-ma-ḥar</i>
 <i>ŠA-ba-ka lu DUG-ka</i>
 <i>DI-mu LÚ.GAL ku-um-re ša KUR-aš-šur-a-a</i></p> | <p>25. ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب
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| <p>30. <i>EN-ja la-aš-me</i></p> | <p>30. ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب ٤ کاب</p> |

1. *ana Dinḥa rebī,
rab kumrē ša aššūrāje, bēlīja:
urdaka Zakkī Nīnuwāja.
ina muḥḥi 25 šanāte*
5. *ša šarrī ku(r)ssī kumrūtīka ussebila.
lū šulmu ana rab kumrē, bēlīja.
kumru rabū, aššūrāju gitmālu,
rā'ju itpēšu, migir ili, nāšir kitti,
rā'im mišari, ēpiš usāti,*
10. *ālik tappūt akī,
sāḥīru damqāti, zikaru kēnu,
ašarēd kal kumrē.
ilu, ana rab kumrūti ša aššūrāje,
šumu ša rab kumrē, bēlīja, izzakar.*
15. *abu, māru u zāqīqu qašdu,
qinūmē ša ili annūte rabūti,
ša šamē, kaqqere,
ra'imūte kumrūtīka,
adu līmīšu ana rab kumrē, bēlīja,*
20. *addaniš addaniš likrubū.
ṭūb libbi, ṭūb šīri,
ūmāte arkāte liddinūšu!
šībūtu littūtu, lušabbiūšu!
me'at šanāte, luballiṭūšu!*
25. *ina pān ili ana bēlīja aktarba.
ūmu, mūšu ana muḥḥi balāṭi
ša napšātēka ana ili amahḥar.
libbaka lū ṭābaka!
šulmu rab kumrē ša aššūrāje,*
30. *bēlīja, lašme!*

¹ To the High Priest of the Assyrians, Dinkha IV, my lord: your servant Zakkay of Nineveh. I am sending in regard to the 25th year (anniversary) of the inauguration of your High Priest's throne. Good health to the High Priest, my lord!

⁷ A great priest, a perfect Assyrian, a wise shepherd, favorite of God, guardian of the right, lover of justice, who lends support, who comes to the aid of the needy, who turns (his thoughts) to pious deeds, a righteous man, preeminent among all priests.

¹³ God has appointed the High Priest, my lord, to the supreme priesthood of the Assyrians.

¹⁵ May the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, the great Hypostases of God of heaven and earth, who are pleased with your priesthood, a thousandfold, very greatly, bless the High Priest, my lord! ²¹ May They grant him joy, health and long life! May They satisfy him with a hundred years' old age!

²⁶ I have prayed before God for my lord. Day and night I turn to God for your well-being. May your heart be glad! May I hear the well-being of the High Priest of the Assyrians, my lord!

¹ ' = a in alone; ā car; ē = a in date; ḥ = kh, ܫ, ܫ; ī & î = e in me;

j = y in year; q = ܩ, ܩ; š = sh, ܫ, ܫ; ṣ = ܥ, ܥ; ṭ = ܬ, ܬ; ū & û = oo in boot;

Debate with Dr. Kelley Ross

Fred Parhad
St. Helena, California

Back in March we were alerted by one of our Forum participants that an article had appeared on the internet written by a professor Kelley Ross who teaches at Los Angeles Valley College. In it he states that he will no longer discuss modern-day Assyrians with his Assyrian students since having had an argument with one of them, but will hand out copies of the paper to his classes whenever the subject should come up in the future. Dr. Ross, who teaches Philosophy at the Junior College, admits to not being an expert in the field. His ideas are based on his formal education, at the Universities of Hawaii and Texas, plus a course he took in the 70's while studying in Beirut. In his résumé Dr. Ross expresses pride in an ancestor of his who created the "Kelley Blue Book", a method of determining the value of used cars.

The central theme in his paper is that modern-day Assyrians, who he grudgingly admits are probably descended from the ancients, should be proud of their contributions to history since the Christian Era and should not seek to establish any links to the pagan Assyrians who, among other things, "killed a greater percentage of Jews than Hitler". He repeats all the usual slanders about our ancestors being savage barbarians, deservedly hated for what they did to their neighbors, especially the Israelites, providing some examples of "typical" and all pervasive Assyrian cruelty. He reserves his greatest scorn for our penchant for "ethnic mythologizing" and what he calls the "bane of the 20th Century...Nationalism." He calls the people who teach these things (our parents), "frauds" and in a variety of ways he thinks he is entitled to...insult Assyrians as he would not have dared to do to any other ethnic minority in this land.

The moderators of a few of our forums began a campaign of protest and several e-mails were sent to the college. Dr. Ross immediately modified the paper and "apologized" in such a condescending manner that only added to the problem. We were told, finally, by Mr. Leon Marzillier, who is head of the Faculty Senate and teaches mathematics there, that they had responded to our concerns adequately, and as far as they were concerned, the matter was ended and they would no longer accept any messages. Several knowledgeable Assyrians had written detailed protests complete with chapter and verse from far more recent sources than Dr. Ross had relied upon, but these were largely ignored. Dr. Simo Parpola even wrote a response in which he firmly scolded Dr. Ross for his unsound scholarship and disregard for our students and community.

At this point in the narrative, you will have to excuse this writer if he is forced to place himself in the middle of the events that ensued, for he was there and knows whereof he speaks. My involvement came about because I did not wish to let the matter end when or where the college decided it would. My last communication with Mr. Marzillier went something like, "we'll see what direct confrontation will do."

By the time all of this was called to a halt by the college, the Assyrian State Convention was slated to begin on Memorial

Day. As it was to be held in Long Beach, my "tech staff", aged ten to thirteen who are far more computer literate as all children are than their parents, spent two days designing a logo and printing out petitions in the name of "Assyrian Chaldean Academic Freedom Committee". My perspective was that we were not at all in favor of having Dr. Ross merely modify the views he held anyway, that it was not "academic freedom" to either censor oneself when opposed, or to present only one side of a story. We were the ones insisting that Dr. Ross had a right to his opinion, no matter how loathsome it was, but that we had a right to be heard as well. Education was the entire point, not half-hearted apologies. I drove down to Long Beach to find that some of the Assyrians there who were aware of what was taking place had smoothed the way already so that the Los Angeles association was behind our petition drive. We were able to gather a few hundred signatures in two days. At the picnic I was especially pleased when three young Assyrian boys and two girls volunteered to take the clipboards around to where people were scattered on the lawn and bring back as many signatures as they could. They did yeoman's service for us that day.

The Tuesday after the picnic was the beginning of Finals' week at the college...a very busy time for students and faculty. Early that morning I was at the president's office, petitions in hand. The two secretaries there recognized my name and were most gracious, saying that Dr. Tyree Wieder was at the central administration offices just then. I told them that I was there to see Dr. Wieder and planned on staying until I did. Dr. Susan Carleo, director for Instruction, sat down to speak with me, to see what could be done. When I told her I was here to seek a meeting with Dr. Wieder about the paper written by Kelley Ross, she informed me that there was a procedure that must be followed etc. My response was that I doubted there had been a procedure in place to allow an entire community, from which several of their own students came, to be insulted in such a fashion as we had been, and as they had been the first to break with any precedent established by "procedure"... all bets were off.

A call was put in to Dr. Wieder and I was handed the phone. I quickly relayed my concerns ending with Dr. Ross' comparison of Assyrians with Hitler, at which I distinctly heard her mutter..."Oh Lord". She said she would be in her office at one o'clock and see what could be done. At the time called for I was ushered into her conference room. Dr. Wieder is an articulate and bright Afro-American woman, warm and engaging...and tough as nails. Seated at the table were Dr. Carleo, Mr. Leon Marzillier, and Dr. Kelley Ross. Dr. Wieder had cancelled her afternoon appointments and pulled these gentlemen together on short notice, to put it mildly.

I stated the nature of our concerns, handed over the petitions and asked to have an opportunity to respond. They were somewhat skeptical at first but I convinced them that behind

this polite gesture there waited a horde of angry Assyrians... that we'd decided I should come alone in order not to inflame the situation further. At one point Dr. Wieder tuned to Dr. Ross and stated that she had been very upset over his comments about African-Americans in the same paper, but reserved comment for another day. Though she stressed that Dr. Ross was under no obligation to do so, she felt that a forum between Dr. Ross and some expert in the field was appropriate. He agreed to meet with such an expert, but not with me. I rejected that, saying that as he himself was no expert, he should more properly debate his equal. He finally agreed to do so and I was told to call back the first week of the Fall semester.

