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NINEVEH

Publication of the Assyrian Foundation of America
Volume 30, Numbers 1-2 ; First-Second Quarters ♦ 2007



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THE
MISSING
CROSS

Cultural - Educational - Social

NINEVEH

First-Second Quarters 2007
Volume 30, Numbers 1-2

Editor: Dr. Robert Karoukian
Editorial Staff: Firas Jatou
Dr. Joel Elias
Dr. Ninwe Maraha
Tobia Giwargis
Sargon Shabbas, Circulation

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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.

Established in 1964 and incorporated in the State of California as a non for profit and tax exempt organization, the Assyrian Foundation of America is dedicated to the advancement of the education of Assyrians.

Address letters to:

The Editor
NINEVEH
P.O. Box 2660
Berkeley, California 94702

Annual Subscription

U.S.A.....\$ 20.00
CANADA.....\$ 25.00
OVERSEAS.....\$ 30.00

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Visit our Website at:

www.assyrianfoundation.org



Note from the President

For many years, the Assyrian Foundation of America has helped Assyrian students and Assyrian needy throughout the world. Since its establishment in 1964, this great organization has dedicated its resources and efforts to promote the Assyrian culture and education. However, I think the time has come for the foundation to do more.

While doing all this work has yielded some great results, (i.e. tens of students whom the foundation is helping annually in US, Canada, Europe and other places, who are engaged in Assyrian and Syriac related studies as well as human rights and international relations) the need for taking on new and important work has become evident more than ever, especially in the last year or so. The recent events in the homeland have created a terrible situation and living conditions for our Assyrian brothers and sisters. Thousands of Assyrians have left their homes looking for safety from the wrath of fundamentalist Islamists and thugs.

Thousands of Assyrians are enduring a very harsh and

insecure life, hundreds of Assyrian orphans in Iraq and Turkey with no help from their compatriots in US and Europe waiting to be helped by strangers and western missionaries, which leads me to wonder whether these orphans will remember their Assyrian heritage once they become adults. I think it will be unreasonable to blame the orphans or their saviors.



At this crucial time, the Assyrian organizations must come together and put their differences aside for the sake of our persecuted and displaced brothers and sisters in Bet Nahrain, Jordan, Syria, and Turkey. We always must remember that if we don't help and lobby the western governments to help our brothers and sisters, no one will.

God save the Assyrian Nation!
Fredy Tamraz



The 2007 Executive committee of the Assyrian Foundation of America

(L to R): Gilbert Adam (Membership), Sargon Hermes (Treasurer), Souha Odah (Welfare), Fredy Tamraz (President), Bernadette Daniel (Secretary), Dr. Joel Elias (Vice President), Flora Kingsbury (Social), Dr. Robert Karoukian (Education)

Statement of Dr. Donny George for the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom

I, Donny George Youkhanna, confirm that I am a citizen of Iraq, I was born in Habania, Anbar province, in Iraq, on the day of twenty third of the month of October in the year of nineteen hundred and fifty, I am an Assyrian Christian, and all my ancestors had lived in Mesopotamia, now Iraq, from the ancient times of the Assyrians, more than five thousands years ago, I have dedicated all my life to work and serve my people and country with honor and loyalty, because this is my country.



I had all my education in Iraq, my higher education in the University of Baghdad, BA, MA, and PhD, and I am a specialist in Mesopotamian Archaeology. During Saddam Hussein's time I have worked in the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, from 1976 until I left the country in 2006. Before the war of 2003, we were unofficially considered second class citizens, simply because we were Christians and Assyrians, Saddam did big efforts to omit our identity as Christians and as Assyrians, he started a campaign of re-writing the history of Iraq in the way he envisioned, and he started calling the ancient Assyrians as Arabs, no more Assyrians, he also set up orders that new born Christian babies should not be named Christian or Assyrian names but Arab Muslim names, and all of us had really big troubles with that, because our names are an important part of our identity.

Although the Assyrian Christians had the highest percentage of educated people in Iraq, we had the lowest percentage of high positions in the government, and of course when for the first time in the late seventies of the last century, we had young Assyrians demanding for our political rights, they were captured, tortured, and then executed. After the Americans toppled Saddam's power in April 2003, everybody started breathing the freedom and waiting for democracy to start and everyone as an Iraqi should have his rights. But the infiltration of people coming from the countries surrounding Iraq made it impossible to start the real process of improving the situation in the country, besides fighting each other, the Sunnis and Shias, a large campaign started against the Christians.

At home, my parents' place in Dora, we started hearing that the Muslim extremists will do to the Christians exactly what they did to the Jews in 1948, this meant complete cleansing of the people from the county, and because of that we received a letter in an envelope together with bullet of a Kalashnikov, the letter threatened my younger son, Martin, and accusing him of cursing Islam and teasing Muslim girls, and they mentioned that they suspect that his father, my self, works with the Americans, so he was ordered to write a letter of apology for them, (the brigades of martyr Zarqawi), and a fine of one thousand US dollars, to be put in an envelope and dropped in a certain place in Dora, otherwise, the next day he will be kidnapped and beheaded immediately, when I heard that I asked my elder son to get them all, my mother, my two sisters and Martin and bring them to our flat in another part of Baghdad, and in the afternoon I arranged for the letter and the money to be dropped for them, so that they will not come after my son.

In the coming few days, I heard that the same thing had happened to 12 Christian families in the same area of Dora, same kind of letter and the same kind of accusations, they all paid and left the area, leaving everything behind, houses, properties, now Dora is completely empty of any Christian Assyrians, and almost all the churches there had been bombed and burnt. After I had my family all together in our flat, I arranged to send them to Damascus, Syria, to be safe of that deadly threat. On the other hand, in November 2003, I became the director general of the Iraqi Museums, and in August 2005, I became the chairman of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage in Iraq, after thirty years of service in all the fields of antiquities. But the problems started when the new ministry of tourism and antiquities was created to control the antiquities service, literary speaking when that ministry was controlled by the people coming from the religious party controlled by Al-Sader, when the ministry people started interfering in my job and specialty, whom they knew nothing, and then all my authorities as the chairman of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage were withdrawn

Boutros Rehana Boutros; Assyrian Sculptor in Lebanon

By Wardieh Boutros

Boutros Rehana Boutros is one of the most talented Assyrian sculptors in Lebanon.

His interest in history and his pride in his Assyrian heritage are displayed in his art.

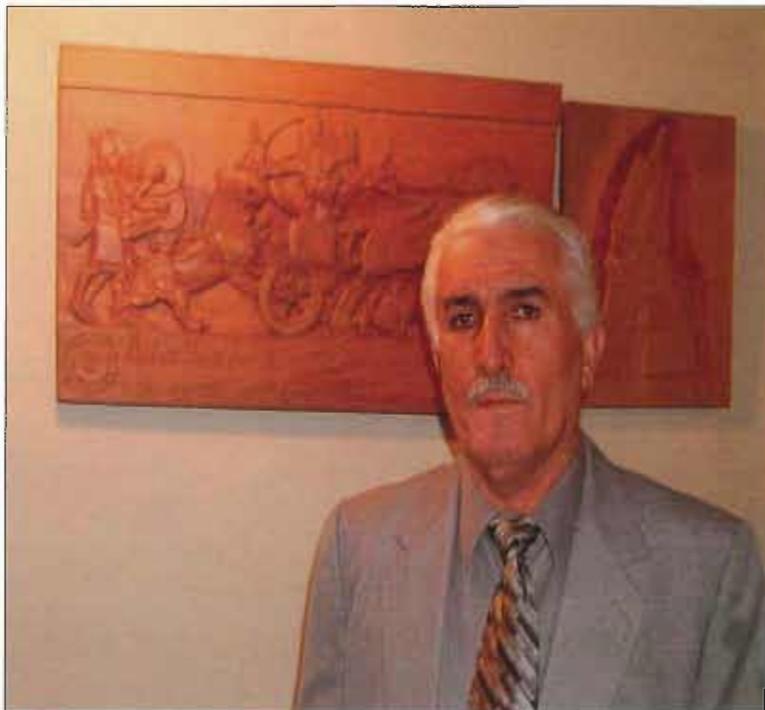
He was born in Khabour, northern Syria, in 1947 in Tel Breej, the village where his parents settled after they fled from Mesopotamia in 1936. He spent his early childhood in Tel Breej. At the age of eight he started drawing and sculpting statues using mud.

Although circumstances did not allow him to study art formally, he pursued his interest by producing works based on Assyrian motifs.

His first work in wood was a *Lamassu* ("Winged Bull") which he made in 1972. In the same year he carved two more pieces in wood representing *Gilgamesh* and *Ashur*.

In 1974 he married and settled with his wife in Sed-El-Boucherieh, east of Beirut. He has four daughters and a son, all graduates from Lebanese universities.

The responsibility of raising his children under the terrible conditions caused by the fifteen years of civil



war in Lebanon did not allow him much time for his art.

He started his woodcarving again in 1990, and until





2000 produced some ten pieces, including *Ashurbanipal*, *Ashurnasirpal*, *Sargon II*, and *Gilgamesh*.

He has participated in many exhibitions in Lebanon that were organized by Assyrian and Maronite associations.

Besides sculpting and painting, he has great love for the Assyrian language which he has studied in addition to works on Assyrian history, culture, and art.

Poetry is another way in which he expresses his love for his heritage. He has written many poems, the first of which was *Beth Nahrin Saggi Bassi-kaieth*. From 1997 to 2000 he wrote twelve poems, including:

Al Mdinate d'Beth Nahrin Shteke

Al D'lit Shrara w Kenota Gaw Alma

Al Dokhrana d'Sahdan Atoraye

Kala Motol Khoyada d Ammn,

In addition, he wrote a special poem for Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, while he was visiting Lebanon in September 1998 named: *Al Teta d'qadieshote d'Mar Dinkha Rwi'aya Patriarka d'Eta d'Madenkha d Atorayieh*.

In addition to his own writings he also rewrote *Gantha d Eden*, which was written by Bishop Mar Odisho d'Sowa. He started rewriting it in 1989 in the middle of the Lebanese civil war under candle-light using an ink brush that he made himself. It took him one year to complete, writing for six hours-a-day.

In addition to his art and writing, he continues to read all kinds of books related to Assyrian art, culture, history, and language, in Assyrian and Arabic.

All his artworks reveal his passion for his Assyrian heritage and pride of his Assyrian roots.





