



NINEVEH

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"100 Years of Genocide" By Artist Paul Batou

Message from the President

Commemorating 8/7 — A Legacy of Courage, A Call to Remember



As we mark another year since the massacre of our people at Simele on August 7, 1933, we remember that this tragic event was part of a much larger history of suffering, the Assyrian genocide that unfolded during and after World War I. Our people endured systematic massacres, forced displacement, and cultural destruction across multiple regions, from the Ottoman Empire to modern-day Iraq, Syria, and beyond.

The tragedy of 8/7 is not just a historical footnote. It is a wound passed down through generations, a stark reminder of our vulnerability as a people without a recognized homeland. But it is also a testament to our endurance. We have survived. We have rebuilt. And now, we must turn remembrance into resolve.

Two years ago, I visited the homeland for the first time. I stood at the very site where thousands of innocent Assyrians were killed in Simele, and what I saw was heartbreaking. There was no solemn memorial, only what looked like a dumping ground. No signs of remembrance. No dignity. No recognition of the lives lost there. It was a painful reminder that if we don't preserve our own history, no one else will do it for us.

Our history demands that we refuse silence, not only in honoring our martyrs but in speaking up for all Assyrians who continue to face persecution, displacement, and cultural erasure. It is our obligation to educate, advocate, and ensure that the world knows our story, not only for justice but for preservation and progress.

I urge each of you to do one or more of the following things in memory of the Assyrian genocide and Simele massacre:

- Talk to your children about what happened.
- Support organizations working to preserve our history and heritage.
- Contact your representatives and ask what they are doing to support recognition of the Assyrian genocide.
- Or simply, share our story with someone who doesn't know it.

Let us honor the past not only with mourning but with purpose. Let us build strong communities, strong institutions, and strong voices.

May we remember our fallen not only with sorrow, but with resolve.

Jackline Yelda

President, Assyrian Foundation of America

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The Forgotten Assyrian Genocide Under Bedir Khan Beg (1843–1846)

Elizabeth Mickaily-Huber, Ph.D.

As Assyrians, many of us have grown up hearing expressions like *gu dora d'Bedir Khan Beg* (“in the days of Badir Khan Beg”) used to refer to something that happened long ago. Or the phrase *jwanke d'Bohtan*, evoking the image of the fierce and youthful warriors of Bohtan. These sayings have passed through generations, but how often have we stopped to ask: where did they come from? What is the history behind them?

The answer lies in one of the most tragic and defining chapters of Assyrian history, the genocidal campaigns of the 1840s, led by Bedir Khan Beg, the Kurdish emir of Bohtan. For many Assyrians, the name Bedir Khan lives on as a symbol of terror, marking the end of a long era of independence and the beginning of a prolonged period of persecution and displacement.

By the 19th century, the weakened Ottoman Empire had started losing control over Upper Mesopotamia. The empire seemed on the brink of collapse when Muhammad Ali revolted in Egypt and took control of Syria. Kurdish Emirs, sensing opportunity, moved to assert their independence. Among them was Ibrahim Pasha, whose dominion extended from Diyarbakir to Aleppo. Though his Syrian campaign failed, it

demonstrated the Ottomans' vulnerability and inspired Kurdish leaders like Bedir Khan to expand their control.

British fears of renewed French intervention in the region led to deeper Western involvement. Missionaries such as Justin Perkins and Asahel Grant arrived, bringing education, printing presses, and religious support to Assyrian villages. British delegate Hormuzd Rassam, an Assyrian himself, was tasked with managing relations with the independent tribes. The growing relationship between Assyrians and the West fueled Kurdish suspicion and hostility.

Internal Kurdish rivalries also played a role. In 1839, conflict erupted between Nurullah of Hakkari and his nephew Suleyman. Mar Shimun XVII Abraham sided with Suleyman, deepening the rift between the Patriarchate and Nurullah. When Nurullah emerged victorious, he retaliated against Assyrian villages and attacked the Patriarchate itself.

Bedir Khan Beg ruled over the Emirate of Bohtan in what is now southeastern Turkey. He was a charismatic and ambitious leader who consolidated power during a time when the Ottoman Empire was losing

control of its outer provinces. While the empire was implementing sweeping reforms through the Tanzimat Edict of 1839, figures like Bedir Khan sought to assert their own authority in the chaos, creating strongholds that operated with near total autonomy. His emirate spanned from Diyarbakir to Mosul and from Urmia to the Tur Abdin mountains—a vast region that included many independent Assyrian tribes.

By 1843, an alliance had formed between Bedir Khan, Nurullah Bey, and Ismail Pasha of Amedi. They requested Ottoman permission to subdue the Christian tribes. With Mar Shimun refusing to cooperate, the alliance moved to destroy the Assyrian resistance.

At the heart of the Assyrian response stood Mar Shimun XVII Abraham, Patriarch of the Church of the East. Based in the mountain seat of Qodshanis, he was both spiritual and political leader for the Assyrian tribes. His refusal to submit to Kurdish demands, partly encouraged by British missionary George Badger's promises of external support, was seen as defiance. When Mar Shimun declined Nurullah Bey's invitation to a meeting, citing religious duties and the presence of British guests, the Kurdish alliance saw its opportunity to strike.

The massacres began in July 1843. Villages were pillaged and burned. Tens of thousands of Assyrians were killed or enslaved. Women and children were taken to be sold. The mother of Mar Shimun was hacked to pieces. His sister was among the few rescued by diplomatic intervention. The massacre was so sweeping that reports to British officials estimated Kurdish forces to number nearly 100,000, attacking from all directions.

What followed was a devastating campaign of violence. Between 1843 and 1846, Bedir Khan, alongside his allies Nurullah Bey of Hakkari and Han Mahmoud of Müküs, launched a series of brutal assaults against Assyrian Christians in Hakkari. Tensions had been building for years. Assyrian alliances with American and British missionaries were viewed with growing hostility by Kurdish leaders. The growing presence of Western influence, and the Assyrians' refusal to pay tribute to Kurdish emirs, were used as pretexts for the attacks.

The 1843 campaign was swift and catastrophic. Entire Assyrian districts like Tiari were razed. The mother of Mar Shimun was reportedly mutilated, and his sister taken captive. Thousands were slaughtered. Survivors

were tortured, enslaved, or forced to carry the looted belongings of their own destroyed villages. Even those who had not resisted were subjected to the same cruelty. Mar Shimun himself narrowly escaped, seeking refuge in Mosul along with his remaining followers.

Those who fled were ambushed. Others were tortured to reveal imagined treasures. Corpses lay across the mountains. The brutality shocked even seasoned diplomats and missionaries. The Patriarch, now a refugee in Mosul, could only watch as his people were destroyed.

Among those killed was Malik Ismail, a prominent Assyrian fighter. Severely wounded, he declared defiantly that he had killed twenty Kurds before his capture. Bedir Khan had him beheaded and his body dumped in the river. His wife and companions were taken prisoner.

In 1846, Bedir Khan launched a second campaign, turning even on Assyrian allies who had cooperated with him three years earlier. In Bohtan alone, 7,000 more were massacred. These campaigns were so brutal, and so widely reported by Western missionaries and diplomats, that European powers—particularly Britain—intervened diplomatically, demanding that the Ottoman Empire put a stop to the violence.

In 1847, under growing pressure, the Ottomans launched a military campaign. Bedir Khan, betrayed by one of his own commanders, was besieged at the fortress of Evreh and eventually surrendered. He was exiled first to Crete and then to Damascus, where he died in 1869.

For the Assyrians, the consequences were long-lasting. The Patriarchate survived, but its authority was shaken, and its people scattered. The independent tribal system that had defined Assyrian life in the highlands for centuries was dismantled. The region was soon brought under tighter Ottoman control, and the ancient Assyrian presence in Hakkari would never fully recover.

Today, the trauma of those events still echoes. Phrases such as *gu dora d'Bedir Khan Beg* and *jwanke d'Bohtan* are not just colorful idioms from a distant past. They are living remnants of a collective memory. They remind

Opposite: Badr Khan Bed in traditional Kurdish attire and the abandoned village of Hakkari

us of a time when Assyrians stood their ground on mountaintops, when their priests, families, and leaders were hunted and slaughtered.

Remembering the genocide led by Bedir Khan Beg is not only a duty to our ancestors but a necessary act of truth-telling in a region where history is often erased or rewritten. These events were not isolated incidents. They were part of a larger, ongoing pattern of violence against Assyrians, one that would later culminate in the

Assyrian Genocide of 1915, the slaughter of Simele in 1933, and the continued struggles of our people across the Middle East today.

The legacy of those dark years is still with us, yet so too is the resilience of a people who have endured, rebuilt, and continue to speak the language of their forefathers—those same forefathers who spoke in admiration of *jwanke d'Bohtan*, the young warriors who fought fiercely until the very end.



by the artist
Moushe Malke



HOT OFF THE PRESS

Assyrian scholars honored with prestigious French literary award

Nineveh Magazine is pleased to inform our readers that on June 5, 2025, the Grand Prix 2025 (Essais et Documents) was awarded by La Selyre (*Société des écrivains lyonnais et Rhône-Alpins*) to the book:

Deux chrétiens d'Orient en Gaule: Jacques d'Assyrie et Abraham d'Euphrate ("Two Eastern Christians in Gaul: Jacques of Assyria and Abraham of the Euphrates")

This remarkable work was authored by Joseph and Claire Yacoub, both respected historians and long-time advocates for Eastern Christian and Assyrian heritage.

Professor Joseph Yacoub, a prominent Assyrian-French scholar, is internationally recognized for his extensive writings on the history, persecution, and diaspora of the Assyrian people, as well as religious minorities in the Middle East.

This award is a significant recognition of their continued efforts to bring the stories of Eastern Christianity and Assyrian legacy into the academic and literary spotlight of Europe.

**Congratulations to Joseph and Claire Yacoub
on this well-deserved honor!**





Bringing Assyrian Genocide Education to California Schools

A Talk given by Erin Hughes, PhD

June 22, 2025, for the Assyrian Foundation of America in San Francisco

It's my absolute pleasure to speak with you today about my experiences with Assyrian history education and pathways to potentially bringing Assyrian history education to California schools.

My interest in this undertaking is driven in large part by my work as an educator at California State University Stanislaus, where I currently teach in the Political Science and History departments and manage the Sarguis Modern Assyrian Heritage project we are so fortunate to host on our campus. This project, founded by Francis Sarguis, created a dedicated library collection on Assyrian content and supports a course on modern Assyrian history, as well as public engagement and academic opportunities for students.

This project aims to make Assyrian history accessible to students and scholars in California's Central Valley. Assyrians are a central part of Turlock, California's history and it is important students see their history

reflected in the classroom, and for non-Assyrian students to better understand the history of their friends, classmates, and community members. Many of our history students want to be teachers; the hope is learning Assyrian history encourages them to share it in their own future classrooms.

Some of the most memorable student feedback I've received has mentioned the impact of realizing studying Assyrian history could be a career and has reinforced why this work matters – as is said, it's hard to be what we can't see. This also has shaped my thinking about the importance of helping make educational content accessible.

Arizona Curriculum

Currently, 29 states in the U.S. have some sort of genocide education requirement in place (although several are specific to the Holocaust). Arizona is one

such state and has a centralized approach in which a task force, with additional review from high school and community college teachers, evaluates and approves curricula.