The debate, they preferred to call it a forum, was held on Monday the 24th of September at Monarch Hall on the campus of Los Angeles Valley College. Some attempts were made to get the word out among our community there and the college produced a handbill for distribution among the students. Since the attack on the Towers had occurred I was asked by people in our community to postpone the debate on the grounds that this was not a good time to attract attention to ourselves. After the Sikh gentleman was killed for wearing a turban, and the Christian Arab gunned down for being a likely "terrorist", and when only that weekend an Assyrian church had been burned down in Chicago, I felt more than ever that this was exactly the time to begin the long overdue "re-education" of the American public, and the world as well, of what we Assyrians were really like, and also of course inform them as to our survival and existence side by side with them and all the other ethnic groups which make up this nation. For the very reason that most people hear I am "A Syrian" when I tell them "I am Assyrian", and because Syria is an Arab "rogue" nation, and because most American high school graduates can't find Texas on the map, let alone Syria, it seemed to me most critical that we begin to educate people, especially as this country prepares to go to war with a shadowy and ill-defined "enemy" with whom we can now be more easily confused than ever.

Five Assyrians showed up for the debate and were outnumbered by other faculty members and non-Assyrian students. Two Jews were in attendance. Fortunately the college agreed to tape the debate.* I had taken a sculpture of the large Lamassu with an attached brass plate addressed, to "Dr. Wieder, the faculty and students of the college, in appreciation, from the Assyrian American community". In her opening statement Dr. Wieder expressed the opinion that this type of educational effort was most appropriate to a college to undertake, and that perhaps there should be more of it.

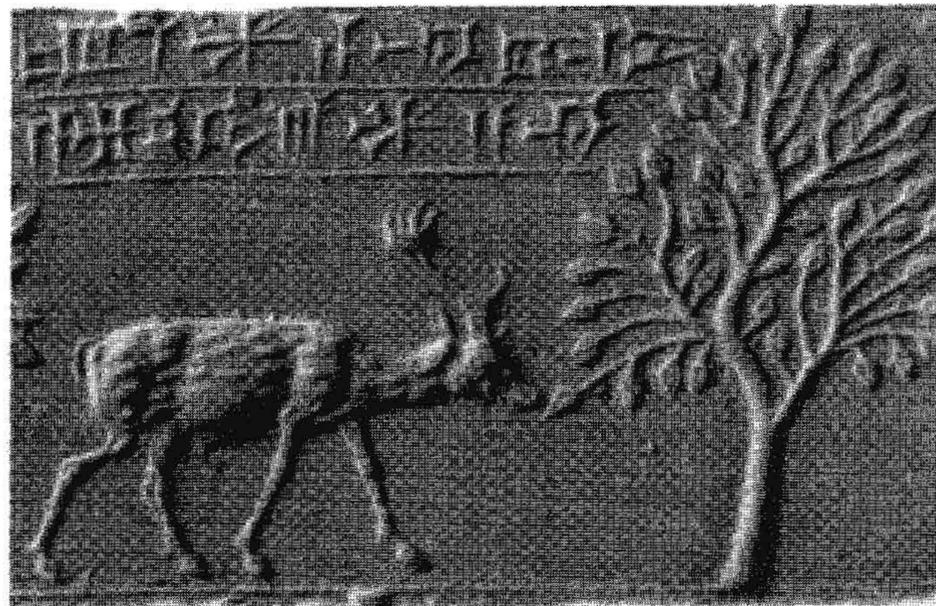
Mr. Marzillier acted the part of moderator and called upon me to make an opening statement. I outlined three main points in Dr. Ross's paper which I would address. The first was that we were exceptionally cruel to captives, that we were particularly cruel to the Jews by deporting them constantly, and that any recent claims made by Dr. Parpola and others, that there were clear indications that Assyrian and Babylonian legends and teachings had a direct influence on Christianity...that Christianity was not firmly grounded in Jewish teachings alone, was ridiculous and a distortion of the facts.

I read some relevant sections from sources that have been recently written refuting each and every claim he made in his paper. I told him there was a new direction and attitude in As-

syriology which only recently broke away from the tradition of defining Assyrians by what the Old Testament claimed, and that in years to come we would see many more such books and articles adding to the promising finds and readings of old cuneiform texts which have lain largely ignored for decades in museum vaults...for people had felt till recently, as he evidently did, that they "knew" enough about the Assyrians from reading the Old Testament. In the past, every opportunity to read a negative slant into anything deciphered in a few clay tablets was indulged in, every situation calling for dispassionate or unbiased interpretation was overlooked in favor of hewing to the Biblical tradition. This travesty of scholarship has only recently been modified and the world will be treated soon to an ever increasing number of publications stating a far more fair and balanced view of the ancient Assyrians. Far from having reason to be ashamed of our ancestors, as Dr. Ross claimed, the world will recognize soon enough that we have every reason to be proud of the people who had such a positive impact on the direction Western Civilization was to take.

I doubt Dr. Ross profited much from the exchange, but then his reformation wasn't the reason we protested. Dr. Ross represents a point of view about us based on prejudice and ignorance. This attitude and the harm it has done our people can only partially be ameliorated by new research and an academic approach free of Biblical propaganda. The greater task will be to instill pride in our coming generation of young people who will require to be shown the way, not by experts in the field, but by the example set for them by their own parents and community. We went to Los Angeles to fight back, to stand up for ourselves. It is a totally new concept in our community to take a pro-active stand. Research alone, even fair and unbiased reporting, will not make up for this deficiency...we must become masters of our own fate and it matters not at all if it starts with a handful of children and five adults or five hundred, so long as it begins.

*The video recording of the debate can be viewed at Mr. Parhad's Web-page (www.fredparhad.com) as soon as it is made available by the College.



The Atra Project*: An Update

Dr. Arian Ishaya

Dr. Ashur Moradkhan was the speaker at the Assyrian Foundation of America's general body meeting on September 16, where he gave a detailed report on his visit to the homeland. He spoke about the impact this visit had on him personally and related his observations regarding the condition of Assyrians in the homeland. He discussed the role of the Atra Project, its accomplishments thus far, its present standing, and its vision for the future.

He pointed out that it was in the homeland that he found the answer to a question he had been asking for a long time; a question that he believes every Assyrian should be asking: "What is the direction of our nation today?" This is a question we seldom ask. If we were to pose this question to Palestinians, the answer would be that they are in a state of uprising; the Kurds are in a state of state building. But in which direction are the Assyrians going? In other words, what is our national program? In the homeland he found the answer: The Assyrians there are in the stage of preparation. The most striking discovery was that the Assyrians in Northern Mesopotamia are not living as a minority group in a state, but as a state within a state. They have established the various offices needed to run a state. Political decisions are the affairs of Zow'a; internal affairs are in the care of the local Assyrian Aid Society. Zow'a has military capability, and it has representation in various foreign countries. In Syria, the Zow'a office facilitates the official business of Assyrians in that country. The government of Syria invited the Zow'a representative, along with ambassadors of other countries, to the memorial service of Hafiz Assad. If an official from a foreign country meets with Mas'ud Barazani and Jalal Talabani, the task is not considered complete unless the official also meets with Zow'a leadership. Today, the Assyrian language is the primary language of instruction in the Assyrian schools. Kurdish, Arabic, and English are secondary languages. This educational policy is due to the diligence and hard work on the part of Zow'a.

The accomplishments of the Assyrian Aid Society (AAS) in the fields of education and curriculum building are remarkable. AAS has established 17 elementary schools, two high schools, and one college in the homeland. All textbooks in various subjects are in Assyrian. They have a daycare center and dormitories for students in Arbil and Duhuk. Moreover, they provide transportation for students who live in areas away from schools. The teaching standards are of high quality. The instructors are well-qualified and do their job with much devotion. In Arbil AAS is building a college dormitory which will house 150 students. The students will have room and board free of charge. It will be a three-story building in one of the good areas of the city. AAS has also built a high school named *Urhai* in Sarsang. This is a large and modern building not much different from a modern high school in the U.S.A. Building costs, the furniture, books, teachers' salaries, transportation, and many other costs are covered by AAS. AAS has also helped in re-roofing homes, repairing water canals, etc. Twice a month, a group of doctors and nurses from the AAS pharmacy visit the outlying villages and sell necessary medica-

tion, at cost, to the people. Zow'a pays for the costs of the military, administration, and officials abroad.

With all these expenses, what is received as donations from our people is not sufficient. These organizations have set the Assyrians in the homeland on a course of preparation. But there are three major obstacles on the road. They are:

1. Emigration
2. Uncertainty
3. Economic hardship

The Atra Project is designed to overcome these obstacles. That is why it is well-received by our people there. Briefly, the objective of the Atra Project is to build personal and economic bonds between families in the homeland, and those abroad. Economic ties are the foundation upon which other ties can develop. The monthly contributions that a family abroad makes to a family in the homeland are not for purposes of charity, but are used in agriculture or livestock breeding to build economically viable households in the homeland.