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(Continued from page 5)



people are rewarded for that by, persecuting, kidnapping, raping, and killing. Again in the history, the Christians being the elite people during the Abbasid Khalifat period, around one thousand years ago, played a vital role in being the mediators by presenting the European culture to the Arabs and vice versa, and they have been doing the same role during the modern history of Iraq and again since 2003. And now what is needed from the US Government, we need four essential steps to keep the remaining minority in Iraq and possible draw those who have left to return, they are:

1. **Push forward funds for Internally Displaced Persons in the north (House of Representatives has passed \$10 million funding, no action yet taken by the Senate).**
2. **2. Press in a sustained and determined effort the Kurdish Regional Government to end all practices that marginalize and discriminate against Christians and non-Kurds.**
3. **Provide on an urgent basis, minimal infrastructure and amenities to the Nineveh Plains to allow the smallest minorities to support themselves in their ancestral areas.**
4. **Convene the civic representatives of the Iraqi minority communities to forge a consensus regarding the political status of the Nineveh Plains territory, for example, by forming an autonomous administrative district as provided for in Article 125 of the Iraqi Constitution.**

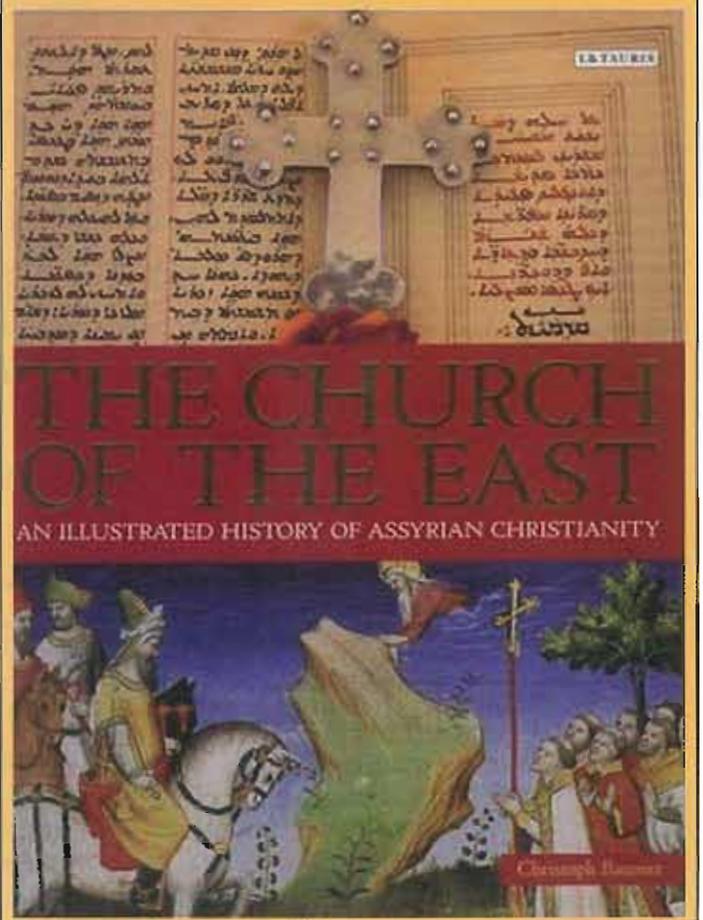
*Dr. Donny George Youkhanna
State University of New York at Stony Brook, NY
Former Director General of the Iraqi Museums and
Former Chairman of the State Board of Antiquities and
Heritage in Iraq
July 23, 2007*

RECOMMENDED READING

The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity

(Hardcover)
by Christoph Baumer

Christoph Baumer is one of the very few Westerners to have visited many of the most important Assyrian sites, and has written the only comprehensive history of the "Nestorian" (or Apostolic Assyrian) Church, which now fights for survival in its country of origin, Iraq. He traces its apostolic beginnings to the present day, and discusses the Church's theology, Christology and uniquely vigorous spirituality. He analyzes the Church's turbulent relationship with other Christian churches and its dialogue with neighboring world religions such as Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Islam, Buddhism and Taoism. Richly illustrated with maps and over 150 full-color photographs, the book will be essential reading for those interested in a fascinating but neglected Christian community which has profoundly shaped the history of civilization in both East and West.



AFA's Trip to Reno

By Ninwe Maraha

The Assyrian Foundation of America organizes as one of its social activities, an annual trip to either Reno or Lake Tahoe in northern California. This year, 2007, the choice fell on the city of Reno, Nevada.

The trip was planned by Flora Kingsberry (Chairperson of the Board of directors and responsible for social events) and Bellys Yelda (former treasurer). They had arranged with a bus taking the members to the chosen destination. We were totally 49 persons on the bus. The trip was on May 20 – May 21, 2007. The driver was very nice and made the trip even more fun! We had great fun and enjoyed being able to meet each other and had some time to spend some time with other members of the Assyrian Foundation of America. It was a great way to catch up with all friends and relatives. Here are some pictures of the trip. There are some other pictures also at the website of the foundation:

www.assyrianfoundation.org

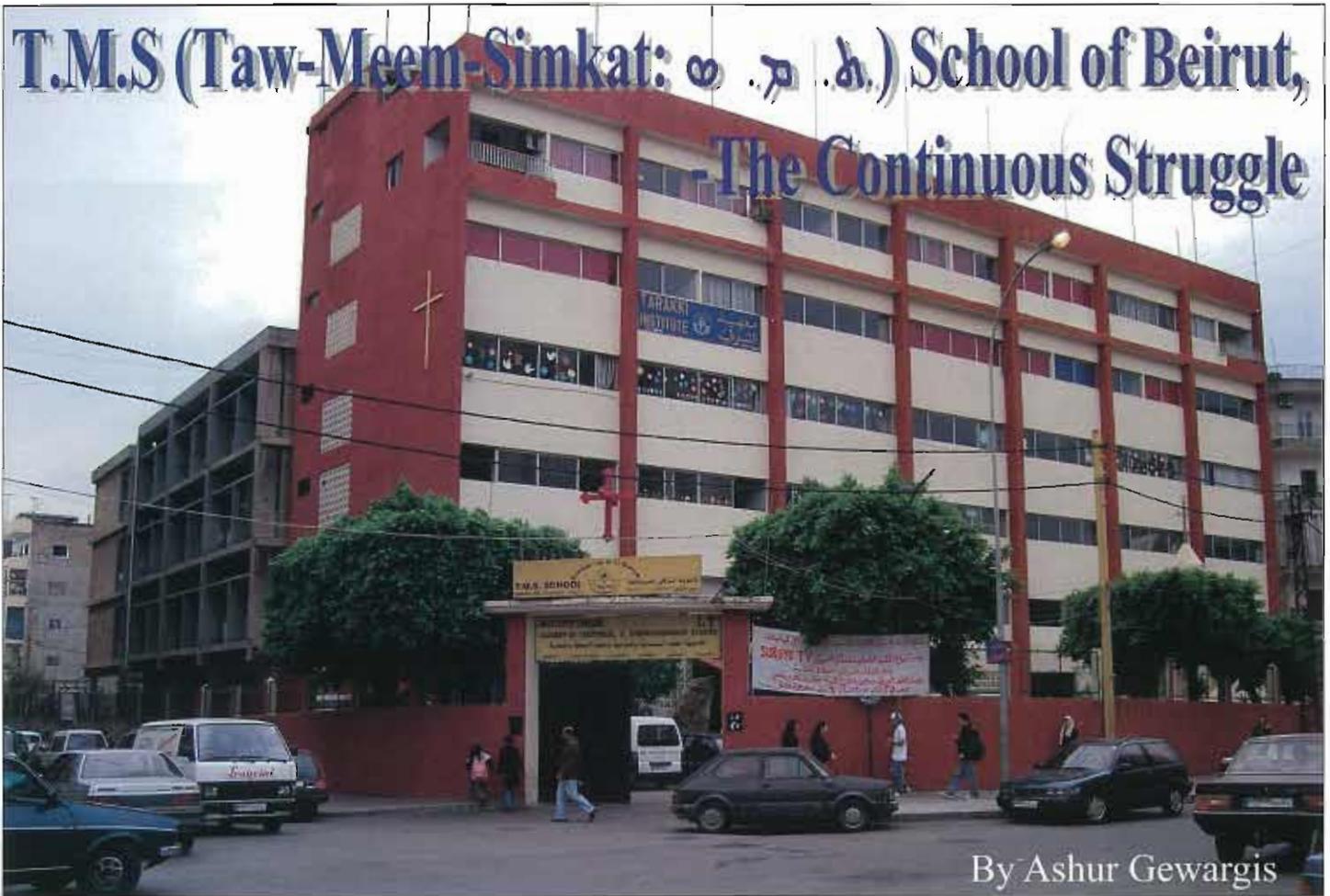


Our own party and social events lady: Flora Kingsberry and in the back our coordinator of the trip: Bellys Yelda.



Some of the members of the Assyrian Foundation of America on the way back from Reno to San Francisco.

T.M.S (Taw-Meem-Simkat: ܩܘܡܝܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܝܢܐ) School of Beirut, - The Continuous Struggle



By Ashur Gewargis

The Taraqqi School of Lebanon is an affiliate of the old “Taw Meem Simkat” which was established in America in 1899 by Assyrian immigrants from Turkey. It was first built in the “Masaytbeh” area in 1923, and then moved to the “Khandaq Al-Ghameeq” area in 1927 when the Assyrian Association of America bought a 900 m² piece of land for that purpose. In 1973 the school was relocated to Bourj Hammoud area, with a larger building, and was named “Taraqqi Assyrian School” (Taraqqi Madrashto Suryeyto: ܩܘܡܝܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܝܢܐ).

