

Arba-Illu, Arbela - City in
Perpetual Existence see page 4

NINEVEH

*Voice of
The Assyrian Foundation of America*



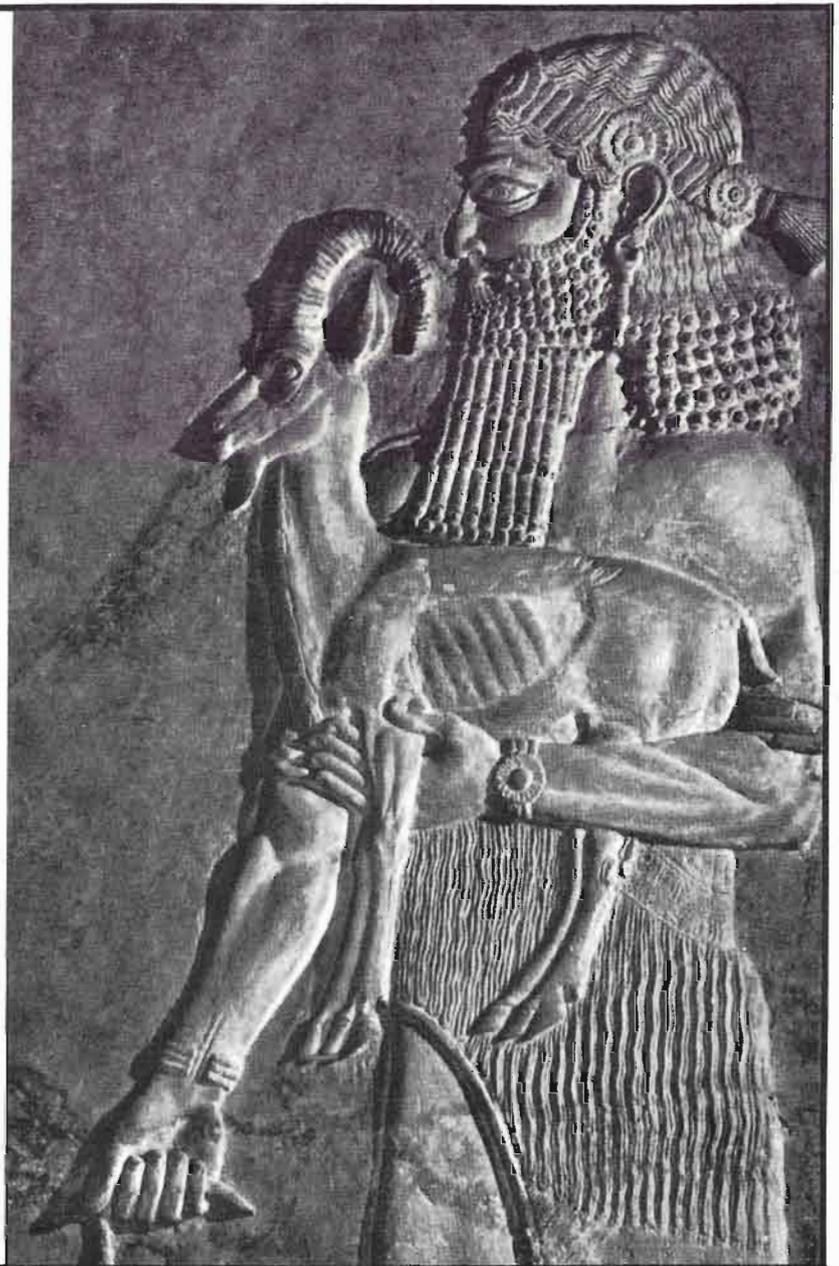
Established 1964

*Dedicated to the
Advancement of Education
of Assyrians*

MARCH - APRIL 1980

VOLUME 3, NO. 2

At Dur Sharrukin (Khorsabad)
Sargon II King of Assyria carrying
the Sacrificial Ibex (8th Century B.C.)



CULTURAL—EDUCATIONAL—SOCIAL

NINEVEH

MARCH/APRIL 1980

VOLUME 3

NO. 2

JULIUS N. SHABBAS Editor
 JOEL J. ELIAS Ass't. Editor
 YOURA TAMRAZ Staff Writer/Assyrian
 JACOB MALEKZADEH Advertising
 SARGON SHABBAS Circulation

POLICY

ARTICLES SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION WILL BE SELECTED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF ON THE BASIS OF THEIR RELATIVE MERIT TO THE ASSYRIAN LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CURRENT EVENTS.

OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS MAGAZINE ARE THOSE OF THE RESPECTIVE AUTHORS AND NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF NINEVEH.

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ADDRESS LETTERS TO

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Assyrian Periodicals

We urge our readers to read and support the Assyrian publications. The active participation of all Assyrians is the only guarantee of the success of Assyrian periodicals.

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 help defray the cost
 of publication**

LET US NOT ERR AGAIN

After the fall of the Assyrian Empire, for centuries the Assyrian people concentrated in areas embracing Jezirah, Sapna of Amadia, the Northern part of present day Azerbaijan, with their stronghold in the mountains of Kurdistan. This territory was a part of the Ancient Assyrian Empire, and the present Assyrians are direct descendants of those people.

Today, the Assyrians are doctrinally divided into five principal ecclesiastically designated religious sects, namely "Nestorians" (The Holy Apostolic & Catholic Church of the East or The Assyrian Church of the East), Maronites, Jacobites, Chaldeans, and Syrian Catholics. The differences between these religious sects are based purely on christology and not nationality.

The intent here is not to analyze the causes that led to these divisions, among which were persecutions and many other calamities that befell the Assyrian people in their ancestral homeland. Neither is it the intent to bring facts pointing to the continued existence of Assyrians throughout history to the present time.

It is understandable that a nation, any nation, would have among its nationals different religious sects or beliefs. But there is no reason, in fact it is illogical, to identify the nationality of the people with a name that represents their religious beliefs, because in so doing, the true national identity of the people becomes obscured. It is, therefore, incumbent upon each and every one of these religious sects to call themselves Assyrians with respect to their nationality, and not "Nestornaye," Maronaye, Yacobaye, Chaldaye, etc.

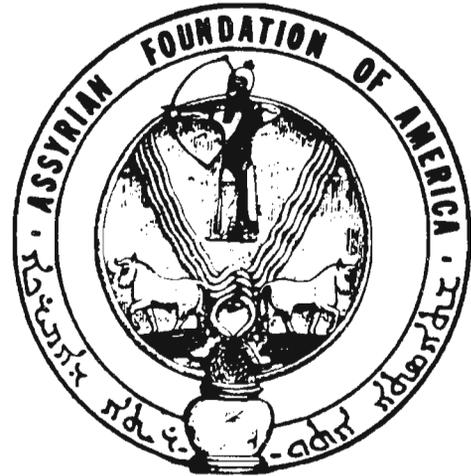
A second great error that we Assyrians have made is the use of the words Suraya, Suryaya, lishana (language) Suryaya to designate Assyrian, when the correct word should have been Aturaya. The name Suraya comes from Asuraya, Assuraya, Ashuraya (Assyrian), etc., with the letter "A" being silent. The direct translation of the word Suraya to English and other European languages therefore became Syrian or Syriac (for the language). Hence, this designation has been perpetuated by these foreign writers who failed to investigate and analyze the root of the word, as it has been strongly pointed out by the late Dr. David B. Perley and other Assyrian writers.

It is vitally important for our national identity that each one of us avoid usage of the word Suraya, in fact, delete it from our vocabulary and substitute for it the word Aturaya.

With this increased awareness on our part, we can hope to influence writers and historians to re-examine the basis for the old terminology and introduce the correct term, Assyrian.

Let us not err again. The Assyrians of today are the rightful descendants of the ancient Assyrian civilization.

Julius N. Shabbas
Joel J. Elias



DEDICATED TO THE
ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION
OF ASSYRIANS

NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

One's being an Assyrian is a synthesis of heritage, religion and culture, and emotional consciousness that transcends all diversities, theological demographic, and otherwise. To be an Assyrian is to feel: The past is my heritage I shall forget it not; the present, my responsibility; the future, my challenge.

When a person is of Assyrian blood, he retains his birthright, self-esteem, and the heritage of his fathers. The term Assyrian is one single unity. The approach of this oneness of all Assyrians regardless of their religious adherence, is through the avenue of blood, and through the majesty of common memories. Religion is a faith acquired and is changeable. Nationality is one's flesh and blood; it is his total nature. Even death cannot undo it.

Dr. David B. Perley

Dear Sir:

I want to thank you so very much for putting the book ad (ASSYRIAN HERITAGE—U.S. OR DEATH) in the magazine. This magazine is done very well—so much good in it. It does my heart good to see the history of Assyrians being printed.

I have been giving my book to school teachers and as many non-Assyrians as I can. This way people can see Assyrians are still in the world. People have asked me what language they speak. I always say that they speak Assyrian, that it is very close to Aramaic language. From my research, I feel the schools will be teaching about the Assyrians some years from now. It is just a matter of time.