Preliminary steps:

Dr. Moradkhan chose the village of Bet-bedee for his pilot project. He purchased an electric generator for the village with part of the contributions of the Assyrian Foundation of America (For this reason a plaque bearing the name of the Foundation will be placed on the wall next to the generator). A list of expenses and receipts endorsed by the village association has been sent to Mr. Youel Baaba, the director of the Atra Project in the United States, and Dr. Moradkhan has copies as well. The generator not only supplies electricity for the household needs of the village, but is also necessary to pump irrigation water, or to run the sprinklers. This was a first step in preparation for the planting of 3000 apple saplings in autumn of this year. Moreover, all the land where apple trees will be planted has been ploughed and ready for planting. There is a good market for apple trees and apples in the homeland.



The electric generator installed in the village of Bet-bedee

As the case in Bet-Bedee illustrates, it is often necessary to prioritize infrastructure projects to be able to proceed with the project at hand. For example, to water the orchards, sometimes pumps are needed to take the water to hilly areas. In other circumstances, irrigation canals, cisterns, and related facilities become necessary priorities. In some villages human power is scarce. One has to resort to hired labor. This is the situation in the village of Hiyis. This is a large village with plenty of water but not enough workforce. For large vineyards sometimes small tractors or manually operated machines are necessary.

Drinking water tanks were set on rooftops of twenty homes in Doorri, in upper Barwar, to supply the villagers with much needed drinking and cooking water on a daily basis. This necessary service was also funded by the Atra Project.

The villages of Belijan, Kandi Kossi, and Hiyis were surveyed to determine the number of households, the size of uncultivated land, and the number of apple and peach trees needed. Belijan is scheduled to receive 4500 apple saplings; Kanke-Kossi and Hiyis each 20,000 peach and apple saplings. The orchard planting scheme comes under the *family-to-family* aspect of the project. Therefore, the follow-up will depend on the number of people here in the United States who would be willing to participate in the *family-to-family* plan. Those who designate their funds for the *agricultural build-up* program will receive step-by-step progress report, and documentation. It is important to note that after four years, when the apple and peach trees mature, 10% of the sale price will be returned to the Atra Project fund to be reinvested in other areas. Thus the initial investment will continue to be productive.

Besides agriculture, investing in livestock appears to be a promising prospect in some areas. For instance, if one buys a young calf in springtime and sells it at the end of autumn, the profit will be twice the purchase price. Sections of our homeland have good pastures, and no additional costs are involved in such a venture. In many villages stockbreeding is an easy way to make money, as in the village of Dihi, where sheep breeding is advantageous.

The villages around the Naala region are especially suited for beehive farming. There is a good market for honey and preparing honey and marketing it is rather simple.

The Buy-Back Program

A preliminary study has been done to determine the lands and orchards that some Assyrians sold secretly to Kurds prior to moving out of the area. This has created numerous problems for the Assyrians remaining in the area. But they do not have the funds to buy these lands back. If sufficient funds are made available, these lands can be bought back and put to good use. There is a large parcel of land in Bagari, three vineyards in the village of Kani-Balavi, and a large tract of land in Bet-Bedee. It is important to buy back all these lands situated in areas where there is a concentration of Assyrians, otherwise there may be dire consequences in the future.

The estimated cost for these projects is \$12,500.00, which is not a prohibitive sum for rural reconstruction. Funds can be collected in various ways:

1. Family-to-family donations of \$20 per month, with an initial six-month donation of \$120.

2. Contributions from Assyrian associations, foundations, and various other organizations or individuals.
3. Foreign aid.

Undoubtedly, raising this fund and investing it wisely and reliably is a great responsibility and requires a lot of work. But the end result is stabilizing present-day settlements, slowing further emigration and population erosion, and building for the future.

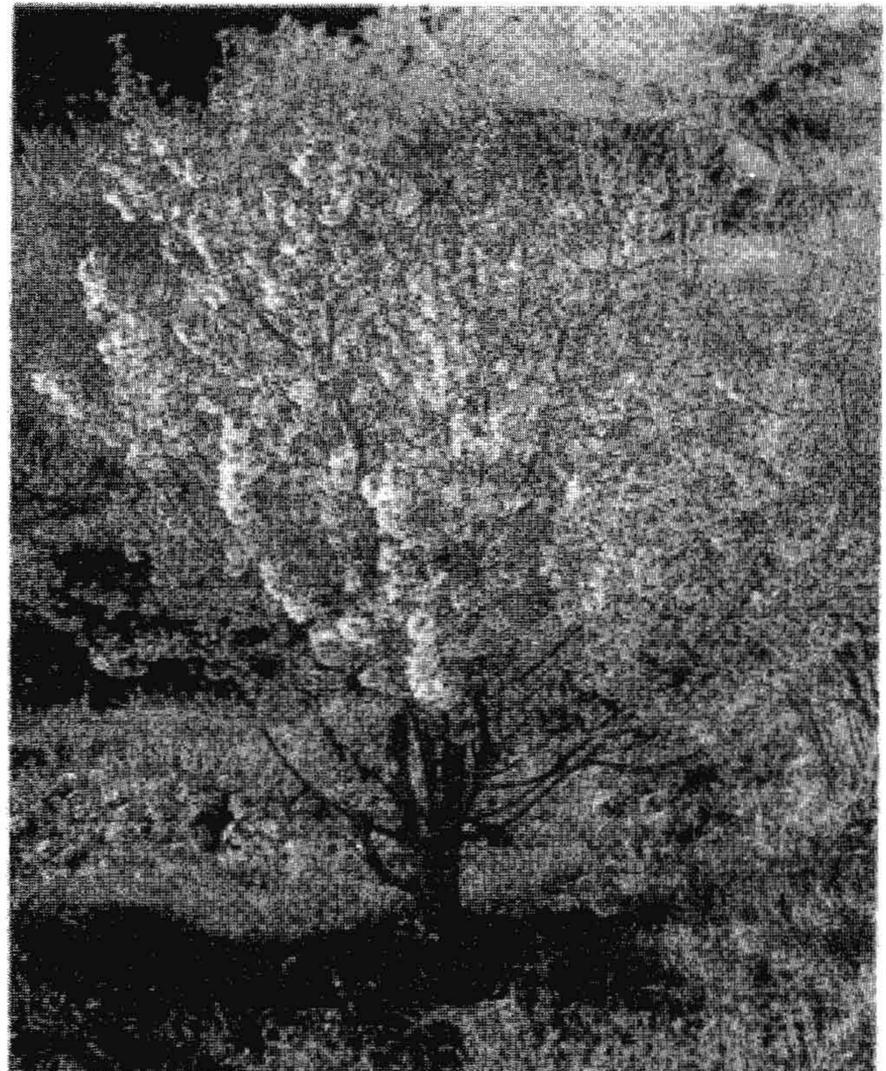
Another goal of the Atra Project is setting up a dental lab in Dohuk to train Assyrian dental technicians.

The Assyrians abroad have the duty to build up the countryside and create work for the people in the homeland. They need to establish firms and trading establishments in the country to fulfill the needs of those people, economic and otherwise. When the people see and believe that they have a reliable support base, their motivation and hope in their future will grow. If they see that a comfortable life is possible and a reliable source of support is behind them, they will not think of leaving the homeland. Moreover, the homeland will become a refuge for those who live in destitution as aliens in other countries. The exiles will return to their villages and homes and emigration may change to immigration. If we want to survive as a nation, we need to be active supporters of projects like the Atra Project.

Please, contact Mr. Youel Baaba, the director of the Atra Project in the United States, for information and to become involved in the building of our future in our homeland, at:

Youel A. Baaba
720 Evelyn Court
Alamo, California 94507

*Atra Project is the new name of The Ashur Project.



The Seventh Annual Assyrian Youth Excellence Pageant

Dr. Arian Ishaya
San Jose, California

The seventh annual Assyrian Youth Excellence Pageant was held at the Assyrian American National Federation Convention over the Labor Day weekend in San Jose, California. Of the many bright and talented contestants, there were eight finalists. And the winners were:

-First place: Anobel Odisho who is a student at the University of California, Berkeley, majoring in molecular and cell biology and Ancient Near Eastern history.

-Second place: Raumin Benjamin who is studying at Santa Clara University, majoring in corporate law.

-Third place: Ilbret Bakuniance who is studying accounting and management at the San Jose State University.

The awards included a beautiful trophy designed by the late Jan Toma, and cash prizes of \$1,500, \$1,000, and \$500 for the first, second, and third place winner, respectively. All contestants received a prize.