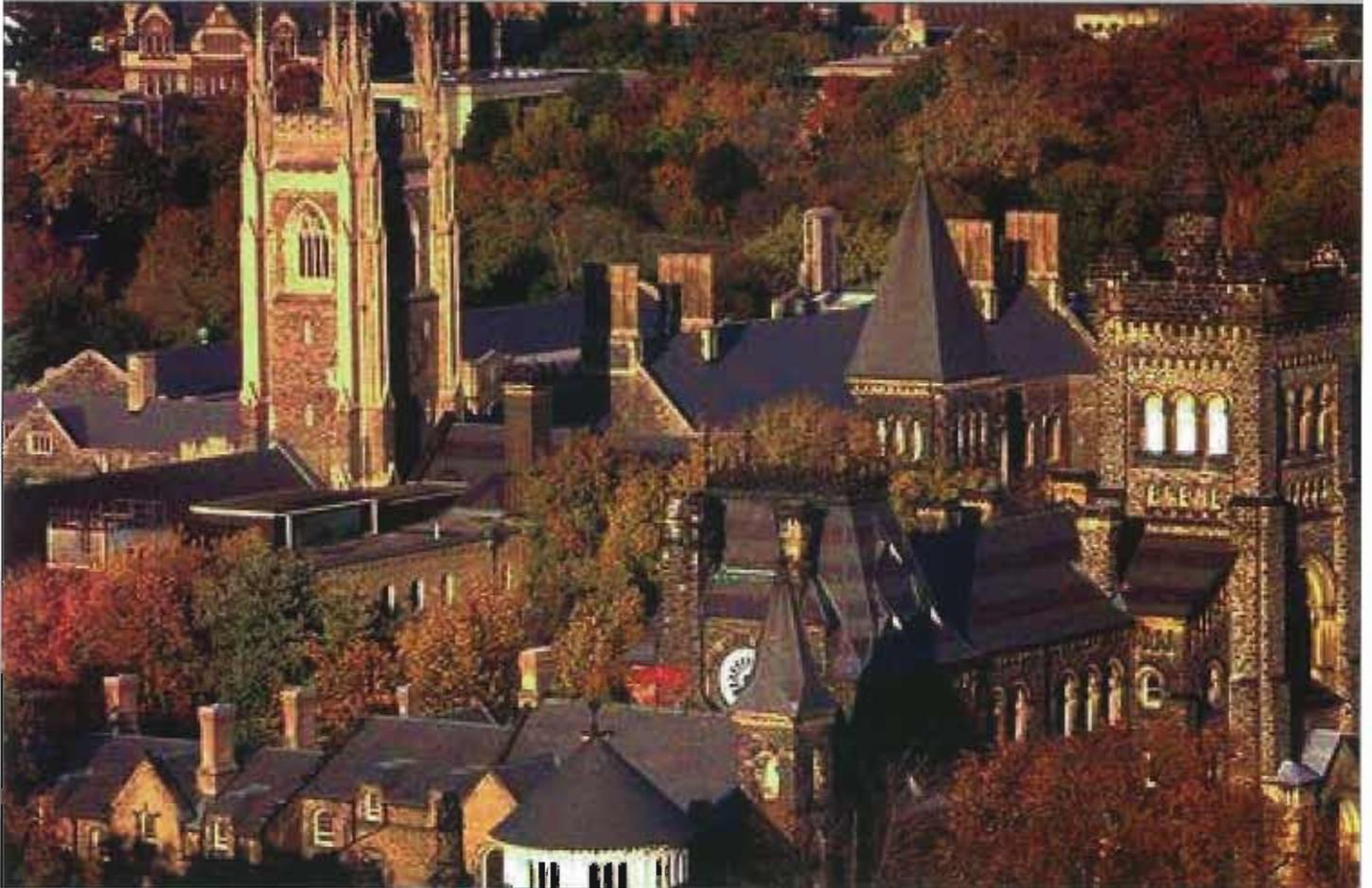
Taraqqi school starts with kindergarten and goes up to the ninth grade (4th intermediate). It has 305 students, 80% are Assyrian and the rest are from different Lebanese populations; the Middle East Council of Churches is in charge of the religious curriculum. All the materials in Assyrian language (grammar, reading, dictation) are by the late Assyrian linguist ‘Abdel Masih Qarabashi, and the educational programs (geography, sci-

ence, etc.) is according to the official program of the Lebanese Ministry of Culture and all the teachers are licensed in their respective specialty. The graduates continue their studies in higher schools but stay in contact



North American Syriac Studies Symposium V: *Syriac as a Bridge Culture*

University of Toronto, June 25-27, 2007



Conference Report:

The North American Syriac Studies Symposium V: *Syriac as a Bridge Culture* was held at the University of Toronto from June 25-27, 2007 in Toronto, Ontario Canada. The conference was organized by the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies (CSSS) under the direction of Professor Amir Harrak of the University of Toronto's Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations.

In attendance were a great number of esteemed scholars, graduate students, undergraduate students, and clergy including members of the Syrian Orthodox Church, Maronite Church and Assyrian Church of the East - whose bishop, Mar Emmanuel, was also present.

The conference covered a wide range of material and genre; from important personalities, including Ignatius of

Melitene and Jacob of Serug, to the anonymous *Book of Steps* and even to such modern issues as the Assyrian-Kurdish Relations in Kerboran, Tur Abdin during WWI.

The three day event culminated with church vespers and a banquet in honour of the participants at the newly built Assyrian Church of the East in Toronto at the Sharrukin Banquet Hall.

The conference was a great success and was enjoyed immensely by those in attendance.

The program can be accessed through:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/nmc/Syriac%20Symp%20Prgm%202007.pdf>

and the full abstracts can be found at:

<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~csss/Abstracts.pdf>

Request for Assyrian Materials

By: Sargon Donabed

I have recently begun 2 projects pertaining to the Assyrian people and would like to request the aid of Assyrians who have materials (books, papers, pictures) related to this work. Currently I am working on my dissertation on the Assyrians from 1960-1988 in Iraq. Secondly, I am finishing a book to be published on the Assyrians and the birth of the Iraqi State.



I would ask for any Assyrian who has photographs from any of these periods to contact me ASAP. I would be grateful to use any material provided if it is pertinent to the study. I will of course reference the family or person the documents or pictures belong to, or in cases where people wish to remain anonymous, I will honour that request also.

A list of desired materials:

1. Pictures or documents pertaining to WWI Assyrians especially rare black and white photos.
2. Pictures or documents pertaining to the Assyrian Levies
3. Pictures or documents pertaining to the Massacre of Simele
4. Pictures or documents pertaining to the Anfal Campaign
5. Pictures or documents of villages destroyed in 1978 (especially in the Barwari Bala Region) both pre and post destruction
6. Pictures or documents from the entire region of North Iraq showing villages, families, important personalities, churches and monasteries.
7. Documents pertaining to the imprisonment of Assyrians engaged in national or cultural work in the Middle East.

If there are people interested in helping with such documents, I would be very grateful, and the service would be helpful for the publication of more Assyrian related material.

Please contact me via email at:

sargon.donabed@utoronto.ca

Thank you all for your interest in Assyrian history and culture.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

By: Wisam Naoum

DETROIT, MI, June 6, 2007/Lamassu Productions/ -- Lamassu Productions has been steadily progressing through its Sponsorship tour throughout North America, visiting various Assyrian youth groups, community organizations, and community leaders, as well as participating in local television and radio interviews. In the midst of this tour, Lamassu Productions has been working on a company website and the creation of a mailing list for the movie. The mailing list is now complete.

Anyone interested will be able to join the mailing list. Simply, visit www.assyriandoc.com and click the "Register for the Newsletter" Button on the home page. Fill out and submit the required information on the pop-up browser and you will have joined the mailing list. All submitted information will be kept private and no third party will have access to it.

The importance of the mailing list is vital to the project's success, as it will provide email updates to those interested about the movie's progress on a regular basis, instead of having to constantly visit the movie site; it will also provide audience demographics for distribution purposes once the movie is complete. Lamassu Productions asks you to please forward this press release to those who may be interested in the project and joining the mailing list.

Though we want to complete this movie as quickly as possible, we are not rushing to finish. We want to create something the Assyrian youth and future generations can attach to and be proud of. Unity through the education of our history is the only key to the future! We hope you will continue supporting our project, and if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, contact us.

This film will help Assyrians, especially those living in Diaspora, preserve their culture and identity. Moreover, it will cultivate interest in the Assyrian youth and future generations to come. It is them, after all, who will have to decide whether the Assyrian culture is worth saving, and, ultimately, worth fighting for. This is where you can step in and make a difference. By donating to this film, you are helping to make our cause a reality. We have morale, but to make this project successful, we need the proper funding. Any and all donations are greatly appreciated. Those who donate a considerable amount will be specially thanked on our sponsor page. Please help preserve the Assyrian identity and make this project a success!

André N. Anton
Producer,
Lamassu Productions

Feras Majid Shammami
Producer,
Lamassu Productions

To make a financial contribution towards the making of this documentary, please contact Lamassu Productions at:

info@assyriandoc.com

For more information, visit us on the web at:

<http://www.assyriandoc.com>

PLEASE
MAKE A
DONATION

Assyrian Aid Society of America Central Valley Chapter FUNDRAISER A SUCCESS IN MODESTO

More than 430 people came out in support of the Assyrian Aid Society of America at its Central Valley Chapter's *Mesopotamian Night Under the Stars* fundraising event on Saturday June 30 in Modesto, California. Hosted by AAS-A President and KCBS Food and Wine Editor Narsai David, the evening dinner and auctions raised \$60,000 for AAS-A humanitarian projects in Northern Iraq.

Following a cocktail hour featuring an array of authentic Assyrian appetizers prepared by volunteers from area churches, the Townsend Opera Players performed selections from *Inanna: An Opera of Ancient Sumer*, a new work composed by John Craton. The singers' ancient Assyrian style costumes were designed and realized by Central Valley chapter volunteer Irene Warda.

Featured speakers were scholar Dr. Eden Naby, discussing "Assyrian Advances Through Diversity and Unity," and special guest Napoleon Pattoo, President of Assyrian Aid Society-Iraq, who was launching a tour of the United States to raise funds and heighten awareness of the plight of the Assyrian people in Iraq.

The night ended with live and silent auctions plus a solicitation for donations, taking in a grand net total of \$60,000.

The AAS-A Executive Committee is currently deliberating which projects to fund with the proceeds from the Modesto dinner and auction. At the top of the list are two full medical clinics proposed for Tekefeh and Teleskopeh in the Nineveh Plains where the need for such facilities is critical. Each clinic would complement a pre-existing AAS pharmacy already serving the people of those areas and would offer standard treatments and sophisticated diagnostic equipment. Estimated cost for each clinic will be approximately \$20,000.

Another project under advisement is that of the infant Kirillos Faris George in Iraq. This child was born with an opening in his heart requiring corrective surgery. Under the guidance and tireless supervision of AAS-A Director Dr. Samir Johna, AAS-A has secured a commitment from the Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center in Loma Linda, California to accept the one-year-old infant as a charitable patient. The family is currently applying for a medical visa from U.S. authorities in Baghdad and hopes to have their son in California soon. With the hospital already providing its services *pro bono*, AAS-A has already raised funds for travel to the U.S. and will be able to provide for any other necessary expenses with a portion of the Modesto proceeds.

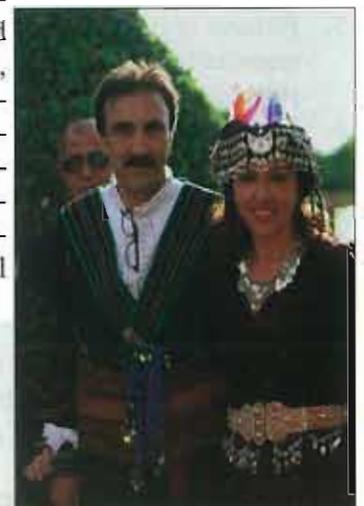


Kirillos Faris George

The Assyrian Aid Society of America is a charitable organization recognized by the State of California and the government of the United States, dedicated to assisting needy Assyrian people in Northern Iraq and around the world. Over the past 16 years AAS-A has raised over \$4.5 million to, with its sister organization, the Assyrian Aid Society – Iraq, build schools, staff and supply medical clinics, facilitate life-saving surgeries, rebuild homes, irrigate farmlands, bring electricity to villages, and implement a host of other vital programs and services.