Several years ago, Dr. Ramina Jajoo-Frindrich, President of the Seyfo Center's Arizona Chapter, asked Professor Hannibal Travis, a leading scholar on the Assyrian genocide, and me about developing a high-school level curriculum on the genocide for Arizona schools. It has been a great honor to work with Dr. Jajoo-Frindrich and Professor Travis on this project, which was further made possible with the support of the Assyrian Cultural Foundation.

The curriculum needed to meet state educational requirements and learning standards, including that it be specific to the WWI genocide, be age-appropriate, and offer flexibility to instructors. My thinking was, what can we create for teachers who only have an hour of classroom time but want to incorporate something, and what can we create for teachers who have more space to dedicate to this history? The curriculum subsequently offers several lesson plan options emphasizing different resources and skills, allowing teachers to use one or several lessons depending on classroom needs and learning goals.

One option, 'teaching with testimony', centers written and oral histories from survivors and their descendants, allowing students to reflect on personal experiences of the genocide and how trauma is carried for generations. Another, 'teaching with archives', draws upon newspaper accounts from the time of the genocide and asks students to examine what was known at the time, how it was known, and how the atrocities were

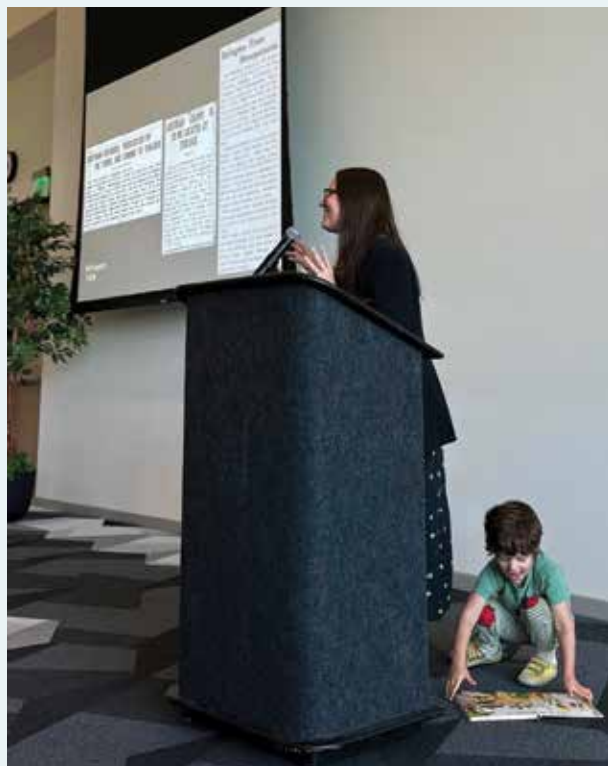
described considering the word *genocide* would not exist until the Holocaust. I am currently working to add local newspaper content here so that students can also see if the genocide was written about in their local communities. Part of the intent here, in addition to building media literacy skills, is to combat denialism by showing these atrocities were part of the historical record even before the world had a word to fully describe them. This leads to the third component, wherein students examine the United Nations Genocide Convention and resolutions, such as from the State of Arizona, officially recognizing the genocide, and unpack why the Assyrian genocide is unquestionably a genocide and why recognition matters.

We created a [website](#) to make the curriculum publicly available, and, through Dr. Jajoo-Frindrich's incredible advocacy, the curriculum was approved by the Arizona Task Force in 2024 and can be found on the Arizona Department of Education's website as a teaching resource for genocide education.

California Pathways

California, home to tens of thousands of Assyrians, provides at least two pathways for encouraging Assyrian-related education in the classroom. The first is likewise the state's genocide education requirement, which has been in place since 1985 and requires education on genocide and the Holocaust (Education Code Section 51220). California's approach to curriculum content has historically been more decentralized, and what emerged was a piecemeal result in which some teachers and districts do an excellent job with genocide education, whilst others offered little instruction.





A 2024 report found an estimated 74% of California schools did not have clear Holocaust or genocide education systems in place. Lack of training and lack of time to develop curriculum were cited as the largest impediments to offering genocide education. However, the study also found that students who did have genocide education were not just more informed, but also more empathetic and socially engaged, demonstrating how valuable genocide education is and its impacts beyond the classroom.

This contributed to the passage in 2024 of a law giving a group called the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education an expanded role in hosting teaching workshops, offering curriculum guidance, and supporting initiatives to help teachers incorporate genocide education. The Collaborative hosts a website with lesson plans for teachers: our goal is for an Assyrian curriculum to be one of them.

Reading through state education requirements and reviewing curriculums currently offered have encouraged us to expand our curriculum for the California requirements to also include atrocities such as Simele and ISIS, offering a fuller, more complete understanding of genocidal violence in modernity. These lessons could then meet multiple state education requirements, including WWI requirements in Grade

10, as well as content regarding nation-building, democracy, and authoritarianism for Grade 12. A central goal is now to build out lessons regarding Assyrian experiences over the past century. A curation of oral histories and/or publication of memoirs or young adult novels could potentially also be used in English literature courses to meet state writing and literacy requirements.

Another avenue to offering Assyrian history education may also be the state's high school ethnic studies requirement, although its status is at present a bit uncertain. A 2021 law, AB 101, requires a semester of ethnic studies as a graduation requirement for students graduating in 2029, meaning the requirement was to take effect in the fall of 2025 for incoming freshmen. There is still discussion regarding what content will look like in practice and available training and resources for teachers: originally reflecting the experiences of the four communities traditionally associated with ethnic studies in universities – Black, Latino, Asian, and Native Americans – the model curriculum developed by the California Board of Education was expanded to incorporate lessons on Armenian, Jewish, Arab, and Sikh communities, as well as language mentioning the option to also incorporate the ethnic heritage and experiences of a school's student body.

The model curriculum mentions Assyrians only once, noting Assyrians as a potential topic for study given the circumstances by which they came to the U.S: fleeing oppression, war, or genocide. Looking at recommended themes in the state's model – identity; history and movement; systems of power; and social movements and equity – it is easy to generate ideas on Assyrian content and envision how a lesson for Assyrian studies could be incorporated into an ethnic studies class. The Arab American studies model centers discussion of stereotypes and orientalism; the Armenian American model draws upon the importance of oral histories; an Assyrian American model could potentially incorporate both topics or introduce new frameworks such as the challenges of statelessness. This is something that makes sense to discuss with districts that are home to larger Assyrian populations, and is already under consideration by school districts like Turlock. Our goal here is to be a resource and help in any way that can support incorporating Assyrian history, from creating classroom materials to offering teacher workshops and curriculum support.

Going Forward

A primary need in all these efforts is for more age-appropriate classroom resources. We especially welcome additional testimonies, oral histories, family stories, photographs to help tell this history (please do reach out if you might be interested in sharing

your family's story!). Another prospective resource that came highly recommended when developing the Arizona curriculum is young adult novels, age-appropriate memoirs, or diaries that could be used in English literature classes. If we know of anyone who wants to share their family story and is not sure how to approach it, perhaps a young adult novel could be an avenue.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about these efforts to expand Assyrian education, about the work I've done with incredible partners like Dr. Ramina Jajoo-Frindrich and Professor Hannibal Travis, and potential pathways to bringing Assyrian history to California schools so that we can continue to expand awareness and understanding of who Assyrians are and the important part they have played in the State of California.

Erin Hughes, PhD
Assistant Professor, Departments of History and Political Science

Project Director, Sarguis Modern Assyrian Heritage Project
California State University Stanislaus

Do you have a story, photograph, or other material to share for possible inclusion in the California Assyrian Genocide curriculum? Are you an Assyrian teacher who would like to be involved? Please contact the Seyfo Center at info@seyfocenter.com or Erin at ehughes1@csustan.edu.





State Board of Education Approves Assyrian Genocide Curriculum for Statewide Implementation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Illinois State Board of Education Approves Assyrian Genocide Curriculum for Statewide Implementation

SEYFO CENTER
Assyrian Genocide Research Center

Chicago, Illinois — June 24, 2025 — The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has officially approved the inclusion of the Assyrian Genocide after meeting the State’s Social Science Standards, marking a significant step towards broader historical education in Illinois schools. The curriculum, developed by Seyfo Center, AZ Chapter, and first approved by the Arizona Department of Education on August 10, 2024, can now be utilized as a resource by high school educators across Illinois. Per Kirsten Parr, Director of Standards and Instructions at ISBE, resources addressing the Assyrian Genocide have been incorporated on pages 9–11 of the document, on the recently updated Holocaust and Genocide Education Resource Guide below:

www.isbe.net/Pages/ContinueEDResources.aspx

The decision comes after a robust advocacy campaign led by the Seyfo Center, Arizona

Chapter, supported by educators and historians who have long sought to ensure that this often-overlooked atrocity is recognized and taught alongside the Holocaust and other genocides. The effort to gain approval for this curriculum in Illinois began concurrently with its development. In August 2023, Ms. Naema Abraham was first contacted. She promptly connected the Arizona Chapter with Ms. Ramina Samuel. At the same time, Ms. Atour Sargon was independently working to include the Assyrian Genocide alongside other minority genocide curricula. It was soon decided that joining forces would strengthen the effort. Each individual continued advocating for the inclusion of the curriculum in the ISBE approval process, now as part of a coordinated, collaborative push. Below are short biographies for each of our three key contacts in Illinois.



Naema Abraham

Naema Abraham is a former President and Vice President of the Niles Township High School District 219 Board of Education in Illinois, where she served two elected terms. A longtime community advocate, she helped lead the collaborative effort—alongside educators, administrators, and state officials—that resulted in the approval of the first state-accredited Assyrian Language and Heritage course in the nation. The course was adopted by the District 219 Board during her presidency, reflecting her commitment to inclusive education and cultural representation



Ramina Samuel

Ramina Samuel is a nationally certified counselor and a committed advocate for the Assyrian community. She immigrated from Iraq to the U.S. as a young teenager. A former student of Assyrian schools in Nuhadra, she is passionate about preserving the Assyrian language and culture. Ramina co-sponsors her school’s Assyrian Club and her district’s Assyrian parent group, Suraye. She is one of the co-founders of BET KANU Inc., a nonprofit organization focused on reviving the Assyrian language, where she serves as the Vice President and leads the language committee. Ramina and her Assyrian colleagues have also led efforts in the Niles Township schools for Assyrian Genocide recognition and helped establish the first accredited Assyrian language program in the U.S.



Atour Sargon

Atour Sargon, a first-generation Assyrian-American raised in Lincolnwood and Chicago, made history in 2019 as the first Assyrian-American woman elected to municipal office in Illinois and was re-elected Trustee of the Village of Lincolnwood in 2023. She holds degrees in Political Science and Public Policy from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and Northwestern University and was selected as a 2019 delegate for the Illinois Women’s Institute for Leadership. Atour served as District Director for Cook County’s 13th District and has been a leading advocate for Assyrian representation, playing a key role in advancing initiatives such as the formation of the Illinois Assyrian Caucus and the addition of accredited Assyrian language courses to the Illinois State Board of Education Course Catalog.

<https://www.atoursargon.com/>

The Assyrian Genocide, known as Seyfo, which occurred during and after World War I, led to the mass displacement and deaths of hundreds of thousands of Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire. Subsequent genocidal acts have since followed, such as the Semele Massacre of 1933 in Iraq and the ISIS invasion in 2014 in Iraq and Syria, resulting in the depletion of the Middle East of its indigenous people. The curriculum will provide students with a comprehensive understanding of

the historical context, causes, and consequences of the genocide, as well as its lasting impact on the Assyrian community worldwide.