This year's pageant was unique in that all the contestants spoke Assyrian fluently and almost all had basic proficiency in reading and writing Assyrian as well. Moreover, all the contestants held active membership in local churches or civic organizations, and had a history of significant contributions to such organizations.

During the talent show session, the contestants demonstrated an impressive range of skills. Shanit Beit Poulice played two classical pieces on the piano. Anobel Odisho displayed a web page he has designed which he calls "Project Ummānā". He has digitized hundreds of rare images of Assyrian and Babylonian art. These are displayed on the web page with a full description of each. Adad Warda who had previously won an award for his online 3-d animation "Ghost Train", displayed several of his computerized graphic art creations. Several contestants read from their original compositions, two of which are included at the end of this article.

As mentioned before, this year's contestants were unique with respect to their Assyrian language skills and active involvement in the Assyrian community. The majority of the contestants came to this country as small children. Another common and important factor is that they had attended Assyrian schools such as Sūsān and Behnām in Tehrān. Evidence that next to the importance of parents as role models, Assyrian schools are extremely important in the preservation and continuation of ethnic identity from one generation to the next. It is also a warning sign to the Assyrian Americans who after residing in this country for more than eighty years have not established even an Assyrian elementary school for their children.

Following, is a poem by Ilber Eshaya from Los Angeles, written in memory of his grandfather who fought in the Assyrian army during World War I.

To You in Heaven

To you in heaven I speak, I miss you with all my heart my

sweet.

To me you were my inspiration, my key. You taught me about all of life's mysteries. You were my role model of life complete.

Without you I am empty like the ocean without it's water. I weep.

You were there for me, you had my back when no one was near.

You held my hand from childhood and rocked me to sleep.

You were my hero, 'the Epic of Gilgamesh', my king.

Living life without you is hard but with my heart I feel the legacy you left for me; above the clouds I know you watch over me; guiding me because I know you love me.

Grandpa, I know you hear me; for you I will go to the deepest sea. You inspired me. You strengthened me. You made me the man I am today. Forever you are my shining day. I pray....

Your wisdom of the old days gave me the power. The essence of an Assyrian Crusade. The journey to better preserve my race.

Through Genocide you survived; your blood you gave to that tree of life, that was frail.

Oh Baba, how I miss you

Only if you knew, my dear Shlimon

If I had one wish, Oh so I may be granted, would be to see you, at least for just a second or two; then, when my time comes, at least I would know where to find you.

Now and always, you are in my dreams.

This life's saga I owe to you; I honor you.

You are forever my King, my Baba, my love.

I will never forget you

A poem by Ilbret Bakuniance, read in Assyrian.

A Prayer in Tough Times

Take away my woe, Oh Lord.

Protect me from the enemy's sword.

Mend my broken heart, Oh Lord.

Strengthen my faith in your promising word.

For grief's mighty power has overtaken.

My heart is left lonely and so forsaken.

Facing tough times, I pray to you in dismay,

But your delayed answers have left me in despair.

God, in you and only you, I find true hope.

I trust that with my problems, you'll help me cope.

I plead to you, my God, not to let me down.

Not to let me lose hope nor give me a frown.

Yes, I know everything you do is meant for the best.

But I ask for this weight to be taken off my chest.

You said "anything you ask in my name, I will do."

Trusting in your word, I will plead 'til my prayers come true...

Because you are the hope, the light, and the love of my life.

The Church of the East in Habbaniya

Solomon (Sawa) Solomon
Fort Wayne, Indiana

In 1936, while the British air base was still being built in Habbaniya, the first unit to move in was No. 30 Squadron from Mosul, and along with it came hundreds of Assyrians who were employed by the Squadron. Among them was Yousip Goriel, of Tkhuma Gawaye. Yousip used his house in C.C. as a gathering place for worship and, on occasion, a priest would come from Baghdad to celebrate mass. Over the next two years, Assyrians started arriving from Henaidi and other places in large numbers. In 1938, a meeting of elders took place and it was decided to petition Metropolitan Mar Yousip Khnanisho to send Father Ablakhad Jarjees as priest for Habbaniya. Father Jarjees, who started out as a Catholic priest, had joined Church of the East in 1928 and served in Dohuk until the 1933 crisis when he was sent to Nasiriya. After his release, he moved to the area of Sinak in Baghdad. At the order of Mar Yousip, he took his new post as the priest for the Church of Mar Gewargis in Habbaniya. Father Jarjees arrived in 1938 along with his sister, Bebe, and took residence in the house of Deacon Khnanya Rehana until he moved to his own place. Deacon Khnanya, along with Deacon Warda Odisho, were collecting money for the church. The two men would visit the Assyrian households once-a-month and every one would give according to his ability. Deacon Khnanya later found employment with the Khanaqin Oil Company and left Habbaniya; however, he remained active in church affairs until his death. His place as money collector was taken by Rabee Zero Amro. Father Jarjees served the church well and was assisted by several deacons, including Khnanya, Warda, Sheem, Menashi, Goriel, Esha, Hermiz, and others.

In 1950 a church board was established and Shawil Suleiman was appointed president with Yousip Jittoo as secretary and Deacon Sheem as treasurer. Deacon Warda and Rabee Zero kept their positions as money collectors. It was decided that each household would give between 50 and 150 fills monthly, depending on the number of workers in the household. However, there were some who paid more, like Zaya Zaya of Gawar, who gave one silver Iraqi riyal each month. There were approximately 560 Assyrian households paying dues each month. This excluded the poor families. It also did not include the Levies and the Coolie Camp who had their own churches; the Levies under Qasha Tooma and the Coolie Camp under Qasha Eshoo. Some of the projects undertaken by the church committee included: taking general census of church members, building of a wall for the church yard, purchasing of lumber for burial coffins, rebuilding the church's foundation with brick, building of three classrooms, refurbishing the priest's house, and converting the church yard so that services could be held there in the summer.

Habbaniya by now had emerged as one the major Assyrian centers in Iraq. Other centers in the Baghdad region included Gailani Camp and Jeeloo Camp. There were also major Assyrian concentrations in the north, including Kirkuk and Mosul.

On August 1, 1950, Father Jarjees returned to the Catholic

church. The church board approached Mar Yousip, who was visiting Habbaniya and staying with Rab-Khaila Zaya, and asked him to send Archdeacon Esho Bet Mar Sargis, who had been serving in the Church of Mar Kardagh, in Gailani Camp, to Habbaniya. Mar Yousip agreed and ordained Deacon Goriel Suleiman as priest and sent him to Gailani Camp as replacement.

On September 1, 1950, Archdeacon Esho arrived in Habbaniya. However, on May 1, 1951, he left for Baghdad to be with his uncle, Bishop Mar Zaya Sargis, who was ill. The Bishop passed away on May 12, 1951, and Archdeacon Esho was consecrated Bishop Mar Esho Sargis on May 14.

Archdeacon Akhiqar Hagy, from Basra, became the new priest for the church in Habbaniya. Later, he left for Dora, and Qasha Zomaya took his place. By then, Habbaniya was in decline.

Following, are samples of the church budget (in Iraqi Dinars and Fills):

1950

-Dues	£386.980
-Cross collections	84.386
-Coffin collections	17.050
-Priest Salary	£200.000
-Donation for Dohuk church	20.000
-Electricity	5.000
-Telegram	7.476
-Miscellaneous	12.895
-Coffins	28.580

1951

-Dues	£341.600
-Cross collections	96.216
-Coffin collections	18.950
-Priest Salary	£216.000
-Electricity	8.000
-Miscellaneous	10.000
-Three water tubs	2.200
-Cost of Bishop Mar Sargis reception	70.250
-Coffins	5.350

1952

-Dues	£450.970
-Cross collections	91.652
-Coffin collections	18.050
-Priest salary	243.000
-Teachers' salary	43.000
-Building schoolrooms	111.000
-Custodian	18.000
-Donations to visiting priests	30.000

Sargis Shallou: the "Jet" and the "Hammer" (Life-sketch of a former sportsman)

Michael K. Pius
Modesto, California

Sargis Shimshon Shallou ran so fast that he was dubbed "the Jet" during the years he played soccer in Habbaniya, Iraq. Later, in Baghdad, his long strong shots earned him the nickname "Chakooch", meaning hammer in Persian.

Because of his speed, at first Sargis played in the wing position. But he had many other outstanding skills which made him invaluable as a defender. So, for most of his career of more than fifteen years, he played as center-half.

Sargis was a hard-working "watchdog". He was the backbone of his team's defense and was one of the best center-half players in Iraq. Wil Mannion, one of England's soccer stars of the 1950's, said that an outstanding center-half had to have four assets: sprinting, swerving, dribbling, and heading. Sargis had all these skills plus others, such as tackling, ball anticipation, and long strong shots. The combination of all these made him an outstanding defender.