**San Francisco
(National Office)**
Narsai David, President
350 Berkeley Park Boulevard
Berkeley, CA 94707
510-527-9997

www.assyrianaid.org



Charles Giwargis & Mona Malik in traditional Assyrian clothes from the Tyari region.

10 Assyrian words

Nineveh Magazine is providing this ongoing column to its readers as a vocabulary supplement and to improve familiarity with both Assyrian dialects, Eastern (Swadya) and Western (Turoyo).

1) Food

Western: Meklo Eastern: Mekhulta

Use in a sentence

English: This food is good!

Western: O muklo basimo-yo

Eastern: A Mekhulta Basimta-ela

6) Day

Western: Yawmo

Eastern: Yuma

Use in a sentence

English: I have work today

Western: kitli Fulhono ad yawma

Eastern: Etli Pulkhana ad-yum

2) Car

Western: Radayto Eastern: Radayta

Use in a sentence:

English: I have a car.

Western: Kit li radayto

Eastern: Eit li Radayta

7) Night

Western: Lalyo

Eastern: Lele

Use in sentence

English: You must sleep at night

Western: Klozem Damkhat b'lalyo

Eastern: Lazim damkhit b'lele

3) Thanks

Western: Tawdi Eastern: Tawdi (Baseema)

Use in a sentence

English: Thanks for the Invitation

Western: Tawdi Li zminotho

Eastern: Baseema L'zminuta

8) Stand

Western: Klay

Eastern: Klee

Use in sentence

English: Stand there

Western: Klay Tamo

Eastern: Klee Tama

4) Mountain

Western: Toro Eastern: Tora

Use in a sentence

English: High Mountain

Western: Toro room/eloyo

Eastern: Tora rama

9) Come

Western: Tuxh

Eastern: Ta

Use in Sentence

English: Come here

Western: Tuxh larke

Eastern: Ta lakha

5) Work

Western: Phulhono Eastern: Pilkhana

Use in a sentence

English: I had work yesterday

Western: kitwayli fulhono Athmil

Eastern: Etwali Pilkhana Timmal

10) Name

Western: Ishmo

Eastern: Shimma

Use in Sentence

English: My name is Ashur

Western: Ishmi Ashur-yo

Eastern: Shimmi Ashur eeleh



MINER FAMILY HISTORY

In 1977, Robert (Bob) Miner and his business partner, Larry Ellison, had started a company in the obscure world of database software. The company was called Oracle. It grew furiously, went public in 1986, and became one of the greatest success stories in the history of technology startups. It is now the second-largest independent software company in the world. The only one bigger is Microsoft.

Bob (Robert Nimrud) Miner co-founded Software Development Labs in August 1977 with Larry Ellison, and Ed Oates. Software Development Labs later became Oracle Corporation. If Larry Ellison was the brain behind Oracle, Bob Miner was its heart. Bob was a co-founder and a well-liked manager for over two decades.

Ellison and his co-founders, Bob Miner and Ed Oates, realized there was tremendous business potential in the relational database model--but they may not have realized that they would change the face of business computing forever. From the company's founding in 1977 until 1992, Mr. Miner led product design and development, helping to create the world's first commercial relational database

management system.

Today Oracle (Nasdaq: ORCL) is still at the head of the pack. Oracle technology can be found in nearly every industry around the world and in the offices of 98 of the Fortune 100 companies. It was one of the first companies to make its business applications available through the internet - today, that idea is pervasive. Oracle is the first software company to develop and deploy 100 percent internet-enabled enterprise software across its entire product line: database, business applications, and application development and decision support tools. Oracle's business is information—how to manage it, use it, share it, protect it.

Oracle is the world's leading supplier of software for information management, and the world's second largest independent software company. Oracle is now a big company with 13,456 employees. The company's website is: www.oracle.com

Bob Miner Family Background

Robert (Bob) Nimrud Miner is an Assyrian born in the States in 1942. His father arrived in this country from Persia in 1914. He grew up in an Assyrian family in Cicero, Illinois. He graduated in mathematics in 1963 from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. A graduate of the University of Illinois, Mr. Miner worked for the Applied Data Research Corporation and other companies before founding Oracle. He got married to Mary Miner and have three children: Nicola, Justine and Luke. Robert (Bob) purchased Oakville Ranch Vineyards in 1989 in Napa Valley, California. Upon his death from Mesothelioma the ranch passed to his nephew Dave Miner who now operates it as Miner Family Vineyards.

In 1989, when Bob and Mary Miner purchased the 350-acre ranch, 55 acres of vineyards were planted to Chardonnay and Bordeaux varieties – Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc. Located on a sloping plateau that rises to 1,400 feet above the Silverado Trail on the East side of the Napa Valley, Oakville Ranch was one of the appellation's pioneering vineyards. Since then, several other highly regarded and prestigious wineries have become neighbors, drawn to this hillside for its powerful signature-red volcanic soils. More information can be found at their website: www.oakvillerranchvineyards.com

The main source of fruit for Miner Family wines, ORV was originally purchased in 1989 by Robert and Mary Miner and now stands as a stunning 80 acre vineyard situated nearly 1000 feet above the valley floor in the eastern hills of the famed Oakville appellation. The red, rocky volcanic soils held within this mountainous site are ideally situated for growing deeply focused Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Syrah and surprisingly intense Chardonnay.

Dave's (Bob Miner's nephew) ancestry, tracing back numerous generations, leads to the people, culture and heritage of ancient Assyria. When Dave first bottled wine under his family's name he looked to the roots of this family ancestry for inspiration. The Miner Family wine label is based on an ancient Assyrian relief in the image of a Winged Sun God. This symbol represents the brilliant light of the sun, which illuminates the life of mankind while providing energy and warmth to the grapevines. It also represents abundance and prosperity and brought life and health to the vines of the family's distant ancestors. It is the hope that Miner Family Vineyards and those who enjoy their wines, will prosper with this good fortune for many years to come. More information about the Miner wines can be found on their website: www.minerwines.com.

Mr. Miner discovered that he had cancer in 1993. He died in his home in San Francisco in November 1994, 52 years old.



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An Interview with Sami Yako



By Tony Kasim
- Firodil Institute

Background

Sami Shamouel (popularly known as Sami Yako) is an Assyrian playwright, director and actor.

He was born on Christmas day in 1948 near Kirkuk, a city north of Baghdad. He studied acting and drama production at the Baghdad Institute of Fine Arts, where he graduated during the 1969/1970 academic year.

During 1971-1978, he was employed as a producer/ presenter at Sawt al-Jamahir ("Voice of the Masses") radio station in Baghdad, and worked at the various departments of the station including drama, current affairs, children programmes and cultural programmes. During this period, he was sent to Germany to do a training course in programme production, and to Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania to cover cultural, literary and artistic events. This was also the period when he first started acting and producing plays, both in the Arabic and Assyrian languages, and performing them at the Assyrian Cultural Club in Baghdad. The plays included adaptations of international works such as 'The Bear', 'The Engagement', 'Christ Re-crucified', 'The Thieves', 'The Twins', 'Joan of Arc', 'The Teacher'

and 'The Reluctant Doctor', as well as locally-written, one-act plays.

It should also be mentioned that Sami was also well known as a singer and songwriter. He has to his credit nearly fifteen songs that he wrote and recorded, some of which are widely covered to this day. But other, patriotic songs he wrote demanding a homeland for the Assyrians and glorifying the Mesopotamian civilization, landed him in hot water especially when he flatly refused to join to the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party of Saddam Hussein's regime. He was arrested and held in solitary confinement in a one-meter by two-meter cell. Between 1st and 23rd November 1978 he was subjected to a horrendous catalogue of torture including electric shocks, beatings with cables while hanging upside-down and psychological torment. On his release, he fled to Kuwait where he stayed for eighteen months. On 4th July 1980 he arrived in Britain as a political refugee. He has become a British citizen and lives in London with his wife, Juliet, and daughters Eva and Lydia.

In London, he took up employment as a sub-editor of the

*Excerpts from www.nirariarts.org



Arabic weekly magazine 'Ad-Dastour'. A year later he joined the Saudi Research and Marketing Company, where he is presently the head of language monitoring and editing department, which ensures accurate Arabic language is used in all company publications, including the daily newspaper 'Al-Sharq Al-Awsat' (The Middle East) and the weekly magazines 'Sayyidati' (My Lady), 'Al-Majallah' (The Magazine), 'Hiya' (She), 'Al-Rajul' (The Man) and 'Al-Jamilah' (The Beautiful One).

In response to an increasing request by the Assyrian community in United Kingdom generally and in London particularly, Sami Yako commenced his voluntary drama activities in 1981 and successfully presented his first play in London. The comedy called 'We and You' was performed together with a group of talented Assyrian men and women, over four days at the Assyrian House in south Ealing. The income generated was donated to the Assyrian House and Assyrian Church of the East, to assist them in the refurbishment and maintenance of the Assyrian House which at the time was also temporarily used as a church to celebrate Sunday mass. Two years later another comedy by the name of 'Wedding Night' was presented, followed by 'Strangers in London' in 1984. 'Yonan Enwiya' (Jonah and the Whale) was performed in 1986. This was a dark comedy of purely political character. The play was also performed in Stockholm, Sodertalje and Khevde in Sweden, where a large Assyrian community of Iraqi, Turkish, Syrian and Iranian origin live.

In 1987, the Assyrian community of Australia invited Sami Yako to perform in Sydney. He responded by producing and acting in two, single-act plays, in which he made use of a number of local Assyrian actors. In 1991, the artist presented 'A Kingdom without a King' followed by 'Esho Dadesho' in 1992. This play was closer to a television programme in its format (a quiz show between two families). In 1994, another comedy, 'Youkheena,' was staged. In addition to acting, Sami Yako writes, directs and produces all of his plays. This is mainly due to the lack of Assyrian play writers. The artist

also finds that scripts adopted from other languages do not closely fulfil his aspirations, nor convey his thoughts as a director.

In 1994, the artist's drama group became a semi-official entity under the name of Nirari Arts. Following 'Youkheena', no other work was produced owing to mainly the absence of financial support and lack of time. Sami Yako was working six days a week as a full time employee at Al-Sharq Al-Awsat newspaper, and he was presenting the news four days a week as a part time news reader at MBC radio FM from 1995 – 1999. In May 2000 however, Nirari Arts started rehearsals on a new play called 'Half Dead, Half Alive'. The play ran for three days in November 2000 at the Assyrian House. Later that month it was presented in Turlock, California, where it was warmly received (the invitation was from Assyrian American Artists Inc). After a year and half Nirari Arts presented a play called 'Encounter' followed by a play in 2004 'A Day in Court'.

The most recent play, 'The Beggars', was staged in July 2006.

Interview

Born on Christmas day 1948, what are your earliest childhood memories?

My earliest childhood memory was when I drunk gasoline at the age of four. The IPC (Iraqi Petroleum Company) had placed a barrel outside each house in which gasoline was stored. The barrel had a tap on the side and one day I noticed our tap was dripping. I positioned myself directly under the tap and proceeded to collect the drops in my wide open mouth. When my mother found me and scolded me I insisted that it was in fact very nice. However, I did regret it once I started to suffer from inflammation and bloating and had to be rushed to hospital.