Mary Elia
Northridge, CA

Dear friends:

We are certainly glad for your cordial help of \$100 to our son, Ken P. Joseph, five years ago when he entered BIOLA College, and now we are glad to tell you that he is now able to graduate, thanks to your initial help, with the class of 1980. Thanks to you and the California State and the federal government. Otherwise he would never have been able to make it on our missionary allowance.

We also thank you for your good publication NINEVEH.

We wonder if you ever got the word that our second son, Bobb, also entered BIOLA planning to be a full-time servant of Jesus Christ, and I am sure that he would appreciate any help you could give him. It would certainly be a great encouragement because he is having to work one semester, being out of school, to get caught up financially. He will enter at the next semester again. At that time his brother Jim, who now graduates from high school, will join him at BIOLA College. I'm sure you think there is no end of the Joseph boys, but there's only one more—Mark, 12 years old! We do thank the Lord that they are anxious to go to a good Christian college and prepare for the work the Lord has for them. And we do thank you for your help to them toward this goal. God is not unrighteous to forget your labor of love...

Please correspond directly with Bobb at BIOLA College, 13800 Biola Avenue, La Mirada Ca. 90637.

Kenny Joseph
Tokyo, Japan

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Assyrian Foundation is sending a \$100 scholarship to Bobb.

Dear Sir:

Please send me some information on the Assyrian people and culture. I once met an Assyro-American, and was surprised to find that the culture still was preserved. Is there a book on Assyrian-Americans? What does your association do?

Y. Lowe
Fairchild - Dept. 361
1725 Technology Drive
San Jose, CA 95110

Dear Sir:

I am enclosing an obituary statement together with a picture for you to print in your publication. As you can see, the few paragraphs are more than obituary but rather an announcement intended to promote the study of our Assyrian language and culture. We should appreciate your printing this message, in any language you choose, as soon as possible. If there are charges for the printing the photograph, please let us know.

Sincerely yours,
Eden Naby (Frye)
86 Beech Street
Belmont, Mass 02178

KHA B'NISSAN

The Assyrian New Year

Celebrated in all periods of our history on April 1st was KHA B'NISSAN the beginning of the Assyrian New Year. In ancient times it was known as the AKITU Festival lasting from the 1st to the 12th Nissan (March-April). Rooted in our nation's foundation, this festival symbolized national links between the god and the king.

Kha B'Nissan was the time of new growth and springtime and our ancient forefathers demonstrated their greatness by recognizing this as the time of nature's continuity of life . . . and logically designated this the time to celebrate the New Year.

All traditional holidays were fully celebrated, but when Christianity spread into Mesopotamia and later became the center of Christian teachings, Christian rituals replaced our national customs. Although the Assyrians were among the first to become Christians and missionaries of Christianity, there remained with some Assyrians, the influence of the ancient traditions and national rites . . . Kha B'Nissan for instance.

The Assyrian civilization is known for its great achievements in fields such as astronomy, a field in which they have rendered valuable knowledge. But the most notable and valuable was that they were the

URBILLUM, ARBA-ILU, ARBELA, ARBIL IN PERPETUAL EXISTENCE

Julius N. Shabbas

Urbillum is the oldest name of the city later called by the Assyrians Arbela. Arbela is the classical form of the Assyrian Arba-ilu (Four Gods placed in each corner of the town), the great sanctuary of the goddess Ishtar for performing religious ceremonies. Arbil is the only Assyrian settlement of importance that has retained its original name and has been inhabited continuously for thousands of years from before the dawn of history to the present day.

Some of the decisive episodes in the history of Asia have been enacted in the region that lies between the Tigris and the Lesser Zab. A vassal-state of the Parthian Kings under the name of Adiabene (Hadiab), this tract of country was an asylum, under the tolerant Arsacids, for Christian refugees from the Roman persecutions, and eventually became one of the centers of the Assyrian Church of the East. In the middle of this land, between the two Zabs, the ageless and indestructible town of Arbil surmounts and encompasses the hill or mound of Arbela, rising above the plain to the height of about 150 feet like the truncated cone of some extinct volcano and topped with great brick walls. Also, here in a yet earlier age, lay the core, the heart of the Assyrian Empire.

The great mound on which the present city lays is not the work of one or other of the kings or conquerors who ruled Arbil. It merely grew. Modern archaeological research indicates the fort or mound was built on some remains of an ancient Assyrian town called Arba-ilu, which had been built on some other ancient remains. City upon city decayed into the mound which slowly rose through countless ages till today it stands about twice as high as any other such mound in the world.