When Sargis dueled in a sprint for the ball, he swerve suddenly, leaving his opponent off-balance and completely beaten. He would then carry the ball and advance it with a pass. Or, he would shoot and send it flying to a forward at the other end of the field, changing a defensive move into an offensive one.

Sargis could dribble; but, he was best known for his tackling. Seldom would he lose the ball in a tackle. And, if a situation turned dangerous, he would clear the ball far away from the goal.

Although five-foot-five, Sargis was very effective in the air. He timed his leap to meet the ball in mid-air and would flick it for a pass, or head it hard for a clearance. He had an uncanny sense of anticipation. He often would be on the spot where a high ball was heading and with a quick move would meet the ball and control it with his head, chest or foot.

Sargis started playing in his early school days, and, by his late teens, he was playing in top competition games.

He played for his club, the R.A.F. Employees (Assyrian) Club and for the C.C. Select team, for all of the seven years he played in the first division while in Habbaniya. Employees' team was the dominant team in Habbaniya and C.C. Select was the cream of the local teams.

In 1955, Sargis moved to Baghdad and played for another seven years for *Muslaha* (Baghdad Passenger Transport), Assyrian Sports Club, and Iraq Select teams, taking part in top competition games. He played in several international matches in the late 1950's and early 1960's.

Sargis was also a field hockey player in Habbaniya, and an outstanding chess player. He was one of the 16 finalists in a chess competition for workers in the oil and gas industries, held all over England and Scotland, sponsored by the Protech International and International Petroleum Times in 1978.

Sargis was the third of six children of Shimshon Shallou and Zabel Khourbanian. His father was employed as a carpenter at



R.A.F. Assyrian Employees' Club Soccer Team, 1951-52. Winners, Shaikh Abdul Razzad Knock-out Cup and R.A.F. Station, Habbaniya League.
Front (left-to-right): Sargis Shallou, Zaia Shawel, Avimalk Yonan (club president), Hormis Goriel (Capt.), Youna Eshaya, Kaako Shallou; Back (left-to-right): Aram Karam, William Shallou, Youel Gewargis, Avimalk Haidar, Benyamin Esho, and Ammo Baba



Friendly match between C.C. and R.A.F. Combined (Assyrian) team and R.A.F. Command Canal Zone, the visiting team from Egypt, played in April 1954 at the R.A.F. Station, Habbaniya, Iraq. Iraq won 6-1. (Sargis Shallou is in foreground). The Canal Zone, which had a number of English professional players, played two other games, beating the C.C. Select 2-1 and the R.A.F. Habbaniya 6-1.

the Royal Air Force Station of Hinaidi, adjoining Baghdad, and lived with his family in the R.A.F. local laborers' "town", called Kota Camp. Sargis studied for a few years at the late Rābi Yaqub's Assyrian and Armenian School situated in the camp, where he had been born on December 30, 1926.

In 1938, the R.A.F. handed over their base to the Iraqi government, after relocating to Habbaniya, a new site 55 miles west of the capital. The Shallou family also moved to the Civil Cantonment of the new air base. His father continued his

employment with the R.A.F., and Sargis studied a few more years at Rābi Yaqub's new school in C.C., renamed R.A.F. Union School, before he began working as a clerk.

At 21, Sargis married Daizy, 18, the eldest of four daughters of Enwiya Babilla and Asyat Younan of Gailani Camp, Baghdad. The wedding was celebrated in C.C. on April 27, 1947. As customary then, they lived with Sargis's family for eight years. Sargis worked for the R.A.F. for a total of 14 years, after which he moved along with his wife and first three children to Baghdad shortly after Habbaniya was surrendered to the Iraqi government in May 1955.



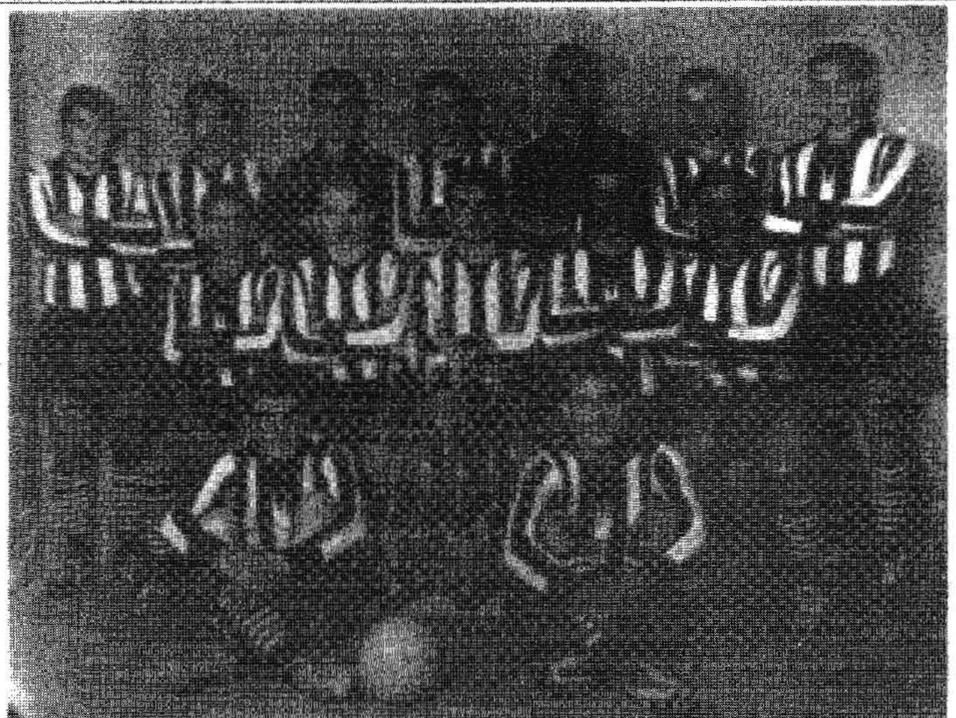
1957: Assyrian National Select Team's captain, Sargis S. Shallou (white shirt) shaking hands with referee, Capt. Fahmi, and with Lebanon's Rising Club team captain, before kick-off of an international friendly match which the Assyrians won 5-0 at Scouts Ground, Baghdad, Iraq, on June 8, 1957.

In Baghdad, Sargis worked for another 14 years, three for Muslaha, six for U.S. Sanderson & Porter Co., and five in Shallou family hotel business.



1959: Baghdad's Assyrian Sports Club captain, Sargis S. Shallou, receiving his trophy from Brig. Ahmed Hassan, following his team's 3-2 win in the final against Royal Iraqi Air force team at Scouts Ground, Baghdad, Iraq, for the Baghdad Knockout Championship Cup. On the right is Isma'il Hamoudi, the referee.

Being one of a handful of Assyrian R.A.F. employees granted British passport by the Home Office, he emigrated, with his family, to London, in April 1974. In London, Sargis



Assyrian Sports Club, Baghdad, Iraq, 1960. Winners of Baghdad Soccer Federation Knockout cup. Standing (left-to-right): Gewargis Ismaiel, Shlimon Yosip, Wilson "Wosh'shi" Daniel, William Shimshon Shallou, Esha Shlimon Warda, Nelson Essa, Wilson Shaul; Sitting (left-to-right): Daniel "Danno" Yosip, Sargis Shimshon Shallou, Ammo baba, Awshalim "Awsho" _____, Kaado Gewargis Shallou; Squatting: Lawrence "Juna" Youkhanna, William Shaul.

worked for another 14 years as senior technical clerk before retiring on December 30, 1990. He served as chairman of the Assyrian Society of United Kingdom for six years.

In March 1994, Sargis and his wife immigrated to the United States and settled in Modesto, California. In 1997, Sargis and Daizy celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

From mid-1930's to mid-1960's the Shallou Family fielded five soccer players: Sargis, his brothers William and Ben, and their late cousins Baba and Kaako Gewargis Shallou. But Sargis was the most famous of the bunch. He earned many trophies during his years in soccer, and was among the former Assyrian footballers honored by the United Assyrian Organizations of California in 1994 and by Ex-Habbaniya Community Group of Modesto and Turlock in 1996. In 1997, he was named "Man of the year" by the Assyrian Aid society of Canada. In 1998, he, along with a few other former Assyrian sportsmen, was honored by the Assyrian American National Federation, and last January, by the Civic Club of Turlock.



Sargis Shallou, speaking at the Assyrian American National Federation's special reception in honor of former Assyrian sportsmen, in April 1998, in Chicago, Illinois.