The curriculum, authored by [Dr. Erin Hughes](#) and [Professor Hannibal Travis](#), includes various educational materials, including primary source documents, survivor testimonies, and multimedia resources, all designed to engage students and foster critical thinking. The writing process took nearly two years to complete, and the [curriculum](#) is available to educators and the general public alike. Teachers can opt to receive specialized training, offered by Seyfo Center, Arizona Chapter, to deliver the curriculum and facilitate discussions on sensitive topics effectively and to meet their Professional Development Requirements.

“I welcome Illinois’s historic decision to adopt the Assyrian Genocide curriculum in high schools. May this serve as a model for European nations to follow. A forgotten genocide is one doomed to be repeated,” said Sabro Bengaro, Founder and Director of Seyfo Center. The approval of the Assyrian Genocide curriculum aligns with Illinois’s broader commitment to inclusive education. The state, which is home to the largest and ever-growing Assyrian community in the US, has made significant strides in incorporating diverse perspectives into its academic standards.

STANDARDS AND INSTRUCTION INSTRUCTION

The Illinois State Board of Education curated the following free resources to assist districts, teachers, and parents. The intent is to provide free or temporarily free learning resources for teachers and parents to support student learning. These resources do not represent an endorsement or recommendation of curriculum or eLearning systems.

Holocaust and Genocide Resource Guide

All Illinois public schools have been required to continue instruction on the Holocaust and other genocides as part of the social studies curriculum starting with the start of the 2024-25 school year. The Holocaust and Genocide Resources guide supports educators in fulfilling this legislative mandate through historically accurate, age-appropriate, and trauma-informed materials for grades K-12.

This guide reflects Illinois’ longstanding leadership in genocide education, grounded in the values of human dignity, justice, and civic responsibility. It provides vetted resources that center survivor testimony, explore the historical processes that lead to genocide, and promote ethical reflection. Instruction is designed to help students understand the origins and impact of genocide, highlight acts of resistance, and examine our shared responsibility to confront hatred and prevent future atrocities.

This unit of instruction may be integrated with the requirements set forth in Sections 27-20.3 and 27-21 of the School Code.

The Illinois State Board of Education collaborated with museums, scholars, survivors, and community organizations – including the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center and the Simon Wiesenthal Center – to curate this resource guide. Materials are aligned with the Illinois Social Science Standards and have been reviewed for cultural responsiveness, academic integrity, and pedagogical soundness.

- [Holocaust and Genocide Resource Guide](#)

About Seyfo Center

[Seyfo Center](#), also known as the Assyrian Genocide Research Center, is dedicated to researching and raising awareness about the genocide of the Assyrian people. It also advocates for international recognition of the Genocide and works to ensure that the memory of the victims is preserved for future generations

For more information on how you can implement this curriculum in your respective states and countries, contact Seyfo Center, AZ Chapter at resolution@seyfocenteraz.com

Ramina Jajoo-Frindrich, MD, FACR, FACP

President, Seyfo Center, AZ Chapter



Remembering the Diaspora: How my Honor Thesis Explores the Memories of the Assyrian Genocide and Diaspora

Adina Kolia

As an honors student at the University of Arizona, I was tasked with the distinction to write a thesis paper. I strongly felt the need to use this opportunity to serve my Assyrian community, as I believe my life's purpose is to share Assyrians' stories. With the resources I am given and as a fourth-generation genocide survivor, it is my duty to extend their voices.

After numerous discussions with two of my professors, I discovered that the perfect topic for my thesis was memory. As a matter of fact, one of my professors suggested I use the social science research method called "memory-work" in studying the memories of Assyrians. The importance of this topic lies in the fact that the Assyrian population is shrinking more and more every day. Although an almost voiceless community, the fabrication of memory media allows the silence of Assyrians to be uplifted. By investigating the different forms used to conserve memories produced by the Assyrians in the diaspora, horrors are unveiled. Their personal and familial memories shape the way

Assyrians recount and retell their stories. Subsequently, the ways in which Assyrians preserve their memories relay the ways in which they hold onto their identity.

Memories are what individuals remember about certain moments and events in their lives; in a sense, memories are our internal memoirs. I thought memories of genocide and the diaspora were especially critical in understanding our Assyrian community. As I found, most of our memories and traumas root from the impact of the genocide. I figured not only would it be exhilarating to understand why Assyrians remember the things they do, but it would also be healing and powerful to discern the long-lasting devastating experiences they had to endure. The stories of the Assyrian peoples deserve to live onward. It is through their history—and the sharing of their history—that we can produce change for good.

Memories shape collective identities. A memory can loosely be understood as a storage in one's mind that

houses past events and experiences. While there are some memories that are unconscionable—in that, people are unable to associate a word to the feeling they endured during that particular moment—for the most part, memories are cognitive stories. Human beings store their memories in a myriad of ways. One such important perception of memory is trauma. Specifically, generational trauma plays an immense role within the Assyrian community. The Assyrian people remember certain occurrences because of collective memories within the group; each is their own person, but as a group, they are members of the Assyrian ethnicity and identity.

I observed how generational trauma was transmitted throughout the Assyrian community in my thesis. I used the calamitous impact of the Seyfo Genocide and the 2014 ISIS Takeover to show the end-result of the two was the diaspora we currently live in. In short, from 1914 to 1918, Assyrians—as well as Armenians and Greeks—were targeted by the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans both brutally removed the minorities from their homeland, and if they refused to leave, horrifically slaughtered them. The Ottoman authorities wanted to get rid of the Assyrians to better promote Turkish nationalism. And unfortunately, to this day, the Turkish government refuses to acknowledge the Seyfo Genocide.

Similarly, a hundred years after the beginning of the Seyfo, the ISIS Takeover of 2014 left Assyrians even more displaced. ISIS targeted Assyrians because of their Christian faith. They would give them ultimatums: pay unreasonably-high taxes, convert to Islam, or be killed. The fear instilled within the Assyrian community—as well as minority groups like the Chaldeans and Yazidis—caused them to flee from their homes. They were coerced into leaving behind everything that was comfortable and familiar, as ISIS would burn down churches and restrict freedom of expression.

As a result of genocide, Assyrians live in a diaspora. Presently, the Assyrian people often feel apart from their culture and identity. Where a diaspora is the removal and relocation of individuals from their homeland, the majority of Assyrians live apart from their ancestral state. In fact, their memories are bolstered by existing in the diaspora. As of today, there are about two million Assyrians displaced throughout the world, including in countries such as Australia and the United

States.

To delve deeper into memories, I fixated on researching three different media Assyrians use to store and process their experiences. The first medium was documentaries. Documentaries serve as a forum of visual facts. In the context of the Assyrian community, documentaries structure and dispense memories of the Seyfo Genocide and the 2014 ISIS Takeover. I examined how the techniques used by documentary directors contribute to collective identity. The three documentaries I analyzed were *Assyrian Genocide - The Untold Holocaust*, *The Last Plight*, and *Assyrian Genocide: A Fate Worse Than Death*.

In researching these documentaries, the narration and stylistic techniques were deliberately designed to document history and its effects. For instance, in *Assyrian Genocide - The Untold Holocaust*, the use of sound was utilized. The traditional Assyrian instrument, *zurna*, was played in the background when the narrator highlighted the victories of the Assyrian people against their oppressors. However, eerie music and echoes were played when the Ottoman authorities were noted to slaughter the innocent Assyrian villagers. The technique of sound in documentaries reveals truth and emotional responses, allowing the audience to learn more about a moment of horror. For Assyrians, the documentaries allow the memory of genocide to be revealed.

The second medium was storytelling. Within storytelling, the memory-work method was implemented to analyze oral history. Oral history acts as a preservation of memory. Sociologist Frigga Haug developed the memory-work research method to understand how personal experiences influence a person's identity. In doing so, the individual learns more about themselves and their history. There are two parts to this method: narration and analysis. The narration aspect allows the participant to answer the researcher's question without interruption. The analysis segment allows the researcher to use elements in understanding the participant's words; there are eleven specific elements used to dissect the narratives. What is critical for this method is its flexibility, in which the researcher can alter the traditional procedures according to their project. In short, the procedures I implemented for memory-work are as follows: the open-ended prompts were asked, the narratives were spoken (and written),

the transcripts were typed, and the words were analyzed.

When I began this portion, I sat down with three anonymous Assyrian women to hear their stories. While the three women were not survivors of the Seyfo Genocide, they indirectly disclosed how the genocide's aftermath still affected them—that is, they told me their story and I examined their words. Thus, I asked an open-ended prompt to highlight the diaspora: "Tell me your experience growing up in (fill in the specific country) as an Assyrian." And to shield their identity, I gave these women pseudonyms. The woman from Iran became Sharokina. The woman from Germany became Nineveh. And the woman from America became Ishtar.

At the end of analyzing the women's narratives, I learned incredible truths. Interestingly, while the women's stories focused on their existence in the diaspora, they were evidently impacted by genocide. For example, Sharokina's grandmother, who survived the Seyfo Genocide, constantly advised her to refrain from sharing too much information and trusting strangers. In Iran, Sharokina could not be Assyrian or Christian. The Iranian government would instill fear that if she, for instance, did not wear a headscarf, she would be imprisoned. She even feared speaking her native tongue.

Contrastingly, Nineveh had a more pleasant experience as an Assyrian in Germany. Her identity was built upon the families she lived with as an immigrant. She was able to create a community and, in turn, be her full self. She and her mother were able to cook traditional Assyrian meals, and they spoke their mother tongue openly, with no fear.

In the middle of Sharokina's loss of identity and Nineveh's gain, Ishtar portrayed a balance. As a child in 2014, the ISIS Takeover affected her greatly. In school, she apprehended her classmates calling her a terrorist if they were to find out about her Assyrian background. However, as an adult presently, Ishtar is thrilled to share her culture with her American peers.

Overall, the three women's testimonies were telling of their lives in the diaspora. The elements of the memory-work research magnified and amplified their truths. Memory-work offers a reader more information about what the women say and make sense of their

personal, yet collective identity. In discussing a memory in diasporic living, the women were able to come to terms with their experiences. Memory-work helped these women's memories be accessible, leaving their words documented forever.

The third and final medium was exhibitions, particularly in the context of artwork on display. Exhibitions are platforms to showcase different pieces of art. In this portion, I looked at different types of art, such as digital exhibitions, paintings, pottery, and even plastic! Each artwork discussed in this thesis unfolded more information about the Assyrian culture, which then said more about the collective identity. The embodiment that is art allows for self-expression to be depicted. The Assyrian culture is introduced to the world by curated pieces that entail customs, colors, and symbols. For example, one piece of art is an incantation bowl. These bowls were first used by the Assyrians in the fifth century. Today, artist Esther Elia uses them to preserve Assyrian culture, furthering their collective identity.

All-in-all, my thesis unpacks my findings by exploring how these three different media have been used to conserve and convey memories of the Assyrian genocide and the ensuing diaspora. As a result, the haunting truth of survivors and victims' experiences are uncovered. For my purpose, the stories protected in my thesis act as proof of a culture of resistance found in collective memories.

As the aim of my thesis was to introduce the world to the untold truths of their experiences as brave, indigenous people, Assyrian memories provided an outlet in not only identifying their collective identities but also uncovering how oppressive power relations have shaped their identities. Past traumas are now known. Present resilience and inspiration are found. I only hope my thesis ensures that the existence of the Assyrian people will no longer be forgotten.

Biography

Born to Assyrian immigrants from Iran, Adina Kolia is a Law and Creative Writing student at the University of Arizona-Tucson. She is graduating in December 2025. Adina is immensely passionate about preserving the stories and heritage of her family. Her thesis is titled, *Remembering the Diaspora: How Assyrians Memorialize their Experiences with Oppressive Authorities to Construct their Collective Identities*.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE NINEVEH ACADEMIC CHAIR TO BE HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SALAMANCA ON 6TH, 7TH AND 8TH OCTOBER 2025.