Arbil was one of the group of four cities of ancient Assyria, namely, Ashur, Nineveh, Nimrod and Arbela. Arbela was the religious shrine of this early pre-Assyrian civilization, probably it was the oldest of those towns. The enormous mound that represents ancient Arbela cannot be excavated because of the presence of later Islamic buildings at its summit. In the fort, there are many bazaars, houses and mosques. To a small extent some excavations were made in 1978 revealing a tablet in the form of a letter addressed to the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal as well as a statue of bronze of Ishtar. While reconstructing Mudhafariyah Street, a few potteries were found in some lower sediments in the base of the fort.

One of the reasons for its continuous habitation down through the ages is that Arbil has its own water-supply, rising from deep tunnels dug several centuries ago. They cannot be destroyed by vandal conquerors as could the irrigation channels of Babylon and Ur and the cities of the South. But the Ishtar gods - Arba-ilu - Four Gods - would seem to have had a special care for Arbela and to have protected and kept her alive long after her far greater sister Assyrian cities had decayed, for neither Dur Sharrukin nor Nineveh were at the mercy of artificial water supplies, yet for thousands of years they have been dead and obliterated, while Arbil has flourished serenely. God preserved Arbil for later Assyrian Church of the East missionary enterprises.

The first missionary to the area was Mari, the disciple of Addai (the apostle Thaddaeus). From Edessa he was sent to Seleucia where he found the people unresponsive to his preaching. Thence he went on to Adiabene, with its capital at Arbela, and here his missionary efforts were met with considerable success.

cont'd. page 5

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- Under Emperor Yazd'gard, known as the wicked, in the year 448 A.D., there was a general persecution of great intensity. This took place in Karkha D'beth Slukh, now known as Kirkuk, in Iraq. On a mound outside the city, ten bishops of the Assyrian Church of the East and 153,000 others suffered martyrdom for their faith in Christ. The redness of the gravel of the hillock, in contrast to the surrounding soil, is said to have been caused by the blood of the martyrs. Yokhanan (John), the Metropolitan of Karkha was one of the martyrs.
- The number of the members of the Assyrian Church of the East who suffered martyrdom during centuries of Christian history can literally be counted in millions.
- John Stuart in his book "The Nestorian Missionary

Enterprise—A Church on Fire" says "The amazing thing is not where they went, but rather where did they not go."

- The Encyclopedia Britannica, speaking about the expansion of the Assyrian Church of the East says "Their campaign was one of deliberate conquest, and one of the greatest ever planned by Christian missionaries. Their activity may well be said to have covered the continent of Asia."
- The famous "Nestorian Monument in China" in Sianfu, was erected by the end of the 7th Century A.D. during the Patriarchate of Mar Khnanishoo, to commemorate the Fifth Centenary of the establishment of the Assyrian Church of the East in China. This monument is inscribed in both Assyriac and Chinese languages.

At the end of the first century Pkidha was ordained the first Bishop of Arbela, followed by Bishop Samson who died a martyr at the hands of Magians in 123, followed by Isaac who converted a Zoroastrian of the name of Raqbokt, who was an Agha of some importance in Adiabene. Unable to find Raqbokt to kill him, the Mobeds (members of the Magian clan) turned their wrath on Bishop Isaac whom they captured and confined for some time in a dark pit. This method of torture was also employed in the case of Bishop Pkidha by the family of the convert. The rule of the Parthian Kings was always tolerant. They appear to have favored a sort of religious eclecticism themselves, and to have recognized all creeds among their subjects, though there is some evidence that the political power of the Magian clan won for their religion a favored position. Still, the government was so far indifferent that about the year 160 Abraham, then Bishop of Adiabene, had good hopes of procuring a formal edict of toleration from the then King, Valges III, and apparently only failed in this object because the outbreak of war with the Romans put such a trifling circumstance out of the King's mind. During the episcopate of Noah (163-179) many Christians fell away from the faith under pressure of a persecution from the Magians. This, however, was not a State persecution; it arose from the weakness, not from the malevolence, of the Government. Noah was followed by Bishop Abel who was particularly famous as a reconciler of disputes between heathens and Christians.