When asked about the most memorable moment of his soccer career, Sargis chose the first of the two matches against Tehrān's Tāj Club, which the Assyrian team won 5-4 in Baghdad, Iraq, in May 1956. "But," he added, "my most joyful moment was our 2-1 win against Shāheen Club in Tehrān, Iran; because, tens of thousands of Assyrians had come to watch and cheer us."

Literature Search

Title: A Unique Talmudic Aramaic Incantation Bowl

Author: C. Müller-Kessler, T. Kwasman

Source: J. of the American Oriental Society; vol. 120, No. 2
April-June 2000

Excerpt: "Generally, incantation bowls are written in a formal standardized literary Eastern Aramaic or, less frequently, in a "Koiné" of Southern Babylonian Aramaic. The present article treats a magic bowl that is written in an idiom that is related to Talmudic Aramaic. The text has a strong parallel in a late copy of a Mandaic incantation series *Shafta d Pishra d Ainia*. Half of the Mandaic text seems to have been adapted, translated in Talmudic Aramaic, and worked into a demon story. Thus it is likely that a Mandaic version was the forerunner of the Talmudic Aramaic text of which a similar parallel occurs in the Akkadian incantation series *Maqlû*."

Title: Phoenicianism: The Formation of an Identity in Lebanon in 1920.

Author: Asher Kaufman

Source: Middle Eastern Studies; vol. 37, No. 1, Jan. 2001

Excerpt: "Many studies, preoccupied with socio-political aspects of Lebanon in the twentieth century, dedicate a few paragraphs to the Phoenician myth of origin in Lebanon. Yet our knowledge about the origins, the character and the content of this myth are fairly limited. This article attempts to provide some answers to the phenomenon of 'Phoenicianism' in Lebanon from its commencement to the formation of Greater Lebanon in 1920."

Title: The Burnt House at Arapchayah: A Reexamination

Author: Stuart Campbell

Source: Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research; No. 318, May 2000

Excerpt: "Mallowan's excavations at Arapchayah in northern Iraq in 1933 uncovered a Burnt House at the summit of the mound. Although the importance of the discovery has been recognized ever since as vital evidence for society in the late Halaf (mid-fifth millennium B.C.; ca. 5300 cal B.C.) in northern Mesopotamia, the basic data have never been reviewed and no comprehensive interpretation has been put forward. Using both published and unpublished material, this article attempts to review the evidence and propose a new interpretation, based on the current knowledge of the period. It is suggested that the Burnt House was the last in a series of structures where exchange—of obsidian, among other commodities— took place within a formalized social context, and it was through this role that Arapchayah acted as a center of regional integration. The destruction of the Burnt House may have been a deliberate, ritual act."

Title: Early Neo-Aramaic and Present-day Dialectal Diversity

Author: Gideon Goldenberg

Source: Journal of Semitic Studies; XLV/1, Spring 2000

Excerpt: "Modern Aramaic dialects differ from each other in some of their basic features, and it is of great interest for the study of the origins and history of the Neo-Aramaic language-type (and of Aramaic-speaking communities) to examine the

textual evidence of early Neo-Aramaic and study the earliest recognizable forms of the language against present-day dialectal diversities. We may thus try to find out whether, or in what sense, the notion Neo-Aramaic should be understood as reflecting a common historical reality. The present discussion excludes the vernacular vestiges of Western Aramaic as well as Modern Mandaic, but includes all other groups, which are strongly connected by sharing the most conspicuous structural developments, to be specified presently. The term 'Neo-Aramaic' refers in the present context to these dialects only. With the revived interest in Early Neo-Aramaic, we may have better chances to get some knowledge of the history of Aramaic in modern times and be able to add some chronological depth to our dialectological studies."

Title: Spätbabylonische Gottheiten in spätantiken mandäischen Texten.

Author: C. Müller-Kessler, K. Kessler

Source: Zeitschrift für Assyriologie; Band 89, I Halbband '99

Excerpt: "Neue spätantike mandäische Beschwörungstexte auf Bleirollen und Zauberschalen liefern in zunehmender Zahl Informationen über babylonische Gottheiten, die in die mandäische Überlieferung als Dämonen Eingang fanden. Der vorliegende Aufsatz faßt die bisher vorliegenden Nachrichten über diese Gottheiten in der spätesten keilschriftlichen Überlieferung und den frühesten mandäischen Texten zusammen. Es handelt sich vorwiegend um die Kulte der Region Babylon, Borsippa und Kutha, die zum Zeitpunkt ihrer Übernahme durch die Mandäer im 2./3. Jh. n. Chr. dort noch ausgeübt wurden."

Title: A Failed Manipulation: The British, the Oudh Bequest and the Shī'ī 'Ulamā' of Najaf and Karbalā'

Author: Meir Litvak

Source: British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies; 27/1, 2000

Excerpt: "Between 1850 and 1903, the Oudh Bequest channelled over six million rupees from India, through British mediation, to the Shī'ī shrine cities of Najaf and Karbalā' in Iraq. It has intrigued historians the way that this sophisticated British tool has exercised influence and control over the Shī'ī 'ulamā' in Iran and Iraq. However, the British became directly involved in the distribution of the Bequest in 1903, on the eve of the Constitutional Revolution. In view of the 'ulamā''s growing involvement in Iranian politics, and gross corruption among the distributors, the British saw the Bequest as a means to enhance their influence over the 'ulamā' in Iran. The political usage of the Bequest was a subject of a prolonged debate within Bequest bureaucracy. Disagreements often stemmed from different priorities, determined by local considerations, of British authorities in Iraq, Iran and India. In 1912 the British took over the direct distribution of the Bequest, abandoning their expectations to use the Bequest as a 'powerful lever' in Iran, and shifting their focus to India. These were renewed with greater vigour after the British occupation of Najaf and Karbalā' in 1917. Overall, these British attempts ended in dismal failure, showing that charity, however generous, cannot compensate for the need of religious leaders to maintain popular support by distancing themselves from foreign patronage and tutelage. Moreover, manipulation proved less powerful than broader historical processes."

Title: "For the Astonishment of All Enemies"; Assyrian Propaganda and Its Audiences in the Reigns of Ashurnasirpal II and Esarhaddon.

Author: Barbara N. Porter

Source: The Canadian Society of Mesopotamian Studies; Bulletin 35, September 2000

Excerpt: "The discussion of Assyrian propaganda —how it was used and at whom it was directed— has been a long one, marked by some lively disagreements.

"The discussion of Assyrian propaganda really began with A.T.E. Olmstead. "In his pioneering history of Assyria, published in 1923 but still influential today, Olmstead included a chapter entitled, 'The Calculated Frightfulness of Ashur-nasir-apal.'

"What Olmstead was implying by this title was that the gore had a purpose: it was designed to terrify potential enemies and keep them in line.

"Layard, taking the texts and pictures found in Ashurnasirpal's palace as straightforward, factual accounts of Ashurnasirpal's activities, gave his opinion of that king and his reign in one brisk sentence: *His expeditions seem to have been attended by great cruelties and sacrifice of human life, and he celebrates the burning of innumerable women and children.* But in summing up Ashurnasirpal's accounts — which are indeed violent and brutal— Layard had failed to ask a crucial question: Why had Ashurnasirpal *chosen* to have such bloody incidents described in grisly detail and then publicly displayed? Why had he elected to project a brutal public image of himself and his activities?

"Olmstead, with his reference to calculated frightfulness, was suggesting that Ashurnasirpal's violent descriptions were meant to frighten. Their purpose was intimidation, and their intended audience was therefore most probably people whom



The stele erected by Esarhaddon at Sam'al
(Courtesy of J. Börker-Klähn., from *Alt Vorderasiatische Bildstelen
Und Vergleichbare Felsreliefs,*
II [Mainz am Rhein, 1982], fig. 219

Ashurnasirpal would have found it useful to intimidate, such as foreigners whose countries might attack Assyria or resist when *they* were attacked, representatives of the many peoples Ashurnasirpal had just finished conquering, and any members of the Assyrian elite who might be considering revolt against the king: potential enemies, in short.

"Far from presenting an undifferentiated message of intimidation to a broad general audience, Ashurnasirpal's temple and palace inscriptions and images projected different messages to the different groups who had access to them. Like the carefully differentiated monuments erected by Esarhaddon in the two cities of Til Barsip and Sam'al, these texts offer evidence of the complexity and subtlety of Assyrian propaganda and of its careful adjustment for the different audiences to whom it was presented."

Title: Inscribing the Arab Self: Buṭrus al-Bustānī and Paradigms of Subjective Reform.