The Fourth International Congress of the Nineveh Academic Chair of the University of Salamanca, to be held on October 6th, 7th, and 8th, 2025, will focus on Assyrian language, history, and continuity. Experts are invited to delve deeply into these three fundamental themes for the Assyrian people. Scholars from a wide range of disciplines are welcome to submit abstracts of their presentations that align with the central topic of this fourth edition that will take place at the University of Salamanca.

The congress will feature conferences, communications, and roundtable discussions designed to offer participants and speakers a comprehensive historical, linguistic, and cultural perspective on the Assyrian people, grounded in rigorous scientific research. Throughout the event, experts will contribute innovative and enlightening insights into Assyrian history, language, and the much-debated question of continuity—both within internal and external academic forums.

In addition, thanks to Assyrian Art Institute, the congress will include a musical performance aimed at reviving the Assyrian cultural legacy that spans several millennia.

EDUCATION IS OUR PRIORITY

The Nineveh Academic Chair / University of Salamanca



The congress is open to anyone interested in Assyrian history, language and culture. The participation of the new Assyrian generation is essential, as the whole effort of the members of the Nineveh Academic Chair and the participating scholars is to strengthen and revitalise the Assyrian language, deepen the history and promote the Assyrian culture on an international level.



Assyrian Genocide (Seyfo): A Forgotten Chapter of the 20th Century

The Assyrian Genocide, or Seyfo in Syriac ("the sword"), refers to the forced deportation and mass murder of Assyrian Christians between 1914 and 1920 by the Ottoman Empire and allied Kurdish tribes. Between 250,000 and 300,000 Assyrians were killed—nearly two-thirds of their entire number—in association with the Armenians and Greeks during what scholars more and more refer to as a Christian genocide of the Ottoman Empire.

Despite all its magnitude, the Assyrian Genocide has been quite neglected worldwide. However, within the last few decades, genocide scholars and historians have tried to document and verify the atrocity.

Historical and Political Context

Who Are the Assyrians?

Assyrians are an indigenous Christian ethnoreligious group of Mesopotamia, originating from the ancient Assyrians. By the early 20th century, they inhabited regions in southeastern Turkey (Hakkari, Tur Abdin), northwestern Iran (Urmia and Salamas), northern Iraq (Mosul and Nineveh Plains), and northeastern Syria.

Assyrians followed different Christian denominations:

- Assyrian Church of the East
- Chaldean Catholic Church
- Syriac Orthodox Church
- Syriac Catholic Church

They were discriminated against for centuries as non-Muslims by the Ottomans and paid special taxes, were limited, and faced periodic massacres, such as the Massacres of 1895–96 under Sultan Abdul Hamid II (Gaunt, 2006).

The Genocide Unfolds (1914–1920)

When World War I erupted, the Ottoman leadership under the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) pursued an agenda of homogenization of the non-

Muslim minorities as a menace to national security. The Assyrians, the Armenians, and the Greeks were accused of treason and of conspiring with external forces—most notably Russia and Britain.

Key Sites of Atrocities

- Hakkari (Turkey): Baz, Jilu, Tkhuma, and Gawar villages were destroyed. The people fled over the border into Persia when Ottomans began an extermination campaign in 1915 (Gaunt, 2006).
- Tur Abdin (Turkey): In Midyat, Azakh, and Ain Wardo, intensive fighting occurred as Assyrians fought in self-defense, though the majority were ultimately slain or deported (Atto, 2011).
- Urmia and Salamas (Iran): Ottoman and Kurdish forces invaded Assyrian towns following the Russian withdrawal in 1917. Over 100,000 fled towards Hamadan and Baquba; thousands died along the way (Travis, 2006).

Methods of Annihilation

- Mass murder and burning of villages
- Rape and sexual enslavement of women and girls
- Forced deportation and death marches
- Selective assassination of clergy and community leaders
- Confiscation of properties and destruction of churches, schools, and manuscripts

The campaign was state-planned and not spontaneous. Testimonies of survivors, consular officials, and missionaries attest the genocidal nature of incidents (Gaunt et al., 2017).

Major People and Events

- Mar Shimun XIX Benyamin, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, was assassinated in 1918 by Kurdish chieftain Simko Shikak after attempting to save his people through diplomacy and collaboration.

- Resistance forces and leaders were mobilized by military leader General Agha Petros and pushed out Ottoman troops in numerous battles in Iraq and Iran, but with limited success due to inadequate long-term external support (Donabed, 2015).

Death Toll and Destruction

- Estimated killed: 250,000 to 300,000 Assyrians (Gaunt, 2006; Travis, 2006)
- Cultural destruction: Dozens of historical monasteries and churches lost
- Displacement: Tens of thousands of people became refugees, primarily in Iraq, Iran, and Syria

Aftermath and Long-Term Impact

Subsequent to the genocide:

- Assyrians were resettled in British-occupied Iraq, although many of them still faced persecution, especially in the 1933 Simele Massacre, which is widely regarded as an expansion of Seyfo.
- Mass waves of migration followed, establishing Assyrian populations in the United States, Sweden, Germany, Australia, and Canada.

The League of Nations was able to preside over some resettlement but was powerless to render justice or recognition.

Recognition and Denial

Despite growing academic consensus, the Assyrian Genocide remains underappreciated.

Recognition:

- European Parliament (2007) and Swedish Parliament (2010) have recognized the Assyrian, Armenian, and Greek genocides.
- International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) attests that the Assyrian massacres constituted genocide (IAGS Statement, 2007).

Denial:

- The Turkish government continues to deny all genocides committed by the Ottoman Empire.
- Restricted international awareness, at least in part due to the fact that Assyrians possess no nation-state or influential geopolitical allies.

Modern Relevance

- Assyrians continue to be threatened today, most recently in the ISIS attacks in Iraq and Syria (2014–2017).
- Churches, historic sites, and towns like Qaraqosh and Tel Keppe were destroyed or depopulated.
- Seyfo's legacy continues to be central to Assyrian identity and activism.

Conclusion

The Assyrian Genocide is a hidden but crucial part of world history. Acknowledgment is necessary not only for historical justice, but also to end further patterns of violence against vulnerable minorities. Unless and until the Assyrian tragedy is brought out into the light, humanity is unable to come fully to terms with the genocidal horrors of the 20th century.

Key Sources and Scholarly Works

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In Loving Memory of Jacob Malek-Zadeh

May 25th, 1944 - June 6th, 2025



On June 6, 2025, at approximately 4:30 p.m., Jacob Malek-Zadeh tragically passed away in a car accident.

Jacob was born on May 25, 1944, in Salamas, Iran, to Paramaas Malek-Zadeh and Cecilia both of Patavoor, Salamas, in the West Azerbaijan province near Urmia. He was one of seven children. He was preceded in death by his siblings Sara, Helen, Mikhail, and Youkhana. He is survived by his brother Yousef and his sister Mary.

Jacob's mother, Cecilia, had made a vow to dedicate one of her sons to the Church. Around 1952, when Jacob was about eight years old, a priest from Tehran, Iran, visited Salmas with the intention of selecting one of Cecilia's sons for theological training. Initially, it was intended that Mikhail, Jacob's brother, would accompany the priest to pursue studies in theology. However, upon meeting Jacob, the priest chose

him instead and brought him to Tehran to begin his priesthood training. Jacob remained in Tehran for approximately three years. At the age of eleven, the Church arranged for Jacob to continue his theological education in Turkey, where he spent an additional three years in training. Following his studies in Turkey, Jacob was sent to Cologne, France, to further his theological studies. After spending about a year in France, he was transferred to Rome, Italy, at approximately fifteen years of age. In Rome, Jacob enrolled at the theology university, where he formally commenced his academic studies in theology and philosophy.

Though he excelled in his studies, Jacob ultimately realized that priesthood was not his calling. In the winter of 1963, at nineteen years old, he left Rome for San Francisco to join his brother Joseph. He enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley, but work responsibilities prevented him from completing



his studies. Instead, Jacob demonstrated incredible perseverance, working numerous jobs—including at a gas station in San Francisco and field work in San Jose, and briefly on a construction site in Alaska—before returning to San Francisco to pursue entrepreneurship.

In 1975, Jacob purchased Cole Street Liquor, which he renamed Val de Cole. In doing so, he played a key role in establishing the name "Cole Valley" for what was then known as Upper Haight. Val de Cole Wine Shop became a beloved community hub for both the Assyrian community and San Francisco residents.

Of all his accomplishments, Jacob's greatest joy was his family. He was a devoted husband, a loving father, and a proud grandfather. From earlier marriages, Jacob was blessed with two children, Lisa and Andrew. On August 30th, 1997, he married his beloved wife, Remouz Bakadi, and together they were blessed with two sons, Luke and Mark. Jacob was a doting grandfather to Dominic and Gianna, children of Andrew and his wife, Danielle.

Jacob's life was marked by faith, generosity, and love. He greeted everyone with a warm smile and an open heart, leaving an enduring impression on all who had the privilege of knowing him. His legacy of strength, devotion, and kindness lives on through his family and the many lives he touched.

Jacob is survived by his wife of 28 years, Remouz; his children Lisa, Andrew and daughter-in-law, Danielle, Luke, and Mark; his grandchildren Dominic and Gianna; his brother Yousef; his sister Mary; and many nieces, nephews, extended family members, and dear friends.

Jacob was a shining example of the American Dream—arriving in this country with almost nothing, and through determination and hard work he built a rich and meaningful life. May God grant him eternal rest. May his memory forever be a blessing.

Jacob was a long time member of the Assyrian Foundation of America, as well as a generous donor.

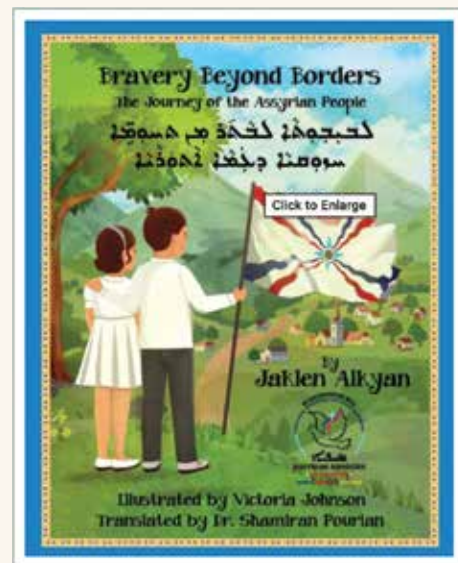


Books in Review

Bravery Beyond Borders: The Journey of the Assyrian People (Assyrian Edition)

by Jaklen Alkyan

This edition is presented in the Assyrian language, inviting readers to join Ashur and Ninwe on a heartfelt journey through Bravery Beyond Borders: The Journey of the Assyrian People. This inspirational tale, written especially for children, follows the resilience of the Assyrian community, blending history, courage, and strong family bonds. As Ashur and Ninwe's family celebrate Akitu, the Assyrian New Year, the story beautifully captures the essence of hope and the enduring legacy of their ancestors. This is a tale to be cherished and passed down through generations, impressing upon young hearts that even in the darkest times, love and family prevail.