Another memory was when I was five and I went to the Assyrian Church in Kirkuk with my mother for the first time. When the time came to celebrate the Eucharist, my mother gave me instructions to get in the line and just follow what everyone else was doing. I didn't have any idea what 'khoosh qroo qorbana' meant at the age of five. I just noticed that as people left the priest they were eating something so that gave me a good clue. As I approached the front of the Church, I noticed that people were leaning over the bisma (frankincense) so I thought that is what they must be eating. When I got to the table I helped myself to a piece of the bisma and munched my way back to my mother. When she noticed I was still chewing several minutes later, she made me open my mouth to show her. She was not impressed...

What were the main reasons that made you decide to study acting?

I only ever wanted to be one of two things: A fighter pilot or an actor. My father out rightly forbade me to become a pilot so I pursued acting. I always enjoyed mimick-



What lessons did you learn from your early performances that you applied to your later performances?

Obviously what I've learnt in the past always affects present performances but this is true of any skill. I always feel I am improving as an actor. I feel that each performance I give was better than the last one but that there is also plenty to learn.

You are also known for singing and song writing. One of these songs is an old time classic "Kha Karma Milya M'Wardeh". What were the reasons for writing this song and where did you get the idea from?

I was in love with a girl when I wrote this song and she was my inspiration. (I hasten to add that she later became my wife!) I likened her to beautiful flower which I wanted to pick, to own - but wasn't allowed to. Nor could I forget the flower or stay away from it. Courtship was a very difficult thing in Iraq in those days! There wasn't the freedom to express yourself that there is now and I so wanted to sing about forbidden love – as well as express it.

Later you migrated and settled in Britain in the early 1980s. How did you initially feel about your new environment? Did the already established Assyrian community of UK ease your settlement?

I initially felt very homesick as I didn't leave Iraq because I wanted to. We left because I was put in prison and badly tortured for a month for singing an Assyrian nationalistic song at a party. Just before I was released, one of the Ba'ath officers in charge told me that he would be expecting weekly communication from me detailing the nationalistic activities of our community – in particular those who were meeting in the Assyrian Culture Club (Nadi Al Thaqafi). Therefore, even after I was freed I felt that there were many eyes still on me and realised that I couldn't continue living that way.

Luckily, my in-laws were already living in South London so my wife and daughter went to live with them and after working in Kuwait for a year I also joined them. I had some close friends in London, among them Dr Emanuel Kambar, who I'd worked with at the Assyrian Culture Club in Baghdad. He introduced me to the Assyrian Society of the UK and the church and told me that the commu-

nity really needed some more cultural activities. That is how I first became involved with the community here.

You wrote, directed and performed some of the best Assyrian plays that currently exist. In general, how does an idea for a play begin and how does it develop?

I would say coincidence plays the biggest role in coming up with ideas for plays. I get influenced by random things that I see in my life. They may be things I see in the local Assyrian community or in the wider world and they can relate to anything from human nature to politics to religion to relationships and so on.

For example, the idea for Wedding Night, 1983, came from the early AGM meetings I used to attend in London. We used to take ages discussing issues and making decisions and creating sub-committees which would take even more time discussing and arguing and acting on decisions to the extent that the original objective of the process would be lost. I wanted to write a play to stress the importance of grabbing opportunities and acting upon them or they may be lost forever. Wedding Night is about a young man who is about to get married and changes his mind at the last minute. When he realises this was the wrong decision, it is too late because the girl has run off with someone else.

A play can grow from one idea but I don't constrain myself too much when I am writing it. I let myself travel down different avenues when I am thinking about how I want it to develop and end.

What is your favourite play so far and what is the most memorable scene that you have performed?

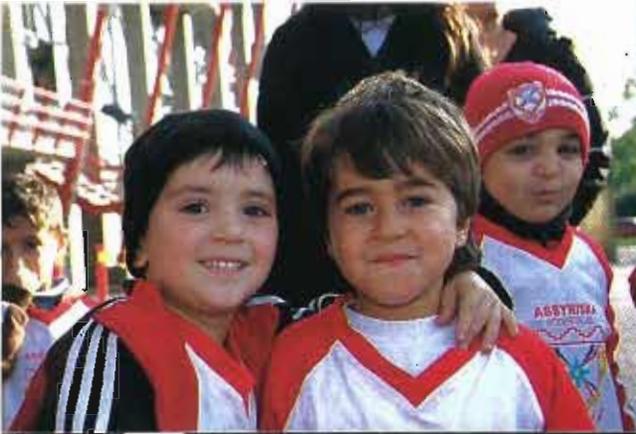
It's difficult to compare them because they deal with varying subject matters but my personal favourite is the most recent play, The Beggars, 2006. I think it most accurately reflects the position of Assyrians today. Before that, my favourite was A Kingdom without A King, 1987.

The most memorable scenes for me have been ones where I do not get the reaction I expect. It works both ways. There has been silence when I thought there would be a standing ovation and there has been laughter and mayhem at the most unexpected times.

Of course, I also remember the times when we forgot our lines. There are certain actors who find it very hard to maintain their composure when something goes wrong. I remember these times with both pain and pleasure. An example is from one of the performances of Youkheena, 1994. One of my fellow actors, Yatron Darmoo asked my character, "Youkheena, what is your name?" I was forced to reply "You just said it was Youkheena, didn't you?" The performance of the other actors was affected for about 10 minutes after that line because they had to concentrate on not laughing. I was very annoyed at the time and I cringe when I think about it now but it really is very funny.

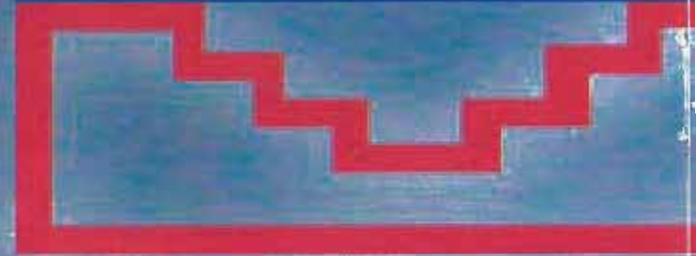
The plays that you perform tend to send indirect messages that reflect the state of affairs of a particular period.

(Continued on page 26)



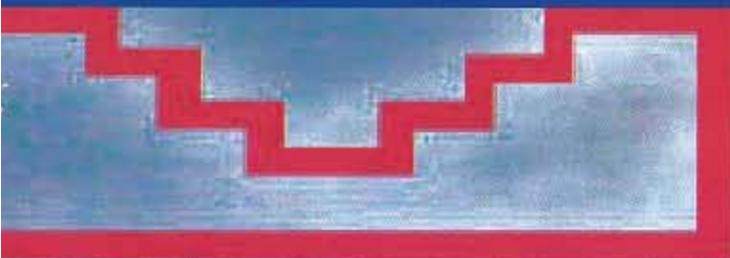
ASSY

Nineveh Magazine congratulates the Assyrian soccer club and their fans worldwide for their championship and for the achievement.



RISKA

ates the ASSYRIASKA FF soc-
wide for the 2007 division cham-
scent to the first division.





(Continued from page 23)

Why is important to raise such ideas and issues to a captive audience?

I like to give my personal perspectives of the state of affairs of particular periods. It doesn't necessarily mean that my perspective is the correct one. On the contrary, my main aim is to pose questions and make people think about issues for themselves. The reason it is important is already in your question. 'The state of affairs' means something that is here and now. It goes back to what I was saying earlier about missed opportunities – especially opportunities relating to our national aspirations.

What do you think of the Assyrian media? What are its strengths and weaknesses? How could we improve and promote it?

We still don't have high standard Assyrian media on an international level. There are local efforts in the form of newspapers, journals, TV channels and websites but they are very far from the ideal standard.

Satellite TV is one medium that has so much potential to be used for the benefit of Assyrians but I am sorry to say that I don't think it has been. One channel just serves its own interests and the interests of its elite followers rather than that of the Assyrian community. As a result it is heavily censored and this does not make effective media. Another channel produces programmes in 3 languages with relatively uninspiring and unchallenging content. It may be light entertainment but does not particularly serve Assyrian interests. Some of our channels may serve religious interests but in my view they do not serve nationalistic interests effectively.

One channel that I personally watch is the only Assyrian channel that is based in Baghdad (with another branch in North Iraq). The main strength of this channel is that it reports on the practical situation of Assyrians in our homeland as well as reporting news about Iraq in general and does not get involved in futile arguments which us in the diaspora seem to be preoccupied with. Unfortunately, the channel is under funded and at the moment I can only view it on a PC. Unlike other channels, it does not receive

millions of dollars of private funding but relies on minimal state funding and donations from the community.

It is important to encourage Assyrian youth to enter the acting field and to perform in Assyrian plays and movies. It is equally important to pass the knowledge and the expertise of established Assyrian actors such as yourself to the youth. What can we do to achieve this?

Unfortunately, one big obstacle to this is the fact that so many young Assyrians today do not speak Assyrian to a good standard. Even the ones that do may come and enjoy the plays but they are reluctant to become involved with acting. This may be because they are nervous or shy but unfortunately this does not just apply to the young. I am finding it increasingly difficult to encourage Assyrians of any age to get onto the stage! Parents can play an important role in giving children encouragement to become involved in performing arts from a young age. This way they will gain confidence for the future.

Over the years you mastered many media roles. Are there any other roles, whether in media or not, that you would want to embark on?

I would love to produce a current affairs TV programme for Assyrians. I would invite Assyrians from the whole political and religious spectrum, to come and discuss the issues of the day in an independent setting in a structured, civilised and uncensored manner.

In terms of theatre ambitions, I wrote an operetta in 1976 called Yousip and Delilah which has never been performed and is still only on paper. It would be my dream to stage this but it would need many actors, musicians, and singers and it is very hard to organise a group of people who can spare the time to rehearse it. It would also be the costliest performance Nirari Arts has ever produced and it is not the type of show where we can get by on a small budget.

The story is about a girl who gets kidnapped from a village by a neighbouring village. It is an allegorical tale in which the girl is a metaphor for our land, Assyria. The village people get together and decide on the best way to get her back. Should they go to war? Should they try diplomatic means? Should they maintain peace at all costs? Is she important enough for them to pursue?

The solution that is deemed most effective is that of personal sacrifice – martyrdom or giving sahdah. Out of the brave set of men that go to rescue the girl, only a handful return, but they return with the ultimate prize.

Your most recent play, called 'The Beggars', launched July 2006, was yet another hilarious show. Are there any new performances on the way?

There are couple of new things on the horizon but I'm not sure when they will be performed. Possibly in 2008.