Occasionally Christians had to suffer, in common with all inhabitants of the country, from wars and tumults. The Arsacid Empire had never, it would seem, the strength and organization of the Sassanid, and a weak central power meant, of course, a disturbed kingdom. On the whole, it is apparent that, under the Arsacids, Christianity had a fair field, and came as near to complete toleration as possible at the time. Hence it spread rapidly, particularly during the long and peaceful episcopate of Abd-Mshikha (190-225) where many churches were built, monasteries founded, and bishoprics multiplied steadily. Abd-Mshikha was the last Bishop of Arbela prior to the advent of the Sassanian dynasty. At this period, the Assyrian Church of the East is reported as extending from the mountains of Kurdistan to the Persian Gulf. In that area there were no less than twenty-five bishops. The advent of the Sassanians produced a state of dormancy for the Assyrian Church, though it continued to be tolerated. Further, a Christian, though his right to continue in the faith of his fathers was recognized, took, as Christian, an inferior position.

Mingana is of the opinion that 'the city of Arbel played, for the countries extending east, north and south of the Tigris, a role no less important (if somewhat less known) than that played by Edessa in the Trans-Euphratic provinces of the Roman and Persian empires in particular, and in Syria and Palestine in general.'

It was to Arbil that Darius fled after his historic defeat by Alexander the Great, the first European conqueror in Asia. The great battle was fought in 331 B.C. only a few miles away near the banks of the Greater Zab.

'The vitality,' writes Soane, 'that kept Arbil in existence since those early days has not deserted it at any period, for it has been worthy of mention at least once during the supremacy of every one of the nations that successively ruled it, Assyrian, Mede, Persian, Greek, Parthian, Roman, Armenian, Roman again, Persian again, and Arab.'

It is said that Arbil for a time had been the seat of the famous Salah-Idin who repelled the Crusaders in the twelfth century. The Mongols, who destroyed nearly all other cities of Mesopotamia, sacked but could not exterminate the immortal town, and the Turks, whose indifference let so much fall into decay, were outlived by Arbil. They abandoned it days before the British walked in, and never a shot was fired by British arms and never a bomb was dropped on Arbil.

Today, Arbil presents a most beautiful scenery and it is attractive because of its historical background. Arbil is being developed rapidly. More factories, buildings, hotels and rest houses are being built. Its moderate climate in both summer and winter adds to its attraction and flocking by tourists. Arbil by day towers as a mountain and a landmark, by night its lights shine as a beacon for many miles.

New Members

The Assyrian Foundation wishes to welcome Flora (nee Ashouri) and her husband, Bob Kingsbury of Orinda as new members of the Foundation.

BEHNAM & SARAH, CHILDREN OF KING SENNACHERIB OF ASSYRIA

Otto Meindarus writing about two historical monasteries of the Assyrian Church of the East now in the hands of the Jacobite Assyrians and Rome says that Prince Behnam was converted to Christianity on a hunt. He lost the trail of the stag and received the vision of an angel ordering him to search for a monk in the Monastery of Mar Mattai who healed his sister Sarah of leprosy...Since — those events are said to have occurred prior to the Assyrian schism, presumably this monastery, like that of Mar Mattai, was in the hands of the Assyrian Church of the East until the 6th century, when the Jacobite Assyrians took possession of it.

Describing the interior decorations of Mar Behnam, the author says that the decorations reveal many unusual Christian symbols, colors of green and blue (used in the Assyrian Church baptismal and wedding ceremonies) and above the saint a crown shaped basket with the saint carried by two angels heaven-ward, and his sister Sarah dressed as an Assyrian princess.

From "Light of the East" Magazine

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ASSYRIAN RECIPE

DOLMA (Cabbage)

2 lbs. lamb meat	1½ cup catsup
1 onion	½ cup cold water
1 green pepper	2 fresh lemons
4 stalks celery	1 teaspoon sugar
2 stalks leek	1 teaspoon salt
½ bunch dill	1 teaspoon black pepper
½ cup rice (raw)	1 teaspoon paprika
1 cabbage (5 lbs.)	¼ lb. butter (chunks)
1 - 8 oz. can tomato sauce or	

Bone and dice meat. Rinse with cold water; place in saucepan and cover. Bring to a boil. When water has evaporated, add diced onion and cook until brown.

Cut up green pepper, celery, leek and dill fine; combine together with mixture of meat.

Boil cabbage until leaves separate. Pour cold water over leaves and drain. Separate leaves and split in half or thirds (depending on size of leaf). Take about 1 teaspoonful of mixture and place in center of leaf and roll up cabbage leaf. Arrange in large saucepan in layers.

Combine tomato sauce or catsup, water, juice of lemons, sugar, pepper, salt and paprika. Cook together and bring to a boil. Strain and pour over stuffed cabbage. Pour in 1 cup of cold water; add butter and cook over low flame until leaves are soft and tender.