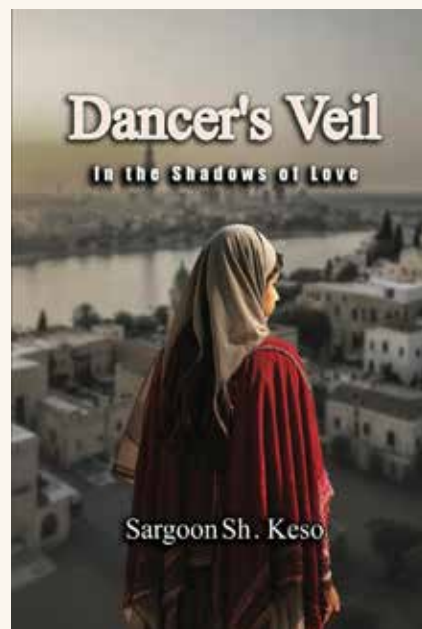
Dancer's Veil In the Shadows of Love

by Sargon Keso

In a war-torn land marked by religious conflict and oppression, Nahla, a Muslim woman trapped in the horrors of human trafficking, and Ashur, an Assyrian Christian dedicated to his faith, find their lives intertwined in a fight for survival and justice. Amidst the brutality of militias, religious intolerance, and corruption, an unexpected bond forms between them—one that transcends cultural and religious divides.

As they navigate a world filled with violence and loss, Nahla and Ashur become allies in the pursuit of freedom, creating a refuge for the oppressed. But their journey is fraught with peril, as they uncover deep-rooted corruption within their faiths and question everything they once believed. Struggling to protect the voiceless, they discover the transformative power of love—a force strong enough to defy the darkness surrounding them.

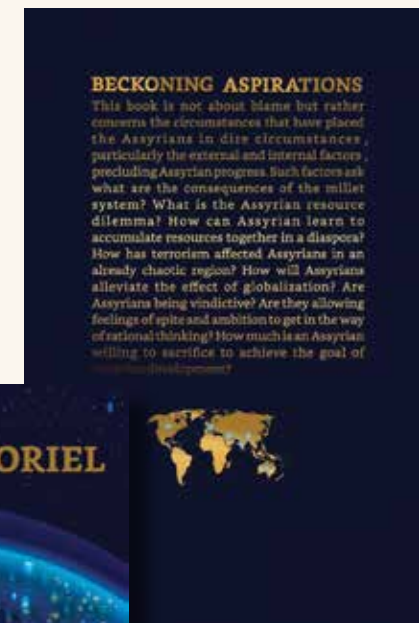
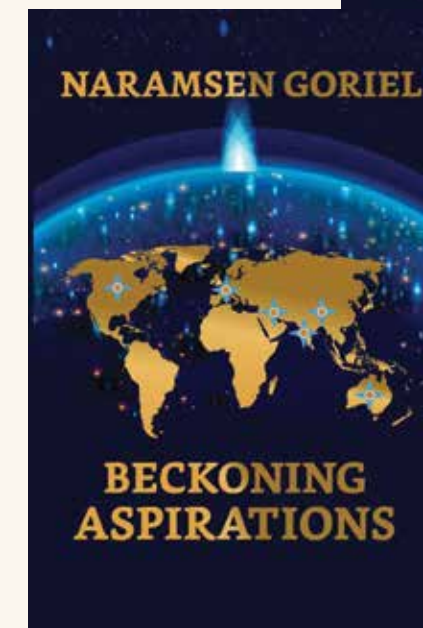
Dancer's Veil is a profound and emotional journey of courage, sacrifice, and the unyielding spirit of resistance. Through pain and loss, Nahla and Ashur fight not only for survival but for a higher purpose—a love that redefines faith and challenges the world's deepest injustices.



Beckoning Aspirations: Solving the Assyrian Resource Dilemma

by Naramsen Goriel

In June of 2014, after a startling military offensive by the Islamic State, ISIL gained control of Mosul, an Iraqi city within the Nineveh Province. From 2014 to 2018, ISIL has destroyed Assyrian archaeological sites in Mosul; around the same time, Iraq's federal government and Islamic State forces have fought for control of Tikrit and Anbar Province. Coalition and Iraq government forces battled for eight months and immobilized ISIL near the Tigris river, claiming victory for the city of Mosul, but displacing many Assyrians while accumulating billions of dollars in infrastructure damage. Ensuring further uncertainty for Assyrians was an illegal Kurdish backed independence referendum staged by Kurdish Regional Government which forced the Iraqi federal government to intervene with an offensive driving back Kurdish annexation. Despite preventing the referendum, discrimination against Assyrian people continues. With Assyrians placed in different circumstances in different countries as a result of being caught within a spiral of war, oppression, and genocide, Assyrians around the world yearn for an independent Assyrian state. Assyrian political organizations have helped draw attention to the Assyrian cause, and educated, diligent, and patient groups of Assyrians must arise, capable of assisting their fellow Assyrians around the world. In order for Assyrians to succeed, those educated, wealthy, and sophisticated Assyrians who live in a post-industrial world must unite without boundaries, narcissism, tribal conflicts, religious division, and nationality toward individual millets. If these reasonable terms can be fulfilled, then Assyrians will be successful in embracing unity under any circumstance even if simultaneously being persecuted.



Books in Review

The Infidels

by Joe David

The book is filled with impressive scholarship and memorable characters.

– Anahit Khosroeva,
PhD, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia

A consistently compelling novel by an author who has taken serious effort to get background details correct ...a simply riveting read from cover to cover.

– The Midwest Book Review

Reading The Infidels is like entering a time machine and watching a rerun of today's Middle Eastern news.

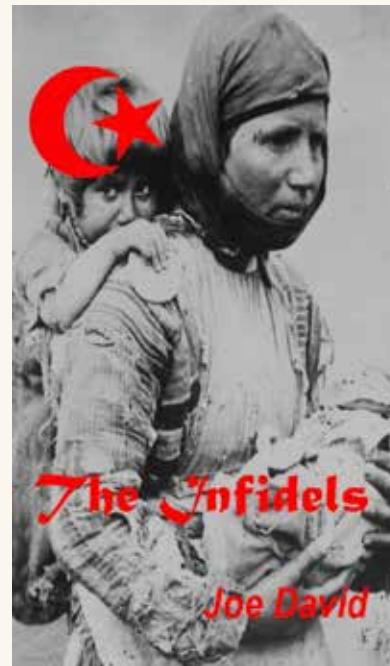
– Rochel Sylvetsky, Editor Israel National News

Clashing Faiths

Washington, DC – What is happening today in the Middle East is old news. The clash that is occurring between Christians and Muslims is a continuation of a long war against Christians that began in the Seventh Century with only brief and periodic truces.

When I wrote my novel, *The Infidels*, I was thinking about my mother's story. Born in Persia (popularly known as Iran), her struggle to survive the 1915 genocide against Middle East Christians was not unlike what millions of other Christians are currently facing around the world. During my mother's lifetime, the enemy was identified as the fanatical Muslim Turks and Kurds. Today they have different names, but whatever they call themselves, they are all in alliance with their spiritual leader since 1989, the Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei.

The Infidels, originally published in 2014 in the UK, introduces readers to a clash of faiths which Muslim Turks and Kurds released with fanatical fervor toward the Christians in 1915. While Europe burst into flames during the Great War, my mother and other Christians in Persia and Turkey were thrust into the center of primitive war, not unlike those that began in the Seventh Century, led by crazed Muslims. Their primitive and brutal murder then was identical to what occurred in the past and what is occurring today – without the modern threat of ballistic missiles and nuclear warheads.



My mother's story (in my fictionalization of it) began on a slice of ancient land in the Fertile Crescent (historically identified as the Cradle of Civilization) which was owned by her wealthy Assyrian family. It was there, that this young Christian girl was forced to face the brutal massacre of her race in a war that she was too young to understand. Stripped of her privileged and comfortable existence, pursued by a Muslim governor – a symbol of the rising new world order – she managed to escape her homeland, only to be wounded in the Baghdad desert where she was left to die.

What unfolds in this paced and historically honest story is a nightmare – a savage close-up of the activities and mindset of barbaric jihadists. The exact number of Christians butchered during World War I slaughter, popularized as the Armenian massacre, is unknown. Officially it is believed to be about 1.5 million; unofficially the numbers are much, much higher.

This poignant story penetrates the heart of the religious clash, as exactly as it had in the Seventh Century, but this time with profound ramifications. In telling my mother's story, I provide readers with enough carefully researched facts for them to understand the root cause of this seemingly never-ending conflict. By reviving the 1915 massacre, I am also reviving its Seventh Century roots – and clarifying its future growth.

In America, the religious clash has been punctuated by the 1988 Pan American Airline bombing over Lockerbie and by the 2001 World Trade Center attack, as well as by the rioting in our "Great" universities against Jews and Christians.

When *The Infidels* was published in 2014, my London publisher, for reasons then unclear to me, sabotaged the book. He killed my book launch at the National Press Club (Washington, DC) by not supplying me with books in time, and by refusing to grant an Armenian publisher the translation rights for the book for promotional purposes during its 2015 commemoration of the 1915 genocide against the Armenians.

Unhappy with this rogue publisher's behavior, sensing a strong anti-Christian motive, I brought a breach of contract against him and forced him to relinquish all rights to the book. Unfortunately, I didn't obtain my rights in time for the Armenian publisher to translate and publish *The Infidels* in 2015 or for my planned National Press Club kick-off event. As a result, the book never got the national and international lift-off that I wanted for it.

My article, "Silencing the Past" did give the book some attention. It was written as a short and long article (Silencing the Past - New English Review) and it was published in different publications around the world, and it will be published again The Lutheran Digest. While in Los Angeles in 2014, I taped a video that still lingers on the internet. (Joe David - The Infidels - YouTube) I found the interview of special worth because the hostess successfully drew me out and encouraged me to release my personal and emotional memories of the family.

Since I hold all rights to the book, I am in position to grant publication rights to any publisher of my choice who recognizes the book's immediate value and who has the willingness to present it to a large market. It is a timely book, which may even become a classic, because it brings clarity to what is happening and what has happened in the Middle East. It is, as one reviewer pointed out, an honest summation of the world's longest-standing genocide.

For your evaluation, you may read the first chapter to my book *The Infidels* as originally published on my web site www.bfat.com.

Exclusive to the media: a review copy of *The Infidels* is available; for interested publishers: a pdf or Word copy is available. Before printing the book's new edition, the book will be reread and edited by me without changing content, only adding a few extra words to it.

AUTHOR: Joe David has written six books, numerous articles, and has spent most of his life dedicated to his profession. It is his intention that each book will be edited by him once again before its final release and his final edition of it. For more information about Joe David and his writings, visit www.bfat.com

Books in Review

Jesus Last 7 Days

A Theological and Historical Middle Eastern look at THE HOLY WEEK

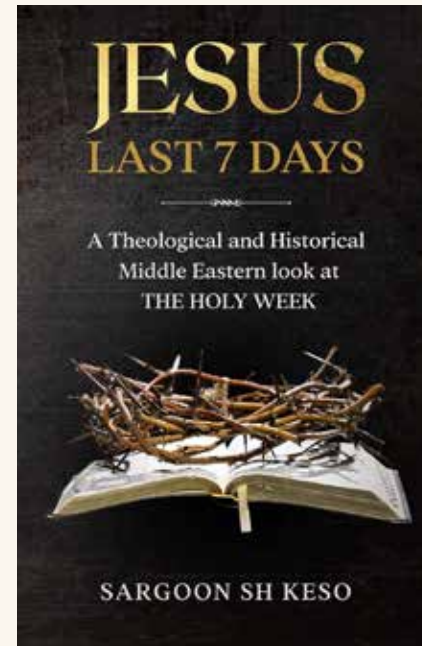
by Sargoon SH Keso

Experience the last seven days of Jesus' life through a fresh and unique perspective with "A Theological and Historical Middle Eastern Look at Jesus' Last 7 Days." This enlightening book delves deep into the history and theology behind these momentous events, offering readers a new lens through which to view this iconic moment in human history.