Do you think that the Assyrians youth born and/or raised in the West struggle to find an equilibrium between their Assyrian identity and their Western upbringing? Would you consider directing a play to highlight these issues?

Yes, I do agree that it must be difficult to find a balance



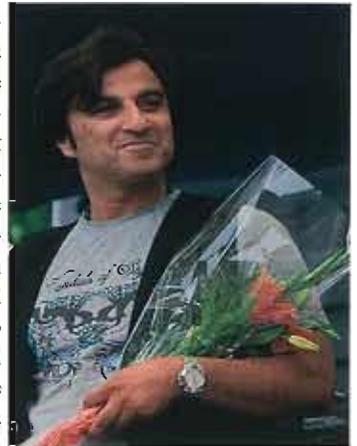
"I let my racket do the talking. That's what I am all about, really. I just go out and win tennis matches," (Pete Sampras, a professional American tennis player) an ingenious motto that draws Mary closer to her game. Mary Chamaki, born July 4, 1991, was raised in San Jose, California and started playing tennis at the age of three. Tennis instantly became her passion and she started competing in tournaments throughout California at the age of eight.

With her talent and amazing skills, she is ranked top thirty in Northern California today. Her competition doesn't end there; Mary has and will continue to compete in national tournaments, including Copper Bowl in Tucson, Arizona and the West Coast National Championship in Sacramento, California. For the past two years, Mary has been attending the Weil Tennis Academy in Santa Barbara to help improve her game. As a hardworking student and currently a junior at Saint Francis High School, Mary has achieved the number one spot on the varsity tennis team and has ranked number two since her freshman year.

Mary Chamaki not only enjoys playing tennis, but also loves to meet new people on the court. It's a way of releasing all her energy and simply just having fun, but that doesn't stop her from being competitive. "I'm just humble about the whole game. In fact, it's so much fun that winning becomes easy," she says. Mary continues to excel in school and shine as an excellent tennis player. A dedicated and talented young lady like Mary makes our nation proud and deserves applause for her aptitude.

Nuri Kino Wins prestigious National Award, Again.

The Assyrian-Swedish investigative journalist, Nuri Kino, has won this year's Blatte De Luxe award in the category of Journalism. Mr. Kino won last year's Award in the same category, becoming the only Blatte De Luxe winner who has received the honor two years in row. In his speech at the award ceremony on 30 July, Mr. Kino called for peace, tolerance and support for the children of the immigrants. "Both my parents are illiterate and I made it this far; you should do it too. But nothing will come to you for free; you must work very hard", Kino reminded his audience. He also says "I'm a proud immigrant. I'm a proud Assyrian and I'm a proud Swede. But I'm a human being foremost and together we can bridge all barriers". The jury makes the following commendation upon awarding Mr. Kino: "For he is an excellent journalist, who digs deep in order to expose injustices both in Sweden and in the international community. He delivers big disclosures one after the other, receiving death threats. He works for the world media, lives in Södertälje (Sweden) and is a role model for many young people." To read Nuri Kino's blog visit his website at nurikino.com.



Dr. Ninwe Maraha Receives her PhD in Microbiology

Nineveh and the Assyrian Foundation of America join the Tamraz and Maraha families in congratulating Ninwe Maraha on completing her studies and receiving her PhD degree in Microbiology/Microbial Ecology from the Karolinska Institutet in Huddinge, Sweden, on 12 January, 2007



The title of her thesis was: *Physiological Status of Bacteria Used for Environmental Applications.*

A letter to Jesus

EUPHRATES

TIGRIS

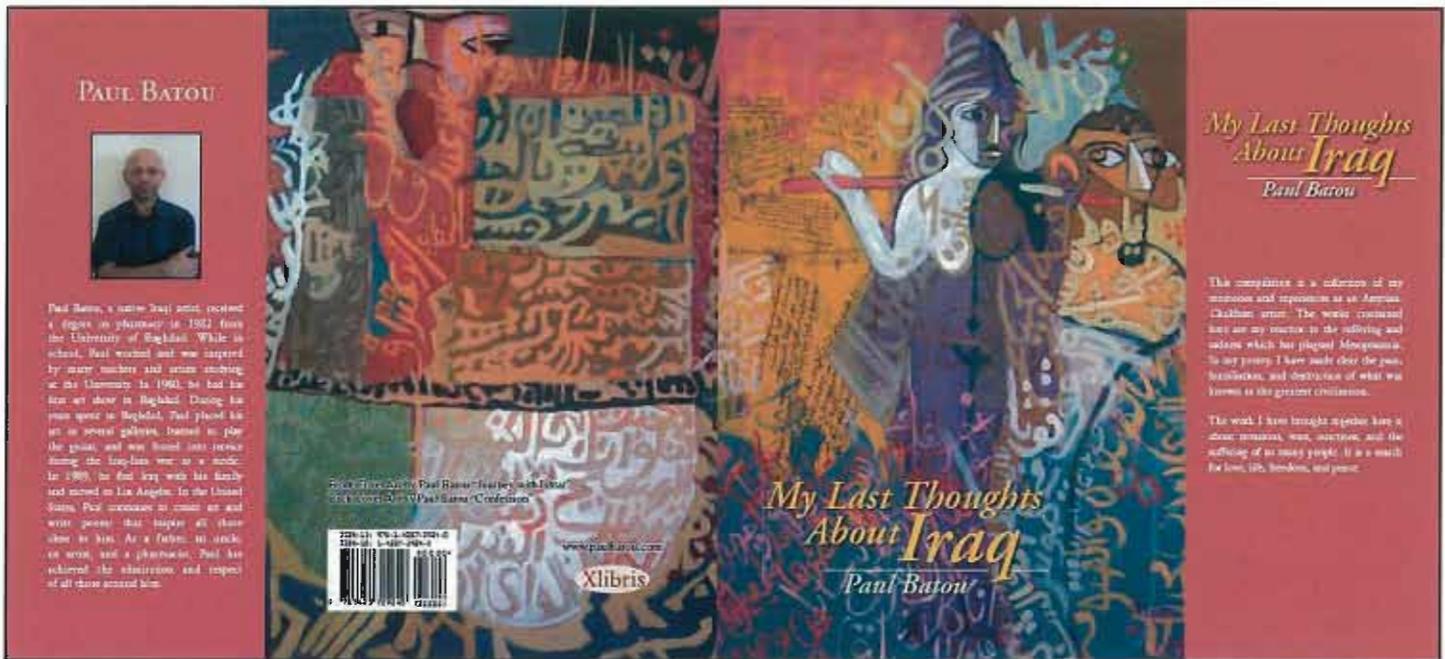
“ THE MISSING CROSS ”

*For two millennia
The Assyrian nation
Has carried your cross on her shoulders
Two millennia of worship
Two millennia of bloodshed
Two Millennia of crucifixion
Of the Assyrian Christian Nation
And now
We celebrate
The beginning of our third millennium
With more bloodshed
While you watch us
Die and die again
For your cause
And for the cause of Christianity.*

*As the grand master tell me now
How much more we have to go through
To satisfy your divine desire.*

THE
MISSING
CROSS

© 2003 . 5 . 7 . 0



Devastating Last Thoughts on Iraq

Author *Paul Batou* shares his raw thoughts, feelings and memories of Iraq

Burbank, CA — Mesopotamia was once known as the greatest civilization on earth. But invasions, wars and sanctions have led to the destruction of the remarkable civilization. Author Paul Batou shares his thoughts, and feelings about the ruin of Mesopotamia in, *My Last Thoughts on Iraq*.

This book is a collection of the author's memories and experiences as an Assyrian-Chaldean artist. He shares his reactions to the suffering and sadness, which has plagued Mesopotamia through poetry that clearly expresses the pain, humiliation, and destruction of a once great civilization. *My Last Thoughts on Iraq* reveals the state of fear in Iraq, the wars, invasions and sanctions that led to the decay of modern Baghdad and the suffering of its citizens around the world.

My Last Thoughts on Iraq is a timely book that will give readers a glimpse inside Iraq during its most troubled times. Iraq at present is still at turmoil and Batou gives us insights on this place, its people and its gradual destruction. This truly interesting read will tell us the real score instead of the media's often-colored view of the news. Buy a copy of this intriguing read now online at Xlibris.com or your local book retailer!

About the Author

Paul Batou, a native Iraqi artist, received a degree in pharmacy in 1982 from the University of Baghdad. While in school, Paul worked and was inspired by many teachers and artists studying at the University. In 1980, he had his first art show in Baghdad. During his years spent in Baghdad, Paul placed his art in several galleries, learned to play the guitar, and was forced into service during the Iraq-Iran war as a medic. In 1989, he fled Iraq with his family and moved to Los Angeles. In the United States, Paul continues to create art and write poems that inspire all those close to him. As a father, an uncle, an artist, and a pharmacist, Paul has achieved the admiration and respect of all those around him.

My Last Thoughts about Iraq by Paul Batou

Trade Paperback; \$10.00; 75 pages; 978-1-4257-2923-3
Cloth Hardback; \$16.99; 75 pages; 978-1-4257-2924-0

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Assyria

By Joseph Aziz

Once the cradle of civilization,
New life was born in the “Fertile Crescent”;
A reason God chose to bear this nation:
From its birth it lives into the present.

Assyria! They screamed it so loudly,
Her precious wings flew high from day to night;
Her people lifted her flag so proudly,
Through her name they grew the courage to fight.

Centuries her people have suffered great loss,
For centuries took agony, torture, and pain;
Though still she fights and holds onto her Cross,
And still refuses to bear a new name.

Assyria! Assyria! Your heart still glows!
I promise you glory, to death I’ll strive;
Through me you’ll live, in my veins your blood flows,
Through me, Assyria, your name stays alive.

And ‘till that day comes, to death will I strive,
Through me, Assyria, your name stays alive.

S.A.F.E. Holds Vigil

Courtesy of <http://www.savingantiquities.org>

Aims of SAFE

SAFE aims to show that looting and the illicit trafficking of antiquities destroy humankind's common heritage.

Why should anyone care about ancient cultures? And why should a citizen in the United States, for instance, care what happens to an object buried in China, Iraq, or another distant location, for thousands of years?

The answer is that antiquities are among the few survivors of early cultural history.

Objects uncovered in their original contexts, properly interpreted, provide insight into the way our ancestors lived, their societies and their environments. They complete our view of ancient life and enrich our understanding on many levels. As such, antiquities comprise an essential part of our global cultural heritage.

Amidst political turmoil and tremendous humanitarian needs, why should we worry about culture and antiquities? One answer is that "wars end, and shattered lives, communities and societies must be rebuilt" (Nature, Vol 423, 29 May 2003). In other words, the physical fabric of the past is vital to the moral and spiritual fabric of the present and future. The idea that our children might not be able to walk into a museum, examine a piece of antiquity, and be inspired by it is unthinkable.

Because the ancient past belongs to all of humanity, we must share stewardship and responsibility for protecting cultural antiquities no matter where they are found.