Author: Stephen Paul Sheehi

Source: British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (2000), 27, 1

Excerpt: "This article attempts to understand Buṭrus al-Bustānī's *Nafīr Sūriyya* as a foundation text in the creation of a new discourse of modern Arab subjectivity. More specifically, the study examines the epistemology that circumscribes al-Bustānī's conception of the modern Syro-Lebanese Arab citizen. The article highlights the nomenclature fundamental to al-Bustānī's formula for 'concord and unity' and 'love of the nation' in the wake of the inter-confessional violence, or civil war, of 1860 in Lebanon and Damascus. In doing so, it reveals how conceptions of Arab self-hood are enframed by a binary of 'success' and 'failure'. While identifying native 'failure', al-Bustānī displaces it into several different agents in his attempt to salvage his conception of an 'ideal' native subject. Inevitably, the author demonstrates, this ideal national subject that *Nafīr* narrates is mired in an inescapable Hegelian, master-slave, struggle with the West."

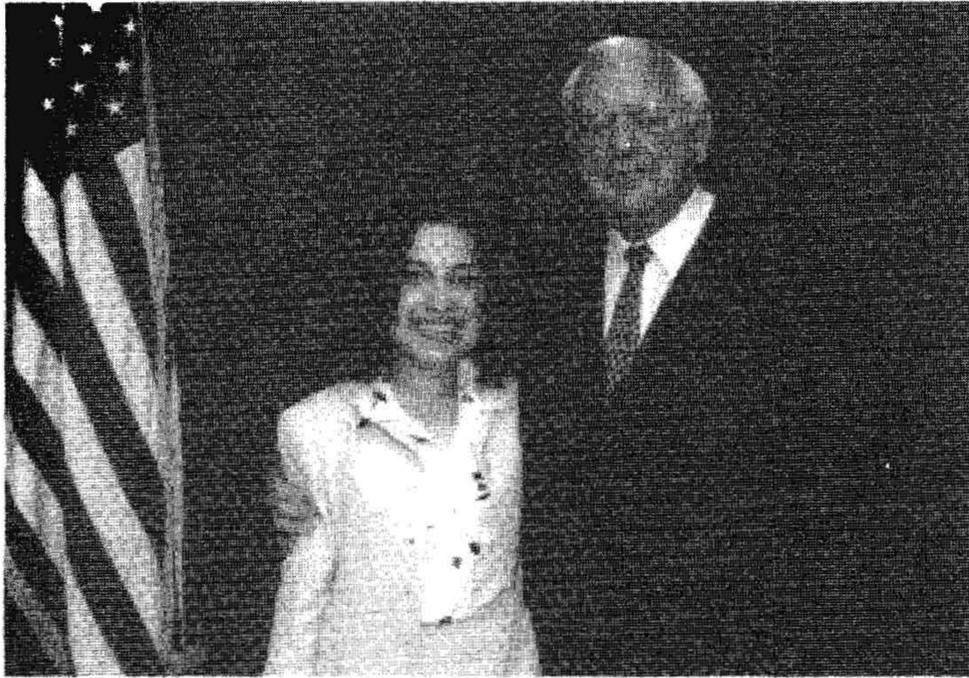
Title: A Turk of the West: Sir Edgar Vincent's Career in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire.

Author: Paul Auchterlonie

Source: British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (2000), 27,1

Excerpts: "This article examines the concept of the 'gentleman capitalist', as embodied by the career of Sir Edgar Vincent (1857-1941), arguing that a career as a financier was not incompatible with the status of a gentleman in Victorian Britain. From the 1830's both the City of London and the British government agreed on free trade as the bedrock of British commercial policy, and the use of financial power as a means of extending both formal and informal empire. The life of Sir Edgar Vincent is discussed in detail, particularly his period in Egypt as Financial Adviser to the Khedive and in Constantinople as Director-General of the Imperial Ottoman Bank. The article concludes that Sir Edgar believed absolutely in Britain's civilizing mission in the Middle East, promoting her interests whenever possible, but equally that he had no qualms about using his official position for financial gain."

Chicago, Illinois



Governor George H. Ryan of Illinois with Grace Zaya, a Skokie resident who has completed an internship in the Governor's Office of Ethnic Affairs. Ms. Zaya is a student at North Park University, where she is the president of the Assyrian Students Association. She is also a member of the Assyrian Academic Society.

In Memoriam

Talia Y. Talia

By Oraham G. Yacoub

A one-year mass was celebrated on May 20, 2001 by His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV at Saint Mary's Church, in Roselle, Illinois, in memory of Talia Y. Talia, who passed away on June 6, 2000.



Talia Yacoub Talia was born in 1932 in Gonda Cosa village, in the governorate of Nohadra (Dohuk), northern Mesopotamia. He received his primary and secondary education in Habbaniya. He then moved to Mosul (Nineveh), where he worked in Ain-Zala Oil Company as draftsman for the next nine years. He also worked in Kirkuk and Baghdad in the same profession.

In 1958, he married Rejina Kuryakos. They were blessed with two sons and five daughters. In 1978, they left Iraq and, after spending three months in Jordan, came to the United States and settled in Chicago. There he worked as draftsman for more than twenty years. He believed knowledge is power and was proficient in Assyrian, Arabic and English. His main hobby was studying history. He joined the Assyrian National Foundation and was its Finance Director for several years. Talia was among those parishioners who participated in establishing Saint Odisho Church in Chicago, in 1985. He was an active member of the church and was twice elected chairman of the church council (Motwa).

I personally knew Talia for over 45 years. He was a gentle, kind-hearted person, loved by all those who knew him. He is deeply missed by his family and friends.

Assyrian Calligraphy ܐܣܝܪܝܐ ܕܟܘܠܡܢܐ ܕܘܢܝܩܐ

In the last issue of *Nineveh*, Ms. Davis-Moradkhan's article on Assyrian Calligraphy presented an overview of the subject, giving examples from Deacon Youarash Bet Qashisha Matti and Mr. Issa Benyamin. Those who are interested in learning more and seeing other samples of Mr. Benyamin's art may order his book, *Assyrian Calligraphy ܐܣܝܪܝܐ ܕܟܘܠܡܢܐ ܕܘܢܝܩܐ* from:

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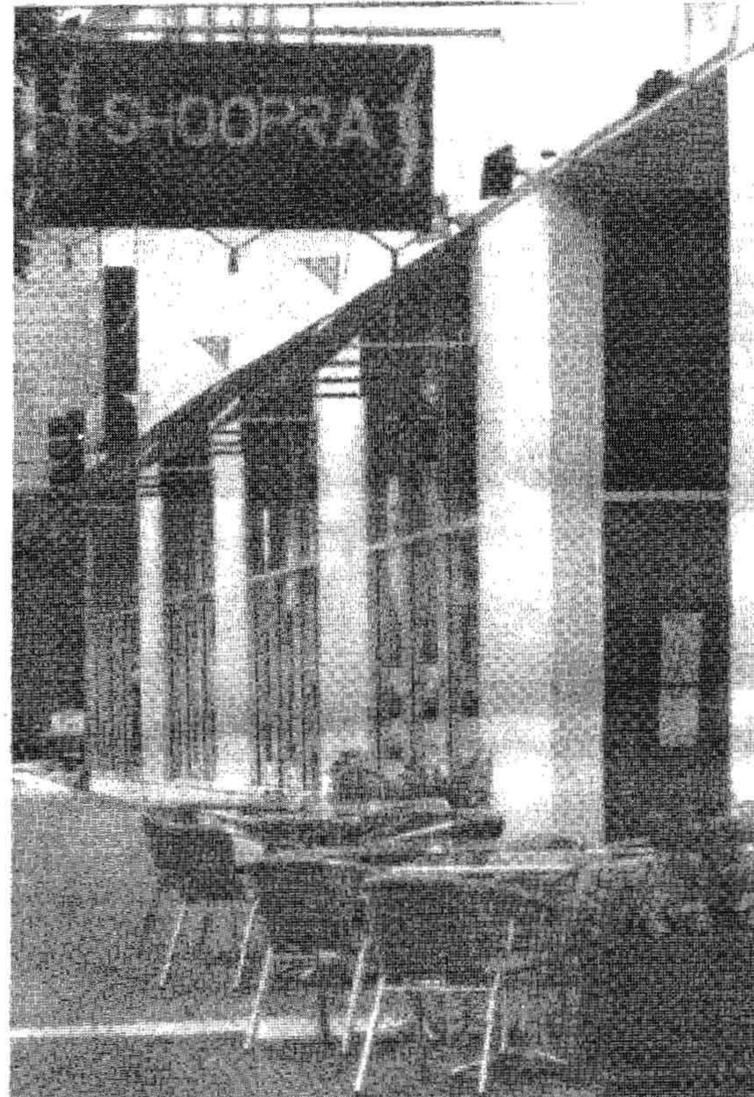
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San Francisco, California

Shoopra is a new Assyrian restaurant in San Francisco's Marina District, which fills a void in the city's culinary repertoire and delights Assyrians and non-Assyrians alike. You can read Robin Davis's review in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (Oct. 3, 2001); but, I recommend you try it for yourself. The "staff" of *Nineveh* are regulars at *Shoopra*.