With meticulous research and expert analysis, this book explores the social, political, and religious landscape of the Middle East during Jesus' time, shedding new light on the events that led up to his crucifixion. Through its theological lens, readers will gain a deeper understanding of the significance of Jesus' final days and the impact that his life and death had on the people of his time.

This book is a must-read for anyone interested in religious history or seeking a deeper understanding of Jesus' life and teachings. With its unique perspective, engaging narrative, and thought-provoking insights, "A Theological and Historical Middle Eastern Look at Jesus' Last 7 Days" is sure to leave a lasting impression on all who read it.

Don't miss out on this insightful and compelling book. Order your copy today and discover the fascinating history and theology behind Jesus' last seven days.



Triumph and Betrayal

Assyria's Path to Empire, 935-745 BC

by Jaklen Alkyan

The author makes the astonishing claim that three previously-unknown kings from the Neo-Assyrian period have been identified—two by Edmonds and one by Eckart Frahm. (I say “previously unknown,” but that is to say unknown to scholarship of the past few centuries—obviously Assyrians from the 8th–10th centuries BC would have known about them.) Edmonds states that the presence of these “new” kings “serves to explain previously enigmatic periods within Assyrian history.” It will be interesting to see what kind of response Edmonds’ work receives. Time will tell.



Anunnaki Echoes from Assur

by Sargoon SH KESO

"Anunnaki Echoes from Assur" is a captivating collection of tales set in ancient Assyria, where the gods' influence weaved through the lives of mortals, shaping destinies, and revealing profound truths. From the celestial union of Anu and Ki to the brave heroics of Ninurta, the stories traverse realms of love, sacrifice, wisdom, and courage. Heroes like Ereshkigal, Tiamat, Atria her daughter Semiramis and Adar illuminate the human experience, while legends of King Sargon, Queen Zabibe, and the enigmatic Adapa bridge the gap between mortals and gods. Throughout, the Assyrian pantheon - Ashur, Ishtar, and others - guide and challenge, offering lessons of power, humility, and redemption.

Each story resonates with timeless themes, celebrating the interconnectedness of life, the pursuit of knowledge, and the enduring power of hope and love, echoing through the ages.

Embark on a journey through time and myth with 'Anunnaki Echoes from Assur,' a mesmerizing anthology that unveils the intricate tapestry of ancient Assyrian tales. From the majestic heavens to the fertile earth, the intertwined lives of Anu and Ki reverberate through the ages, reminding us of the delicate balance between cosmic forces. The triad of Anu, Enki, and Enlil illustrates the benevolent guidance of gods in human affairs, offering solace in nature's rhythms.

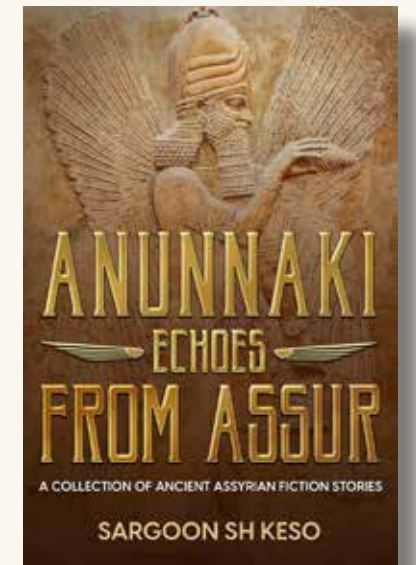
Ninhursaga's nurturing touch weaves harmony between humanity and the world, while the rise of Ashur paints a portrait of devotion and triumph that transcends mere mortal boundaries. Enter the mystical realm of Ereshkigal as she battles malevolent spirits alongside the fearless Mullissu, teaching us that determination and courage can pierce even the darkest veil.

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Let the tales of 'Anunnaki Echoes from Assur' awaken your spirit and ignite your imagination. These stories, woven with wisdom and spun with the threads of courage and love, resonate across time, inspiring us to explore our own narratives and seek the eternal truths that connect us to the ancients and the cosmos.



Books in Review

Assyrian Genocide in Modern History

Educate & Commemorate

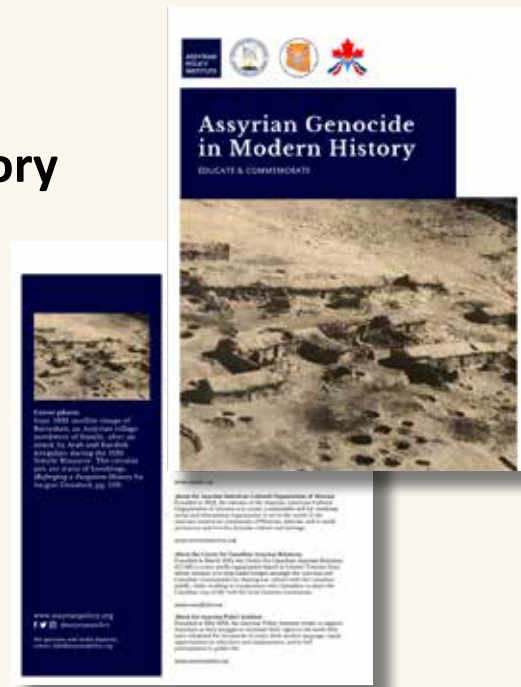
by Joseph Naayem

Les Assyro-Chaldéens et les Arméniens massacrés par les Turcs (1920)

This document provides a summary of five major events in modern history during which Assyrians were subjected to genocide and ethnic cleansing: The Massacre of Assyrians at Hakkari (1843); the Assyrian Genocide (1914-1923); the Simele Massacre (1933); the Soriya Massacre (1969); and the more recent genocide and ethnic cleansing campaigns at the hands of ISIS (2014-2015). It also contains recommendations for further reading on these events.

"I am determined to record the martyrdom of a small people, the most worthy of interest yet at the same time the most abandoned, arising out of a great empire of the world's most ancient civilization, whose country, like Armenia, was the stage for Turkish abominations in which men were tragically murdered, women, children, and the aged deported into the desert, pillaged, martyred and subjected to the worst atrocities.

This people is the Assyro-Chaldean people."



A Brief History of Assyrians In Santa Clara County, California

by Dr. Arianne Ishaya

This new publication is part of a series of community studies on the Assyrian diaspora in the United States. The Assyrians began immigrating to the United States at the end of the 19th Century and settled in the industrial cities of the East and the Midwest. There were hardly any Assyrians in the Santa Clara Valley until the 1960s. This book traces the history of Assyrian refugees from Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran. It shows how a small immigrant community with modest beginnings can prosper and maintain its ethnic identity against strong forces of assimilation.



Shlama (The Assyrian Peace Monument) Los Altos, California

This book is not available for sale on Amazon. It's available to purchase in San Jose, by the AAASJ and the Assyrian Church of the East. Price is \$15.

List of Assyrian Foundation of America Donors

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Any donations received after 6/30/2025 will be included in the next issue of the Nineveh Magazine.

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The Children of the Assyrian Genocide

Dr. Arianne Ishaya



Rabi Judat

In writing or speaking about the Assyrian Genocide of 1918, the focus has been mainly on the adult generation. The question is, what do we know about the children who were trampled over, or sold into slavery, or those who survived and were raised as orphans?

It is essential to investigate this question because the survival of a nation is not dependent solely on its material assets, such as its land, minerals, and animal resources. It is equally dependent on its human resources, including its manpower, educators, professionals, and intellectual and spiritual leaders. Children compose the human resources of the next generation. So, we want to know what happened to the children of the Assyrian genocide and how this affected their descendants.

I have drawn on quotes from several sources to provide a brief sketch of the horror stories about the children who were caught in that disaster, as well as the remarkable resilience and comeback we witness in the Descendants of those who survived.

Two-thirds of the Assyrian nation perished during World War I. Children composed a large portion due to their vulnerability to disease, exposure, and starvation. The following is a sample of reports from various sources about the fate of the children of the genocide.

Children who perished.

“One day, the Muslims began to gather all children between the ages of 6 and 15 and led them to the

police commissioner’s office. From there, these poor little children were brought to a mountainous area called Ras El-Hadjar and killed; their corpses were thrown into a mountain gorge.”

(Eyewitness Report from Seert, Turkey, quoted in G. Yonan. *Lest We Perish*. P. 38) 2

“During the forced evacuation of the Assyrian-Chaldean Christians, several children fell to the ground from fear. They were trampled over and crushed.”

(Report of the Abbot Paul Bedar Zakho, Northern Iraq.

Refugee Children in Hamadan (Iran):

“Around 160 were housed in an abandoned wet basement. They were all naked and hungry. Some old and torn-out mattresses were provided for them to sit or lie down on. Two weeks later, when I revisited the place, it was empty. All those kids had died.”

(Joel Warda, *The Flickering Light of Asia or The Assyrian Nation and Church*, P. 63

The Fate of Children who Survived:

“The Assyrian Children were sold for one Mejidiya each. Some were sold in exchange for clothes, a basket of fruit, or a chicken.”

Racho Donef *Massacres and Deportation of Assyrians in Northern Mesopotamia*. P.37

Turkey’s policy of deportation differed from that of Persia, where the family members fled together. In Turkey, the regime separated families. Men, women, and children were deported separately.

The Fate of Young Women and Little Girls in Turkey:

“Young Women were raped, and little girls were deflowered most brutally.”

A Yohannan, Ph.D. *The Death of a Nation*.

“There were more than a thousand women, young girls, and children under six; only a few were twelve or thirteen years old. We had a few possessions with us, mostly blankets. Four gendarmes accompanied us. All of us were on foot. During the rest stops, they fell upon us, searched out the prettiest young girls and women, and abused them. Many of my relatives were among them, and I too was not spared.”

Eye-Witness Account: (From the report by Jalila, daughter of Gabriel Musa Gorgis, about her deportation) 3

“Several Kurds who continued to accompany us along the way suddenly assaulted two or three young girls who were with us and raped them before our eyes.”

G. Yonan. *Lest We Perish*. P. 33

Often, the parents had a difficult choice to make about which child to save. In most cases, sons were chosen over daughters.

Personal Account:

We fled in the wake of the retreating Russian troops. I was four and my sister was 2. My mother took me on her back, and my sister in her arms. But after walking a couple of blocks, my mother returned and left my sister with my grandmother because she could not carry us both. My grandma had a house full of furniture, an orchard, and vineyards. She would not part from them. She thought no one would harm an old woman. But she was mistaken. All those who remained behind were killed. (A. Ishaya. *Familiar Faces in Unfamiliar Places*. 76.)

Girls were forcefully separated from their mothers and sent to harems.

“Many attractive girls and young women were forcibly taken into harems. Many others were promised their lives on accepting Islam if they would merely pronounce its formula and abjure Christ. But instead of doing so, with few exceptions, they gave their souls to God and their bodies to the tormentors, defying hell itself by their boundless trust in God and Jesus Christ. From Haftevan alone, more than 500 women and girls were handed over to the Kurds in Sauchbulak.”

(A. Yohannan, Ph.D. *Death of a Nation*. P. 128)

4000 Assyrian women from the Hakkari and Urmia region were kept in bondage in the homes of Muslims.

(Joel Warda) 4

Statistics from a 1917 survey of the American Mission’s vital census work in the Urmia region indicate the ratio of orphans to adults.