Looting of cultural heritage

Every day, looting and plundering of priceless cultural treasures continues all over the world. The problem is most acute in Africa, Southeast Asia, China, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Himalaya region. The underground antiquities trade prospers in such places, because many third-world countries are rich in undiscovered cultural treasure. Local residents are often tempted to trade their heritage for quick income that represents a tiny percentage of the artifacts' true value.

Looting of archaeological sites is not confined to the developing world. There are serious threats to the integrity of archaeological sites all over the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. According to a 1988 Congressional report on vandalism and looting in the Four Corners region of the United States (where New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado intersect), up to 90% of known Native American archaeological sites in the area are believed to have been vandalized. (See The Trade and Environment Database Case Studies, American University, Case number: 216.)

What can be done to save world cultural heritage?

Over the decades—even centuries—various attempts have been made to stem the gradual depletion of our shared cultural heritage. These efforts range from legislation and treaties on global and national levels, to engaging local communities in archaeological excavations. These are possible solutions:

Reporting suspicious items, asking questions, collectors make sure items were purchased properly. Speaking up to voice the concern to the Cultural Property Advisory Committee (CPAC) during their hearings.

Conventions

Since the end of the Second World War, several international conventions have been enacted to combat the theft, illicit exportation and trafficking of cultural property as well as promote the restitution of objects to their countries of origin. Here are some of the most important conventions:

- Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague 1954) and Protocols
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO 1970)
- Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO 1972)
- UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (UNIDROIT 1995)

In addition, individual countries have enacted legislation to address the problem of illicit trade within national borders and have negotiated bilateral agreements to help stem the flow of smuggled artifacts internationally.

As the first major art-importing country to ratify the Convention, the U.S. signed into law the Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act (CPIA) in 1983, enabling the U.S. government to enter into emergency and bilateral agreements to restrict the importation of specified objects that are in danger of being looted from archaeological sites. Bilateral agreements have been proven effective in stemming the flow of illicit antiquities.

Event organized by SAFE - A Candlelight Vigil for the Iraq Museum

On April 10, 2003, news broke that thousands of ancient artifacts had been systematically looted from the unrivaled collections of the Iraq Museum. The looting was an immeasurable loss both to the people of Iraq, and to all of mankind. Even more devastating has been the ongoing plunder of Iraq's ancient archaeological sites, which feeds the international black market trade in antiquities.

Four years later, more than 7,000 artifacts are still miss-

For Iraqi Artifacts

ing from the Museum and sites continue to be looted. This immense loss has awakened many to the vulnerability of our shared cultural heritage and inspired the establishment of SAFE.

Although media coverage of these issues has dwindled, we must not forget the sacrifices of Museum and site staff, the missing artifacts, as well as the plunder that occurs in Iraq and all around the world. Not only for ourselves but also for the generations to come.

The non-profit organization SAFE/Saving Antiquities for Everyone, Inc., announced its plan to organize, promote and help facilitate a three-day Global Candlelight Vigil on April 10-12, 2007 to mark the fourth anniversary of the looting of the Iraq Museum in Baghdad.

The Vigil, which has received the endorsement of the Iraq Museum's former Director-General, Dr. Donny George Youkhanna, aimed to draw attention to the 7,000 priceless artifacts still missing from the Museum, as well as the ongoing looting and destruction of Iraq's more than 10,000 archaeological sites that comprise the cradle of civilization.

In San Francisco, the SAFE organization had their Candlelight Vigil outside the Asian Art Museum, in the afternoon on Thursday the 12:th of April 2007. We were a few members of the Assyrian Foundation of America that attended and joined the event that was mainly aimed to remind us of what is happening with our cultural heritage

and to raise public awareness regarding the importance of preserving cultural heritage worldwide. Because of the harsh wind we could not lit our candles, but we had them in our hands though. It is though very interesting and great for our people, that other non-profit and non-Assyrian organizations do take actions for the cause of saving the Assyrian cultural heritage. We had later a nice coffee/tea and cake at the museums café. It was nice event but just too few people showed up and one of the reasons was that the announcement of this special event reached our people in San Francisco very late.

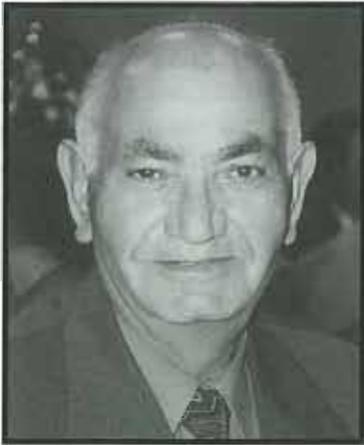
However, similar Candlelight Vigil gatherings were held in Baghdad, Iraq on the 10th of April 2007 in front of the Iraq Museum, in Turlock, USA in front of the Assyrian Cultural Center of Bet-Nahrain. And a similar gathering on the 12th of April in Vancouver, Canada. The U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield, the Archaeological Institute of America, and SAFE had a candlelight vigil on the 12th of April at the University of Minnesota Minneapolis campus, in front of the Weisman Art Museum. Also candlelight vigils were performed at the University of Oregon, in Boston and New York.

Global Candlelight Vigil received attention from [Bagdadhope](#); e-artcasting in [English](#) and [Spanish](#); [e-norte.org](#); [CultureGirl](#); [Museum Security Network](#); [Daily Kos](#); [The Archaeology Channel](#); [AssyriaTimes](#); [museo-on.com](#); [Oregon Daily Emerald](#); [Archaeological Institute of America](#); [Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center \(CHP\)](#).



Candlelight Vigil outside the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, on the 12th of April 2007

In Memorium



Victor Badal

My father, Victor Badal, was born on March 30 1932 in the village of Jenize, Urmia, in Iran to parents Shimshon and Axenia Badal. At 15, he moved to Hamadan to work in a photography studio owned by his great uncle. A few years later he moved to Abadan to continue with his photography

career. In 1955, he moved to Tehran to work for the United States military in the mapping division. On December 18, 1958 he married Frieda, daughter of Paulos and Shushan Babanejad of Yangija, Urmia.

In 1963, they moved to the United States, and after various jobs including a week assignment photographing *The Beatles*, he accepted a job with Bechtel Corp. In 1972, their daughter Sabrina was born. In 1975, he began working for the United States government for the Dept. of the Interior at the US Geological Survey in the mapping dept., located in Menlo Park, California. The same year the family moved to Sunnyvale. In 1979, their son Sargon was born.

From the beginning of their arrival to the United States, he became very active in the Assyrian community. Both Victor and Frieda were among the founding members of the Assyrian Foundation of America in Berkeley, they were involved in Mar Narsai Parish in San Francisco, and he was a member of the building committee of Mar Yosip Parish in San Jose. Church was a priority and obligation and he instilled that in our minds and hearts. He looked forward to every Sunday, greeting and seating the parishioners. It was his duty to serve his Church and, more so, his Assyrian community. He prided himself in being Assyrian and was always quick to educate everyone, Assyrian or not, about our history and who the Assyrians are.

In 2000 he retired, after 35 years of government service, with a congratulatory letter of retirement from then President Bill Clinton.

In 2004, he and Frieda moved to Modesto where they lived until his passing on June 1st.

He is survived by his wife Frieda, son Sargon, daughter Sabrina David, son-in-law Rony David and their children Alexandra and Aidan. His brother Aprim Badal and family reside in San Jose and his uncle Sam Jacobs resides in Greenbrae.

Coming to this country as a young immigrant and working hard to provide his family with the best, he always stressed the importance of going to school, getting an edu-

cation and being successful. He taught us to reach for the stars but to be honest in all that we did.

I am so grateful to have had such a wonderful father who gave us the best in life, taught us values and morals, and who sacrificed his life for his family.

Bappa, you will live in our hearts forever and on our mind with each passing breath. Until we meet again.

Your daughter,
Sabrina



PERA, Lillian Sargis

Mrs. Lillian Sargis Pera, a longtime resident of New Britain, was called home to heaven on Tuesday, (May 1, 2007). She passed away in Florida. She was preceded in death by and awaiting a joyful reunion with her husband, Rev. Richard G. Pera, her parents, Jacob and Judith

Sargis, a son and a grandson. Mourning her passing is her sister, Mrs. Rose Sargis Ernesto of New Britain. She was a loving and devoted mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She leaves behind her brokenhearted children: daughter, Judith (Pera) and son-in-law David Giguere of Georgia, daughter Denise L.R. Pera of Florida, son Richard and daughter-in-law Mary Jo (Robinson) Pera of Washington, D.C. She was very proud of and adored her three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, who will miss her greatly. Her family is comforted by her great and abiding faith in God and the sure knowledge that they will all be together again someday in heaven. Mrs. Pera was a graduate of New Britain High School. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Connecticut at Storrs and her Masters Degree from Central Connecticut State College. She taught sixth grade for many years at McDonough Elementary School in Hartford. Teaching was a career and profession she loved. She valued education highly. Funeral services are Saturday, (May 19, 2007) 11 AM at South Church, 90 Main Street, New Britain. There are no calling hours. Burial will be in Fairview Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to South Church, 90 Main Street, New Britain, CT 06051 and designated for the "Assyrian Memorial Parlor Fund". The Carlson Funeral Home, New Britain, is assisting the family with arrangements. Please share a memory or note of sympathy at www.carlsonfuneralhome.com



Barsom J. Kashish

(March 6, 1925-December 18, 2006)

Barsom J. Kashish, of North Falmouth, formerly of Milton, Massachusetts, has been known to his loved ones and to those who have truly witnessed his life, as an extraordinary spirit, a Christian of profound faith, and, indeed, a very mighty Assyrian. Barsom, through his absolute faith in God and the teach-

ings of Jesus Christ, had a valiant and most remarkable spiritual journey on earth, marked by numerous heroic battles in which he defied man's earthly struggles, including that of death, time after time. Barsom almost seemed invincible, as he had visited death's door many times, however, finally, he entered God's kingdom, to rest, on December 18, 2006. Barsom, a cherished reflection of God's love and goodness, is forever in the hearts of his devoted wife, Margaret (Jano) Kashish, his loving daughters, Lisa Kashish of Hoboken, New Jersey, and Cindy Hazerjian of Plainville, Massachusetts, his dear sons-in-law, Brian Assadourian and George Hazerjian, his beloved grandchildren, Aram Barsom Assadourian and Jeremy and Joshua Hazerjian, and his dear "kid brother", cousin George Dobabed of Milton, Massachusetts. Barsom is also survived by his sister, Charlotte Correia, of Cape Coral, Florida.