WOMEN'S LIB IN ANCIENT ASSYRIA

In the Assyrian and Babylonian laws, women had definite rights and considerable freedom and independence. They took active part in commercial transactions, even becoming what in our days might be called managers of industry. The greater economic freedom of women in Assyria and Babylonia was the result of the greater wealth of these two nations. The frequent absence of many men on expeditions promoted the economic activity of the women at home.

THE FIRST ASSYRIAN GRADUATE OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, ABRAHAM YOHANNAN, PH.D.

Dr. Abraham Yohannan was born April 25, 1853, in Urmia, Persia. After he received his preliminary education in the town-school and at home, he entered Urmia College, Urmia in 1864. He took a six years' course encompassing the study of Oriental languages, as Assyriac, Arabic, Persian, Armenian, Science and Theology.

After graduation in 1870, he was appointed to give instruction in Oriental languages in Urmia College until 1886 when he was called to the United States of America to assist in the revision of the Scriptures in Modern Assyriac under the auspices of the Bible Society. He entered the General Theological Seminary, New York, in 1888 and graduated in 1890. Dr. Yohannan founded the Oriental Mission and joined it to St. Bartholomew's Church, New York. He was promoted to the Holy orders of Priesthood by Bishop Potter of New York in 1891.

In 1893, he entered the School of Philosophy of Columbia University to pursue his studies in some of the Semitic languages under Professor R.J.H. Gottheil, and Indo-Iranian under Professor A.V.W. Jackson. He received the degree of M.A. in 1895.

In 1895, he was appointed Lecturer in Modern Oriental languages at Columbia University, and was a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, his subjects being the Semitic and Indo-Iranian languages.

In 1900, he was still engaged in giving instruction in the Oriental languages in Columbia University, and was in charge of the Oriental Mission of St. Bartholomew's Church.

In 1900, he wrote a Modern Syriac-English Dictionary (Alap only consisting of 65 pages) which was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University.

His book "*The Death of a Nation or the Ever Persecuted Nestorians or Assyrian Christians*" was published in 1916. The book consists of 170 pages and 27 illustrations and a map. Another book written by Dr. Yohannan is entitled "*A Church of Martyrs*," published in 1917 by Putnam's, NY.

FEASTS AND COMMEMORATIONS

Assyrian Church of the East, Mar Narsai Parish, 3939 Lawton Street,
San Francisco (731-9537), Archdeacon Nenos S. Michael officiating.

5-18-80	Feast of Ascension	Sunday	Qurbana	9:00 a.m.
5-25-80	Feast of Pentecost	"	"	9:00 a.m.
7-13-80	Feast of Noserdell	"	"	9:00 a.m.
8-3-80	Feast of Transfiguration	"	"	9:00 a.m.
8-17-80	St. Mary's Departure	"	"	9:00 a.m.
9-14-80	Feast of the Cross	"	"	9:00 a.m.
11-2-80	First Sunday of Hallowing	"	"	9:00 a.m.
11-16-80	Commemoration of all Saints	"	"	9:00 a.m.
11-30-80	First Sunday of Advent	"	"	9:00 a.m.
12-24-80	Wednesday before Christmas	Wed.	Service	7:00 p.m.
12-25-80	Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Christmas)	Thursday	Qurbana	9:00 a.m.

Note: All Sundays of the year not mentioned above are the morning service, and begin promptly at 11:00 a.m.

CONTRIBUTIONS

United Way \$ 2.06

BUILDING PLEDGES

Mr. and Mrs. David Henderson 50.00
Mr. Youra Tamraz 50.00

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Mr. Ninus David 20.00
Mr. John Boone 6.00
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Yonan 15.00
Mr. Tony Badal 12.00

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ASSYRIAN FOUNDATION'S NEXT

ACTIVITY

Picnic at Robert Crown Memorial Park in Alameda on Sunday, June 22, 1980, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Dinner at 12:30 p.m. - Barbeque—Music—Volleyball—Nartekhta—Other Games.

WE ARE VERY GLAD THAT.....

Sankhiro Khofri's recovery is progressing very well from his recent illness. We were delighted to see him at Mar Narsai Parish on Easter day, and also at our Membership Meeting on April 19.

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Grand Opening

1419 Burlingame Ave.
Burlingame, CA
692-2711

Varooj Manuelian

7 days a week — 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

AUA Foundation is Producing Film

The Assyrian Universal Alliance Foundation is producing a film that will focus upon the causes and effects of the Assyrian refugee problems from all quarters of the middle east.