The total Assyrian population in the Urmia region consisted of 3,915 families, comprising 15,669 individuals. Of these, 1350 were orphans.

The Assyrian mountaineers consisted of 2,850 families, comprising a total of 14,154 people. Of these, 2,333 were orphans.

The Assyrians of Sulduz consisted of 108 families, comprising a total of 598 people. Of these, 76 were orphans.

The Assyrians of Baranduz consisted of 67 families, comprising a total of 337 people. Of these, 60 were orphans.

Nineveh Magazine, vol. 82, issue 28 (2005)

Note: This is roughly 4,000 orphans. The Jacobite Assyrians and the Assyrian Chaldeans of Turkey are not in this count. Also, remember that this report is from 1917, before the final exodus and carnage that occurred in 1918.

Judith Khanim, the wife of Kasha Yaccu David of Seir, did a heroic act. She was highly respected in the community. She collected money from townspeople and bought back some of the abducted girls from the Kurds.

As mentioned above, while Ottoman Christian families had been separated under the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa Law, families in Persia had been permitted to stay together. Therefore, Relatives were able to assume responsibility for orphaned children.

Example: During the uprooting of Assyrians from Urmia, the 4-year-old Nigo was left on the roadside. His uncle’s wife saw the little boy and rescued him. (Arianne Ishaya’s Interviews)

What about children with no relatives?

Unclaimed children were placed into orphanages. In Iran, Near East Relief maintained small orphanages in Tabriz, Hamadan, and Kermanshah for children who had no surviving family members. The orphans were mainly Assyrian and Armenian. Tabriz was the site of administration for all of Near East Relief’s work in Persia. Susan J. Shedd (daughter of Dr. William Shedd



The Moradkhan Children



Jesse Badal Elias on the Left, Mrs. Bato Elias on the Right, and Joe Elias, far Right, Trulock (1976)

and Louise Wilbur Shedd) made international news when she led 400 orphans to safety in Tabriz. Miss Shedd became the director of the orphanage for all of Persia.

In Hamadan, about 230 unattended children were collected and they were housed in a camp called Barrak, where the Indian soldiers had been previously headquartered. Rabi Esther, who had been a teacher and principal in the schools in Urmia, was placed in charge of them. (J. Warda. Ibid)

There was an orphanage for the children ages 5-14 who had lost both parents at the Baquba refugee camp. There were close to 1,500 orphans in the camp. One-third of the total number of refugees were children. Girls and boys were placed in separate camps and were supervised by older women. The children attended classes and were given small chores to do. Playgrounds were built for them. (H.H. Austin. *The Baquba Refugee Camp*.)

After the Baquba camp was closed down, the children were transferred to an orphanage in Baghdad.

Mrs. Arby Hoobyar:

"I came from the old country in 1926. My father was killed during World War I. My mom died on the road when we were fleeing. I was taken to an orphanage in Baghdad. I was 14 when my mother died. The orphanage was for Assyrians, but it also housed Armenians. There were about 200 girls and boys there. It was under American supervision. The orphans used to go to school. Each girl had a small job to do. Age ranged from five up. The 6 supervisor was the daughter of Dr. Shedd. There were two Assyrian ladies; one was Rabi Roza; she used to teach there." (A. Ishaya. Ibid. P. 88)

The Assyrian refugees in Russia: "Role Reversal"

The children of Assyrian refugees in Russia were sent out as beggars in the streets of Russian towns. They brought food, clothes, and the money they had received from begging, and fed their parents. (A. Ishaya. Ibid. P. 74-75)

John Alkhas, the famous Assyrian poet who was also an orphaned genocide survivor, wrote a poem about a little girl named Badri who loses her parents during the flight of Assyrians from Urmia. Standing on a cliff, she pierces through the crowds, hoping to spot her parents.

She waits until everyone is passed, still hoping, not contemplating that they might be dead.

You would think the traumatized children described above would drown in despair, grow up with a pessimistic and defeatist attitude, and live out their lives with a broken spirit. But this is not what happened to those children. As adults, they became indignant about what happened to their parents and their community. They became all the more determined to gain back their dignity and seek restitution for their people.

In the 1980s, Jessie Elias shared his family history with me, tears in his eyes. When he was a teenager, His parents were butchered, and Judat Khanim rescued his sister. Yet he was a staunch Assyrian nationalist and in the leadership of both the church and the Assyrian Civic Club in Turlock. He raised sons and daughters who were all educated with university degrees. One of them was Dr. Joe Elias. A well-known physician and one of the founders, as well as a long-time board member of the Assyrian American Foundation, based in Berkeley, California. His granddaughter Annie Elias, a third-generation Assyrian, is following in the footsteps of her parents and, in collaboration with Dr. Ruth Kambar, is working on a project to preserve the Assyrian

Oral Histories. By the way, both Annie and Ruth are the descendants of orphaned children of the Assyrian genocide, and a living example of Assyrian resistance against all odds.

These children are the children of Assyrian parents who grew up as orphans. Their parents were raising a family in poverty. Their parents could have taken the boys out of school so that they could do menial work and bring some money home. However, they preferred to live in deprivation so that their children could attend school. All of the boys became university graduates. But the girls were married off at the ages of 16 and 18.

The eldest, Johny Moradkhan, was a chemistry teacher in Urmia and an icon of Assyrian nationalism. The second one, Emmanuel (Moradkhan) Ramsin, was a physician. He purchased a large tract of land in Tehran, not to build a luxury home for himself, but donated it to the Assyrian Association in Tehran and asked them to build a hall and name it "William Daniel Cultural Hall". The building now houses the Assyrian Association. The third one, Ashur Moradkhan DDS, was one of the founders of the Assyrian Universal Alliance and the founder and director of the Atra Project in the Assyrian homeland in Iraq.

Below is a small sample of the Assyrian men and women, most of whom grew up as orphans but achieved great deeds for their families and their nation. This goes to show how many such treasures Assyrians lost in the World War I genocide.

- Freydu Atouraya: Assyrian Nationalist (1891-1926)
- Rabi Binyamin Arsanis: Historian, Diplomat (1884-1957)
- Rabi William Daniel Poet, Writer, Music Composer (1903-1988)
- Lucy Shabaz: School Principal, Community Leader (1886-1974)
- Emma Ayoubkhani: School Principal (1906-1989)
- Edward Joseph: Scholar, Antique Expert, Poet (1903-1993)
- Father Tuma Mar Yohana Gavilani (1903-1983)
- Andre Gvaleyevich: Famous Artist (1911-1985)
- Naum Faik: teacher, Journalist, Assyrian Nationalist (1868-1930)
- Dr. Ashur Yousef: Professor, Assyrian Nationalist (1858-1915)
- Abraham Yousef: Medical Doctor, Assyrian Nationalist (1866-1924)

From Aššur's Court to Heaven's Throne: Liturgical Parallels Between the Assyrian Akītu and the Christian Feast of Ascension

Abstract:

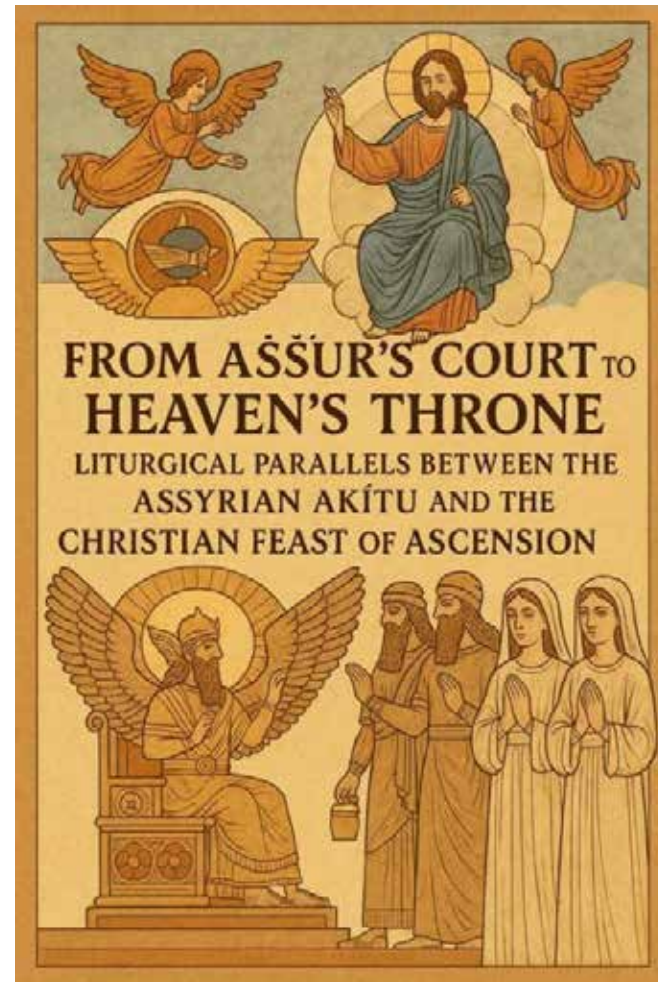
This article explores the theological, symbolic, and ritual continuities between the Assyrian worship of Aššur and early Christian liturgical theology, with particular focus on the Feast of the Ascension. While rooted in differing doctrinal systems, both traditions share motifs of celestial kingship, divine liturgy, ritual purity, and eschatological processions. Drawing upon Assyriological texts and early Christian sources, this study argues that the memory of Aššur's celestial court survives in Christian visions of heaven and liturgical ascent, reframed through new theological lenses.

Introduction: Memory and Transformation of the Sacred

The transition from Assyrian religion (Aššurism) to Christianity is often depicted as a radical departure, yet numerous liturgical and cosmological structures demonstrate significant continuity. These continuities manifest not in doctrinal replication but in symbolic reconfiguration, wherein ancient theological schemas are transformed rather than erased. A striking example is the depiction of heaven as a divine court, found both in Neo-Assyrian religion and in Christian apocalyptic and liturgical texts. The Assyrian God Aššur presides over a divine assembly, surrounded by lesser deities and celestial attendants, mirroring the Christian image of God enthroned among angels, saints, and the redeemed. Such parallels invite a reconsideration of how sacred memory transmits and transfigures across epochs and religious paradigms.

Aššur: High God of a Celestial Court

Aššur, the chief God of the Assyrian pantheon, was not only a political symbol but also a cosmic sovereign. In the royal inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II, Tiglath-Pileser III, and Esarhaddon, Aššur is described as the king of the gods, the upholder of *šūt ilāni* (the divine order),



and the bestower of kingship. His temple in the city of Aššur (current Qal'at Sherqat) was both the liturgical heart of the empire and the mythological axis mundi where heaven and earth met. Ritual processions, enthronement ceremonies, and hymns composed in his honor reinforced his role as a divine sovereign surrounded by a heavenly court. Aššur was typically depicted in a winged sun-disc flanked by protective beings or genii, echoing the structure of a courtly retinue and celestial order.

The Divine Court and Heavenly Assembly

Assyrian cosmology emphasized a structured divine assembly (Akkadian: *šūt ilāni*), wherein gods deliberated and enacted cosmic decrees. This model is reflected in various literary and ritual texts such as the "Myth of Erra," the "Enūma Eliš," and Neo-Assyrian political theology. Simo Parpola has argued that this divine court served as a prototype for later apocalyptic visions in Jewish and Christian literature. In Daniel 7, God (the Ancient of Days) is depicted seated on a throne, surrounded by thousands of heavenly

attendants; Revelation 4 similarly presents a celestial liturgy involving angelic choirs, incense, and hymns of praise. These images reflect not only continuity in celestial imagery but also the preservation of a liturgical architecture rooted in Assyrian theological imagination.