Barsom was born to Maritza (Kazar) Kashish and Jurjies Kashish of Kharput, Turkey, in Watertown, Massachusetts, on March 6, 1925, and grew up in the Boston area. Maritza and Jurjies named him after his grandfather's brother, Barsom Kashish, father of Assyrian activist/author David Barsom (Kashish) Perley, whose life was taken by the Ottoman Turks, in Kharput, as described in the book *Shall This Nation Die?*

Throughout his youth, Barsom was affectionately referred to as "Barsie" by friends and family members. He was a straight "A" student, and intended to pursue studies to become a diesel engineer; however, before Barsom was able to attend his high school graduation ceremony, he went to serve in World War II, as a front-line combat medic, in the Battle of the Bulge. He refused to carry a weapon and placed his full reliance on God for protection. This critical slice of Barsom's early years encapsulated who Barsom would be throughout his life.

Initially, Barsom returned home to the Boston area, to recuperate after the war. Subsequently, he and his father ran the family clothing/export business, together, for a number of years, while Barsom would often spend his free time at the Boston Public Library, studying the history of the Assyrians. Barsom would later tell his own children how inspired he was to find that all that his fa-

ther had told him of the greatness of the ancient Assyrians as the cradle of civilization, as conquerors, and as Christians, was, indeed, true.

Barsom's pride in and a passion for his Assyrian heritage motivated him to become active in the Assyrian community. He served as the Executive Secretary of the Assyrian National Federation. He was one of the founding members of the *Assyrian Star* magazine, and served as its corresponding secretary, as well as a reporter. Barsom authored *What Language Did God Speak...And His Chosen Language*, a compilation of references substantiating the luminous history of the Assyrian Christian missions throughout the world and "the faith of the original Semitic Church of the Holy See of Babylon—divinely revealed in the original Aramaic mother tongue of Abraham, of Christ, and of the Holy Scriptures—to be "the chosen church", in Peter 1 5:13. This publication was recently discovered to be listed amongst the books found in the study of the Truman Home, (President) Harry S. Truman National Historic Site, Independence, Missouri.

In 1960, Barsom married Jano, and together with his "marge", raised daughters Lisa and Cindy. Barsom, a graduate of Burdette Business School, went on to enjoy an outstanding thirty year career in commercial real estate in the Boston area. Toward the end of this career, Barsom manifested his love for antique collecting by opening his own antiques by Barsom, in Collidge Corner, Brookline, Massachusetts.

In 2002, Barsom published his final book, *The Revival of Spiritual Healing*. In his book, Barsom draws a critical link between the practice of "primitive Christianity" which Christian Science believes to have rediscovered, and the ancient Assyrian Church of the East, which Barsom documents to have been the most powerful and dynamic healing based church, with its unparalleled missions extending throughout the Middle East and Asia.

Barsom, a seeker of knowledge, who was always learning, growing and discovering new realms, will also be remembered for his very sweet heart, his thoughtful ways, his warm, gleeful smile, his friendly manner, his no-nonsense talk, his gentlemanly way, his feisty moments, his generosity, his love of humor and telling jokes, his adoration of children, his enjoyment of festive gatherings, music and dancing, the Christmas season, old movies, sporting his captain's hat, Old Silver Beach, his keen knowledge of history, politics, and foreign languages, his appreciation for all forms of beauty, the relish with which he enjoyed his wife's fine cooking, chocolate ice cream, hot cocoa, and Mounds bars, his impeccable dressing, and his favorite colors...blue and purple, which Barsom would proudly identify as the color of the Assyrians.

Send your news to Nineveh Magazine
info@assyrianfoundation.org

Wills and Trusts



to revise it, do not make your changes on the original. You can amend your will with a separate legal document referred to as a *codicil*. You may want to consult an attorney before creating or changing such an important document (because even changing or amending a will you must follow strict steps to keep the changes valid).

Assets distribution

In the case of an existing will, the executor named in the will starts the process by filing a petition in court and seeking appointment as your personal representative. Your personal representative will take charge of your assets, pay your debts and distribute the rest of your estate to your beneficiaries. This court process is known as *probate*. If you do not have a will, a relative or other interested person can start the process. Simpler procedures are available for transferring property to a spouse or if the estate amount is equal to less than \$100,000 (this amount may differ with new legislature).

A will does not control certain assets distributions

Generally a will does not control the distribution of life insurance proceeds, retirement plan assets, certain jointly owned assets, "transfer on death" or "pay on death" accounts and the assets of revocable living trusts

"This article is for informational purposes only. The information is intended only to help individuals to learn about the law and the legal system in California. The information provided, DOES NOT constitute legal advice and MUST NOT be used as a substitute for the counsel and services that you may require from an attorney."

Thought of a will?

A will is important, if you want to have control over who will inherit your assets. Even if you own very little, you can earmark a particular piece of jewelry or a cash gift for a person or charity if that is your choice. You can nominate guardians for your young children in your will. You can express your funeral and burial wishes. And you may name an *executor* to carry out your wishes.

The executor - who must be officially appointed as your personal representative by a judge - will collect and manage your assets, pay off debts and distribute your property. Your will may be handwritten, or you can fill out a *California Statutory Will*. This may be useful if you have very few assets. (This form can be printed out from the State Bar Web site. Go to www.calbar.ca.gov.)

However, in order to have a valid will it must meet strict requirements (for example certain types of wills require two witnesses). Your will should be kept up to date. If you do decide

If you do not have a will when you die

Your assets will go to your spouse, registered domestic partner, children or next of kin, if you die without a will (referred to as *intestacy*) according to California's interstate succession laws. In the case where you don't have a spouse, domestic partner, or child, or your next of kin cannot be located, your property will go to the state.

Revocable living trust

It is a partial substitute for a will. With a living trust, your assets are put into the trust during your lifetime and transferred to your beneficiaries when you die. Most people name themselves as the trustee who manages the assets. This allows you to remain in control of the living trust assets during your lifetime. You also can revoke or change your living trust. One advantage of a living trust is that the assets do not go through probate. And the distribution process often takes less time. A revocable living trust, however, does not remove all need for a will since you still need a will — known as a *pourover will* — that is necessary to cover any assets that are not included in the trust. Also, be aware that a living trust is not appropriate for everyone.

Before creating such a trust, you should seek advice from a qualified estate-planning attorney. And always watch out for

unqualified “advisors” who sell living trusts in “trust mill” scams and who seek to obtain seniors’ private financial information for other purposes as well.

Are beneficiaries’ inheritance taxed?

Property left to your spouse or a charity will not be subject to *estate tax*. The portion of the estate that is left to anyone else, depending on the circumstances — even your children — will be taxed if your assets are a total \$2 million or more from 2006 through 2008, and \$3.5 million in 2009. In 2010, the estate tax will disappear completely. But in 2011, unless Congress passes an extension, the exemption will revert back to \$1 million (IRS form 706, Pub. 950). Under federal law, you can also give away as much as \$12,000 a year and \$1 million during your lifetime to each of your children or to anyone else without incurring gift tax. In addition, you could pay your grandchild’s college tuition or medical insurance premiums (or anyone’s tuition or medical bills, for that matter) free of *gift tax*—but only if the payments are made directly to the educational institution or medical provider (IRS form 709).

Benefits of making a donation

Gifts and donations to a charity organization, as The Assyrian Foundation of America, are also tax deductible. A charity organization is defined as a nonprofit organization that is incorporated and identified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization. These organizations have been given tax-exempt status and can accept contributions. To claim a deduction, you will need to fill out a 1040 Form, which is available through the IRS website, and itemize your deductions on Schedule A. The IRS doesn’t require receipts for cash donations under \$250, but you should keep donation information on file. Cash contributions of \$250 and over require an acknowledgement that must be sent to the IRS with your tax returns. The receipt needs to record the donation amount, the date the donation was made, and the name of the charity. The instructions for the 1040 Form will help determine the exact amount of your deduction, which will vary depending on your tax bracket and whether you file as a single person or jointly.

For information on estate tax and other gift tax exemptions call the IRS or State Controller’s Office.

<http://www.calbar.ca.gov>

<http://www.taxes.ca.gov>

<http://www.irs.gov>

Subscriptions and Donations

- *Nineveh*: Subscriptions and donations to *Nineveh Magazine*.
- *Education*: For financial assistance of Assyrian students and other educational and cultural projects.
- *Needy*: For financial assistance of Assyrians in need.
- *Donation*: Not specified.

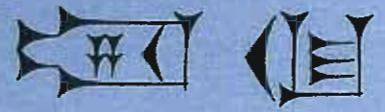
Assyrian Foundation membership dues are not included.

You may indicate how and/or for what project you wish your donations to be used.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Ms. Maryam Babilla; Nineveh:	\$25
Mr. George Bazou; Needy:	\$839
Mr. Mooshi Benjamin; Nineveh:	\$30
Mr. Fred Chalita; Nineveh:	\$30
Ms. Nina Charbakhshi; Nineveh:	\$20
Ms. Alexandra and Aidan David; Needy :	\$50
(In memory of their grandfather Victor Badal)	
Ms. Khana Daniel; Nineveh:	\$20
Mr. Nathan Elias; Needy:	\$100
Ms. Narmella Elissa; Nineveh:	\$35
Mr. Solomon Eshu; Needy:	\$25
Ms. Marganita Gergo; Nineveh:	\$10
Mr. Ramsin Givergis; Nineveh:	\$80
Mr. Fereidon Gologhlan; Nineveh:	\$40
Mr. Jonathan Hermes; Nineveh: \$20; Needy:	\$40
Mr. Sargon Hermes; Nineveh:	\$20
Mr. Gilbert Isaac; Needy:	\$25
Mr. Wilson Ishu; Nineveh: \$20, Needy:	\$20
Mr. Victor Kelaita; Nineveh: \$70; Needy:	\$75
Ms. Marian Langley; Nineveh:	\$20
Mr. Donald Lazar; Nineveh: \$40; Needy:	\$160
Ms. Helen Lazar; Nineveh:	\$20
Ms. Irene Lazar; Nineveh: \$20; Needy:	\$80
Mr. Sargon Mikael; Nineveh:	\$25
Mr. George Nadirsha; Donation:	\$200
Mr. George Narso; Nineveh:	\$20
Mr. Melis Pourbabaei; Nineveh:	\$20
Ms. Najibeh Reyhanabad; Nineveh:	\$20
Ms. Margaret Sarkissian; Nineveh:	\$20
Mr. Mirza Shmoil; Needy: \$100; Education:	\$50
Mr. Filimon Tamraz; Nineveh:	\$20
Mr. Roben Tamraz; Nineveh:	\$20
Ms. Sarah Warda; Nineveh:	\$120
Mr. Oraham Yacoub; Nineveh: \$20; Needy:	\$30
Mr. George Yana; Needy:	\$50
Ms. Jacklin Yelda; Education:	\$200
Mr. Sabah Youash; Nineveh: \$75; Donation:	\$75
Mr. Sabah Youash; Nineveh: \$75; Needy:	\$75
Ms. Rochelle Yousefian; Nineveh:	\$20

THANK YOU!



مسئلہ

مطلبہ دہلی، ۱۹۵۸ء، دہلی

دہلی، 30، مئی، 1964ء، 6757



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