The first phase of the film is already completed as several governmental officials have been interviewed on film for this purpose. They have discussed the problems of persecution of our people in the middle east and discussed the series of events and circumstances that drove our Assyrian people from their homelands and forced them into western cultures and societies where they have difficulty adjusting.

The second phase of the filming calls for interviews with the resettlement and professional people who work with the refugees after their integration into their new environment.

The target date for completion is late spring and the film will be available for showing to groups who would be interested.

The Sentinel

Sometime ago I read a report by Reuter's roving correspondent stating that in a remote village in Syria they still speak Aramaic - the language Christ spoke. By the way Jesus never spoke or knew Hebrew.

That correspondent is one of, now rare, journalists, well steeped in the history of the Middle East and capable of distinguishing the various languages and dialects spoken in the area - languages and dialects that speak of the ancient and tumultuous history of the Middle East.

However, all the names given to Aramaic and referred to by the correspondent are by foreigners. Thus it has also come to be known as Syriac, Soryoyo, Chaldean and Aturnaya. The latter name was given by the Parthians.

The confusion, as regard the name, was started by the Greeks, particularly by that Father of History, Herodotus, and this confusion has persisted upto the present day for religious and other reasons, and by Dilettanti in Eastern languages history and archaeology.

Sometime ago a member of the Syriac Writers' Society in Baghdad compiled a catalogue of works printed in the language spoken by Christ since the invention of the press.

To compile it he searched libraries in Iraq and private collections. He also wrote to several world libraries, such as the British Museum Library, Library of Congress, New York Public Library and Cleveland Public Library. Most of the libraries responded positively by furnishing him copies of their catalogues, such headings as: Aramaic Syriac, Syriac; Syriac, modern.

The New York Public Library classified under the heading "Neo-Assyrian". The British Museum Library, indicated it would re-catalogue the books and other printed materials in its possession under the heading "Neo-Assyrian" in the future.

When the book catalogue was drawn up, it contained more than 360 titles of books printed in Neo-Assyrian or modern Syriac. However, this cannot be considered as a complete list as some libraries had not replied, and also the task was too much for one man.

To call that language as Assyrian usually raises eyebrows and brings forth angry retorts, for one reason or another, because the language spoken and written by present-day Assyrians is not the same language that was spoken or written, say during the era of Ashurbanipal (66-631 BC). Of course, it is not, just as much as present-day English, or for that matter Greek, is not similar to that which was spoken before. Languages continue to develop, but keep to their roots.

According to the article published in Baghdad Observer (Page 6 - 18/1/1980), an Italian professor traced the roots of some European words to the Accadian language (another confusion). If that is possible, then it is equally possible that the Assyrian language, as spoken today, may contain words going back to thousands of years. Fact there are. A study on Ashurbanipal's account of his seven campaigns reveals that more than 120 words he used are currently in common use by illiterate Assyrians!

With the fall of Ninevah (609 BC), there was apparent decline in literary activities in the Middle East. The Assyrian scientists, engineers, architects and army officers were forced into the Parthian service. The Parthians organised their administration, army and architecture on Assyrian models. They also adopted Assyrian cuniform characters for their writing, which further developed from hieroglyphic to separate words and into 39 phonetic signs or alphabets - but retaining the cuniform characters. Whether this remarkable development was by Parthians or by their Assyrian servants is debatable.

On stage several plays have been performed during the



past decade. Currently, at the Assyrian Cultural Club a drama is under rehearsal. This drama, "SONG OF HOPE", written and directed by Goriel Shimon, is in a way more significant than previous plays, in that it has a cast of 20 amateur actors (five girls and fifteen boys... all college and high school students). Previous plays used to have less than five actors.

The two-hour three-act-play is scheduled to go on Baghdad Theatre stage on February 10, for three days. Later it will be staged in Kirkuk for two days at the request of the Assyrian clubs and societies there.

In other parts of the world scholastic interest in the Assyrian Language continues to grow as the following titles, given by Dr. Edward Youkhanna as reference in his article on phonetics published in the Assyrian Cultural Magazine of May 16, 1978.

- The phonology and phonetics of Neo-Aramaic as spoken by the Assyrians in Iraq.

- Grammar of the Modern Syriac language as spoken in Oroomiah (Urmia), Persia and Koordistan) by D.T. Stoddard (Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 5, 1956).

- Studies in Modern Syriac - H.J. Polotsky's paper in Journal of Semitic Studies.