Kurt Rogers / The Chronicle

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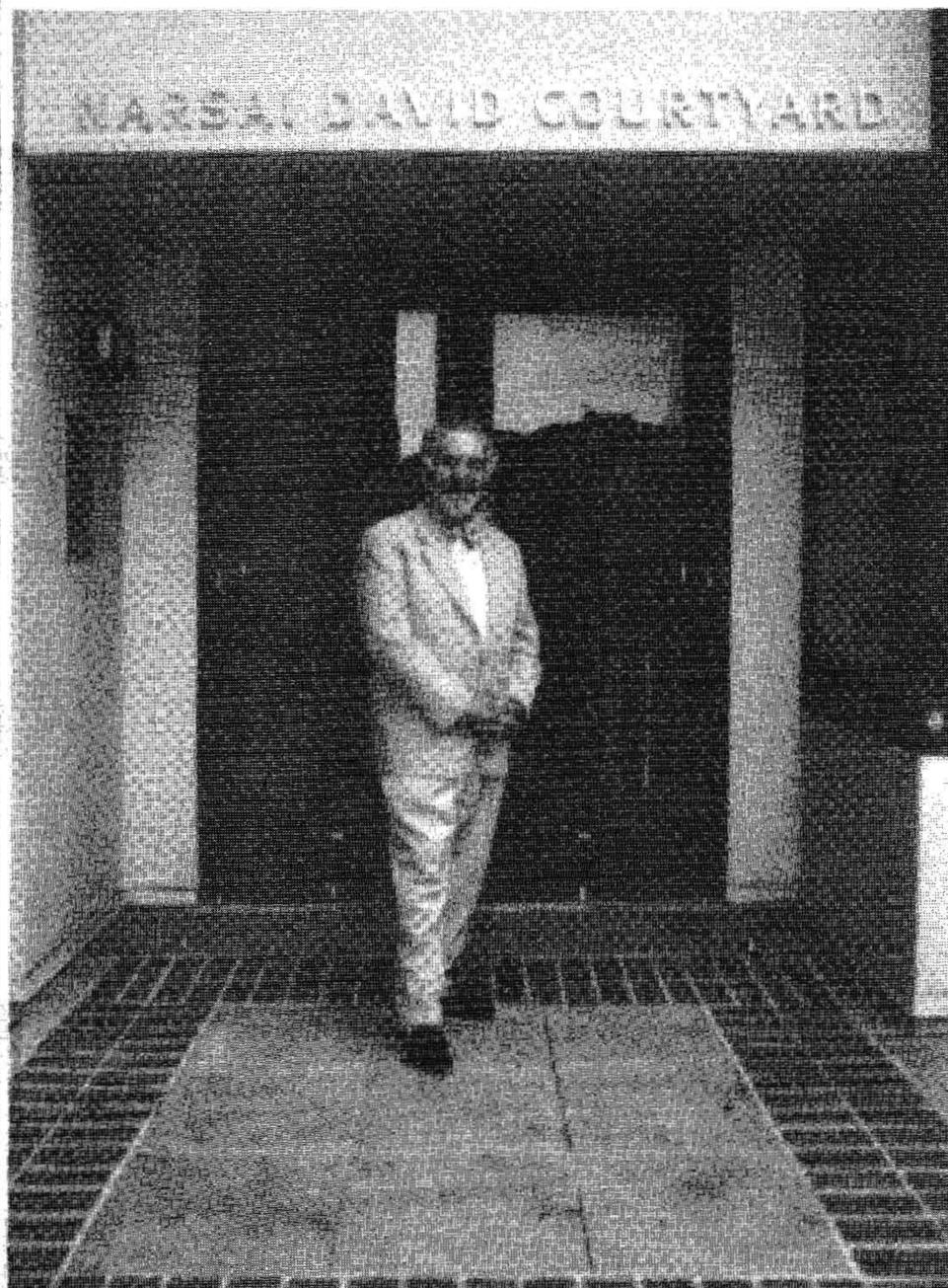
Berkeley Rep Dedicates Courtyard of New Roda Theatre to Narsai David.*

Berkeley, California, May 10, 2001

In the summer of 1998, a group of his friends surprised Narsai David by announcing that they were naming the expanded courtyard of Berkeley Rep's new Roda Theatre in his honor. Having raised \$250,000 for the Narsai David Courtyard Fund, which went towards Berkeley Rep's \$20 million capital campaign to build the new theatre, the courtyard was dedicated on March 26, 2001 at a ceremony at Berkeley Rep. With Narsai and more than one hundred of his friends and family in attendance, the event commemorated his many years of commitment to the company.

Berkeley Repertory Theatre Managing Director Susan Medak and Artistic Director Tony Taccone addressed the crowd, and spoke about Narsai's commitment to Berkeley Rep, and his instrumental role in the company's growth over the years, particularly the move to the 400-seat Thrust Theatre in 1980.

One of the founding members of Berkeley Rep's Board of Trustees, Narsai David served as president of the Board from 1981 to 1984. An accomplished chef and famed restaurant owner, he is the food and wine reporter for KCBS radio. In addition, he operates a wholesale food products division, has authored the cookbook, "Monday Night at Narsai's," and "The Menu," a guide to Bay Area restaurants. He is also the host of "Saturdays in the Cellar" at Macy's in Union Square.



Narsai resides in Berkeley with his wife Venus. His son, Daniel, also works in the food industry. Narsai continues to demonstrate his outstanding support of the Rep by hosting the company's biggest annual fundraiser, *The Narsai Toast*. This year alone, *The Narsai Toast* raised more than \$250,000 for the company.

*Excerpted from the *News Release* of the Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

Narsai David is also the president of the Assyrian Aid Society of America.

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- Needy: To be used by the welfare committee for financial assistance of Assyrians in need.
- Assyrian Foundation dues are not included.

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25 خرداد 1917، مکتب و فرهنگ و مکتب و فرهنگ و مکتب و فرهنگ

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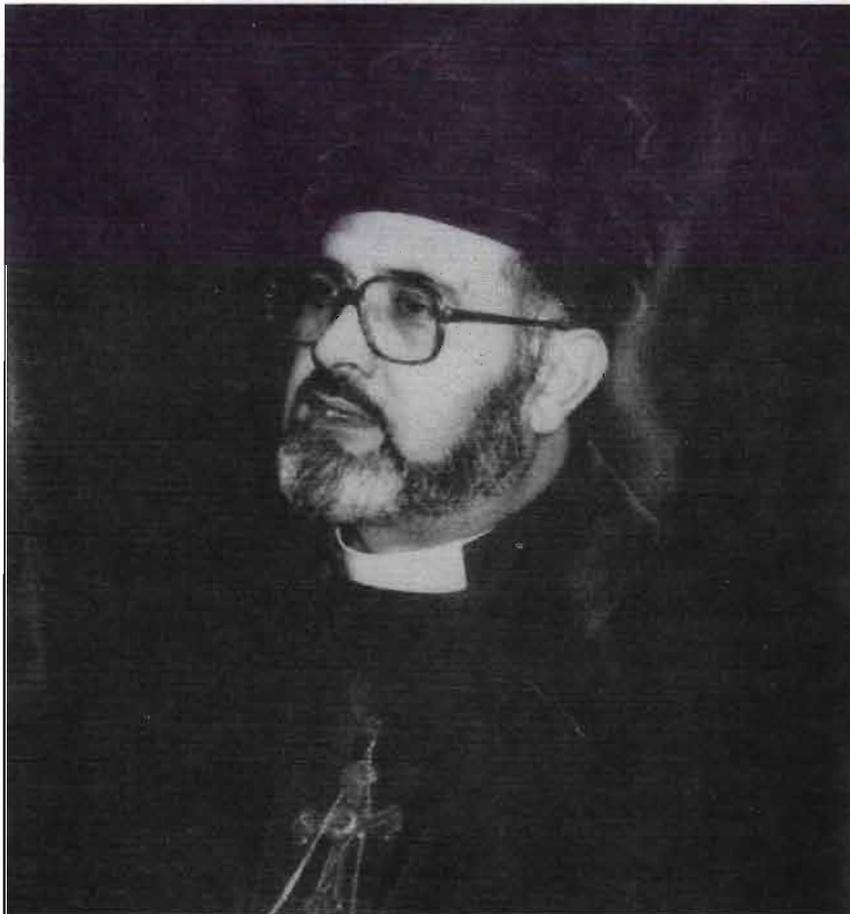
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