Virgins, Temple Servants, and Sacred Purity

In Assyrian religion, ritual purity was a prerequisite for proximity to the divine. The *nadītum* and *qadištum* women, often attached to temples of Aššur, Šin, or Ishtar, lived celibate lives of prayer, weaving, and sacred song. Their function paralleled that of sacred virgins in Greco-Roman and later Christian contexts. In Christianity, consecrated virgins were often considered the spiritual brides of Christ, drawing on the nuptial mysticism of texts such as Psalm 45 and Revelation 14. The virgins' celibacy represented a form of eschatological readiness and moral purification that mirrored the Assyrian understanding of sacred service. Patristic writers like Cyprian and Ambrose viewed virginal life as a mirror of angelic existence, much like the celestial purity expected in the service of Aššur.

Ishtar and the Heavenly Bride Archetype

The paradoxical figure of Ishtar as both lover and virgin underscores a deeper archetype of divine femininity. Hymns from the library of Ashurbanipal describe Ishtar as the "radiant virgin," the "queen of heaven," enthroned amidst a chorus of divine maidens. These celestial attendants sang her praises and maintained her temple service. This motif resonates with Christian portrayals of the Virgin Mary, who is hailed as Theotokos (God-bearer) and depicted in Revelation 12 as a crowned woman clothed with cosmic symbols. Additionally, the image of the Church as the Bride of

Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-27) reflects an ecclesial reworking of Ishtar's retinue, where sacred femininity serves as the liturgical icon of divine-human union.

Liturgical Processions and the Akītu Festival

The Akītu festival, held annually in the month of Nisan, marked the renewal of divine kingship and cosmic order. As part of this multi-day liturgical drama, processions included virgins, priests, and ritual actors reenacting the mythic restoration of divine harmony. In Nineveh and Kalhu, young girls clad in white likely represented purity, order, and divine joy, walking before the gods in public ritual. Christian liturgical processions—especially those held on Ascension, Palm Sunday, or Marian feasts—echo these traditions. Girls dressed in white carry candles or palms, representing the purity of the Church and the soul's readiness to encounter the risen Christ. These processions are not merely commemorative but enact a theological ascent, mirroring the cosmic renewal enacted in Akītu.

Conclusion: The Continuity of Sacred Imagery

The liturgical imagination of ancient Assyria lives on in the Christian cosmos through transfigured symbols and reframed rituals. The throne of Aššur becomes the throne of Christ; the virginal attendants of Ishtar become the choir of saints; the Akītu procession becomes the Church's heavenly ascent. These are not simple borrowings, but transformations: ancient structures of sacred space and action carried forward into new theological narratives. In this way, the memory of Aššur's court has not vanished, but ascended—translated into the heavenly liturgy of Christian faith.

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Speech given by Nineveh Magazine assistant editor Dr. Elizabeth Mickaily-Huber, at the Assyrian Martyrs' Day event held at the Assyrian American Civic Club in Turlock, California on August 7, 2025:

Revered clergy, esteemed officials, community members, and fellow Assyrians: I am honored to be here today as the president of the Assyrian National Council of Stanislaus. Since the year 2000, the Assyrian National Council has been the umbrella representing nearly all of the Assyrian organizations, foundations, and churches in Stanislaus County. I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the Assyrian American Civic Club of Turlock, in particular Albert and Romina Pourtaverdi, for their continued support in this and many other cultural events. It is critical for all our Assyrian organizations, whether cultural, religious or political, to come together to celebrate our proud heritage.

We are here not only to remember the past, but to draw strength from it. We carry a legacy written in blood and faith, in tears, but also resilience. Today, August 7, 2025, we are gathered here to honor and remember the millions of Assyrian martyrs who have perished during the many bitter genocides and onslaughts that have been perpetrated against our nation and against our people throughout the centuries:

From the Mongol Invasions and Tamerlane's Campaigns, in the 13th and 14th centuries, to the Kurdish and Ottoman attacks from the 16th to the 19th centuries... We remember the massacres in Hakkari and Tiyari by Bedr Khan Beg, the Seyfo Genocide from 1914 to 1920, the Simele Massacre on August 7, 1933, Saddam Hussein's Arabization Campaigns in the 70s and 80s. We recall the targeted killings and persecution during the Iraq War in the early 2000s, and the genocide and displacement of Assyrians perpetrated by ISIS from 2014 to 2017.

But let us not forget that attacks are occurring against our people even more recently. On September 26, 2023, hundreds of Assyrians died in a horrific fire in Baghdede, Iraq, while attending a wedding. Although some claim the incident was the result of a tragic

accident, others claim it was a purposeful attack. On April 1, 2025, a man wielding an axe severely injured 3 Assyrians during the Assyrian new year celebration in Dohuk, Iraq. When questioned on his motivations, he clearly stated that he was motivated by anti-Assyrian hatred rooted in ISIS-inspired ideology. On June 22, 2025, suicide bombers entered the Church of Mar Elia in Syria, killing and injuring nearly a hundred people — among them, ethnic Assyrians. These most recent events received barely any news coverage, if at all — a painful reminder of how easily our suffering is overlooked in a world and a media consumed by louder conflicts.

Although much of our history is heartbreaking, let's focus for a moment now on how we Assyrians have defied the odds and are shining brighter than ever before. Assyrian names are becoming more known and respected worldwide. Sam Shamoun has become famous as a Christian apologist. Some call him the Biblical encyclopedia. Patrick Bet David is world renowned for podcasts in which he has interviewed some of the most influential people in the world. Mar Mari Emanuel of Australia has become known and beloved for his fiery preaching style and his outspoken commentary on modern moral and social issues, in a world hungry for direction. Juliana Taimoorazy is internationally recognized for her humanitarian advocacy and efforts to bring the Assyrian genocide to the attention of policymakers. Nuri Kino is multi-award-winning Assyrian investigative journalist living in Sweden who works tirelessly to gain international support for persecuted Christians in the Middle East through his organization, A Demand for Action. And there are so many others — leaders, artists, educators, quiet heroes, you and me — each keeping our heritage alive in our own unique way.

Even non-Assyrians have begun crying out for the world to recognize the plight of our people. Dr. Ron Susek,

author of *The Assyrian Prophecy*, and Dr. Stephen Andrew Missick, author of multiple books on Assyrian religious history, are Evangelical preachers who are making efforts to draw attention to the Assyrian cause. Professor Yaacov Maoz is the author of the book entitled *Jerusalem and Nineveh*. He is focused on erecting an Assyrian genocide memorial in Israel and is working tirelessly to secure official recognition of the Assyrian genocide by the State of Israel. Professor Michael Wingert works on reviving interest in the

Assyrian language in all its forms, old and new, written and spoken.

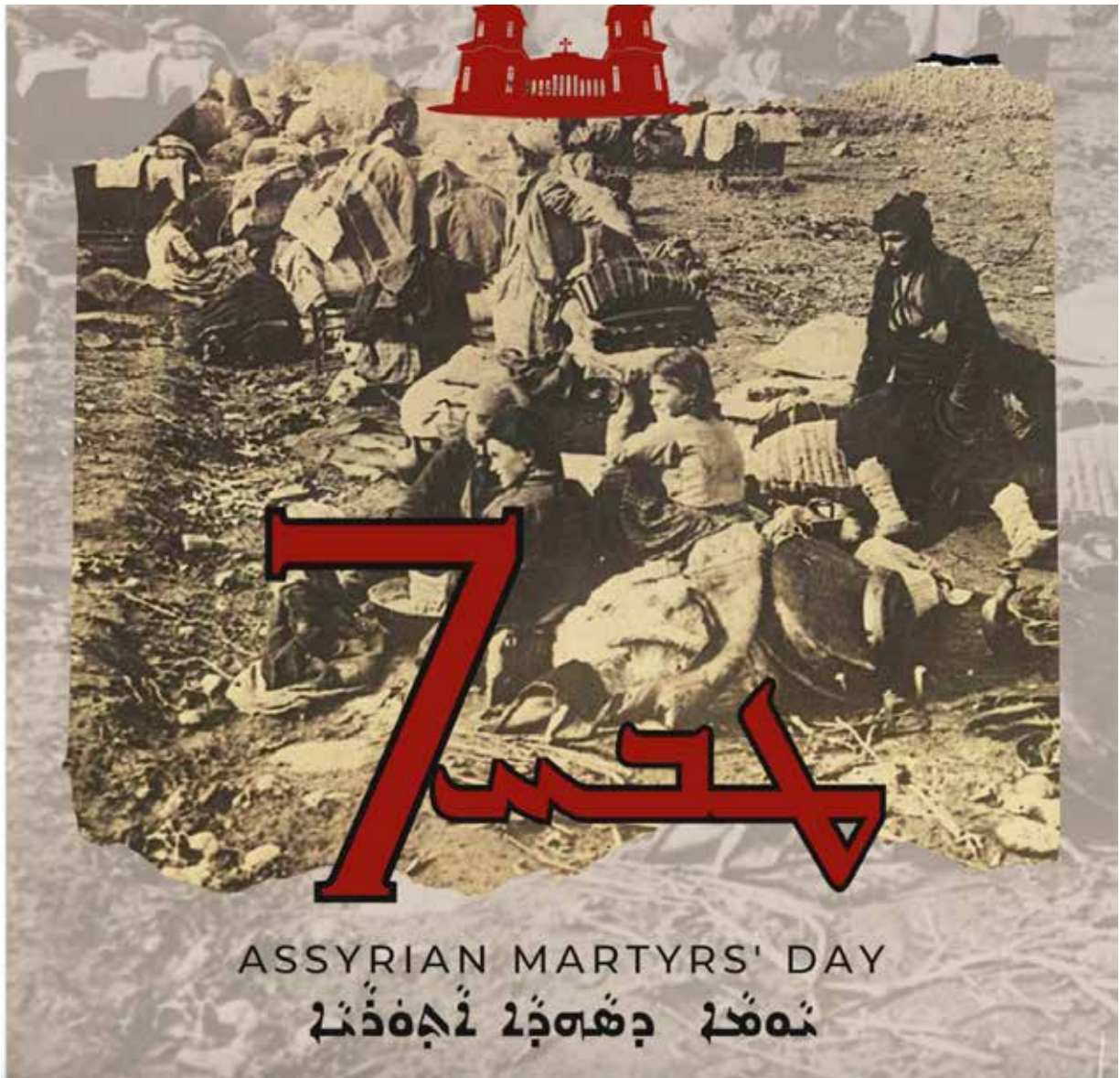
In closing, despite our sadness in remembering our Assyrian martyrs on this day, we must never lose hope — for we are the progeny of Assyrian genocide survivors. But we are not merely descendants of survivors — we are stewards of a culture that refuses to vanish because God wills it to be so.... As the famous Greek poet Dinos Christianopoulos once wrote: "They tried to bury us, but they didn't know we were seeds."

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ASSYRIAN MARTYRS DAY
THURSDAY, AUGUST 7TH, 2025
6:30 PM DOORS OPEN
7:00 PM PROGRAM STARTS
LOCATION: ASSYRIAN AMERICAN CIVIC CLUB OF TURLOCK
ORGANIZED BY
ASSYRIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STANISLAUS
IN COLLABORATION WITH
ASSYRIAN AMERICAN CIVIC CLUB OF TURLOCK



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ASSYRIAN MARTYRS' DAY

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