- The Morphology of the Verb in Modern Syriac - R. Hetzrow. (Journal of American Oriental Society, Vol. 89, 1969.)

- O.I. Marogulov's Grammar for Adults Schools (in Syriac) Moscow, 1935.

The English, French and German languages have been greatly developed by scholarly studies, by the science of linguistics, and by philologists and others. But as to the Assyrian language it has developed naturally keeping tenaciously to its roots.

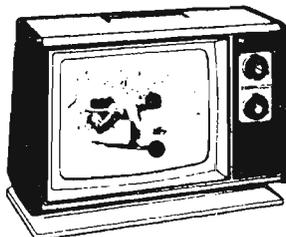
ABU ASHUR

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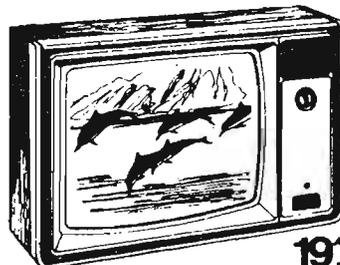
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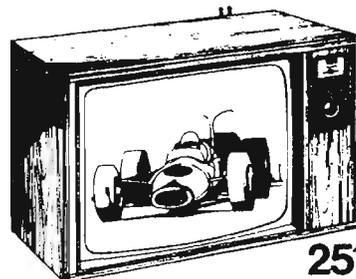
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BERKELEY

The Assyrian Foundation held its first function of the year at our Cultural Center on March 22, celebrating Kha B'Neesan, the Assyrian New Year. The attendants danced Khiga, Shaikhani and other fancy Assyrian step dances to the music of Sargon Mayelian Band. A beautiful time was had by all.

SAN FRANCISCO

Bishop Mar Narsai, Metropolitan of the Assyrian Church of the East, visited the Assyrian community of San Francisco Bay Area in February. He officiated in the offering of Qurbana Qadisha (Holy Communion) at the Mar Narsai Parish in San Francisco. The services were followed by breakfast in the Social Center and a dynamic, informative talk by Mar Narsai. He indicated that Mar Addai Church in Turlock has purchased a 17 acre land in the Ceres area which will accommodate a Seminary, a second church in the San Joaquin Valley, a parsonage and a printing press.

SWEDEN

The Assyrian community in Sweden continues to grow. Their number is in excess of 12,000 with over 10,000 of them coming from Turkey. They make use of television and radio in Assyriac, print magazines and newspapers in Assyrian and Swedish.

CHINA

The **earliest map of the stars to be found in China** has been discovered in a temple pagoda in Suzhou, one of the ancient cultural cities of East China. The map is dated AD 1005 and printed with wood blocks. It depicts the 28 "lunar mansions" of ancient China and the zodiacal signs of Babylon on a Sanskrit incantation. In the center is a painting depicting Buddhist stories. The map will provide important material for the study of the history of astronomy in China and the introduction of Babylonian astronomy into China.

AUSTRALIA

After ten years of establishing the Assyrian Australian Association and purchasing a five acre block of land for its headquarters, the Association felt that the time has come to start building. Thus, on Sunday, November 4, 1979, the Association announced this day an all Assyrian feast day. Members of the association and the Assyrian community as well were invited to witness the ground breaking. About two thousand

people responded to the invitation. It was a jubilant occasion with Nineveh band playing, dance lovers carrying rows of Khiga on the grass, with the Assyrian poet, singer and composer, Envia Shomon singing. The ladies committee were busy cooking forty heads of sheep which were donated for the occasion, other families sitting by their shining Semavars enjoying their usual Chai Deshlama. With Mr. Alfonso Tawar as the M.C., he called upon Archdeacon Younan Kiwarkis of the Assyrian Church of the East to bless the occasion, followed by a talk by the Secretary of the Australian Chapter of A.U.A., then Mr. Youaw Kanna, the president of the Association. Mr. Kanna stated that, since the Association's establishment in 1969, it has been instrumental in establishing a church, forming the A.U.A. Australian Chapter, representing the Assyrian community in all fields of social activities, establishing an Assyrian radio program and an Assyrian language school.

The first shovel in the ground breaking was started by Mr. Kanna with a donation of \$100, followed by the committee members, members of the Association and the attendants. Within an hour, the sum of \$18,000 was donated. Within two months, the foundation for the center was laid and 95 percent of the steel skeleton was erected.

Editor's Note: The Assyrian Foundation of America wishes to congratulate the Assyrian Australian Association for their dedication in the pursuit for a united Assyrian effort.

Kha B'Nissan—cont'd.

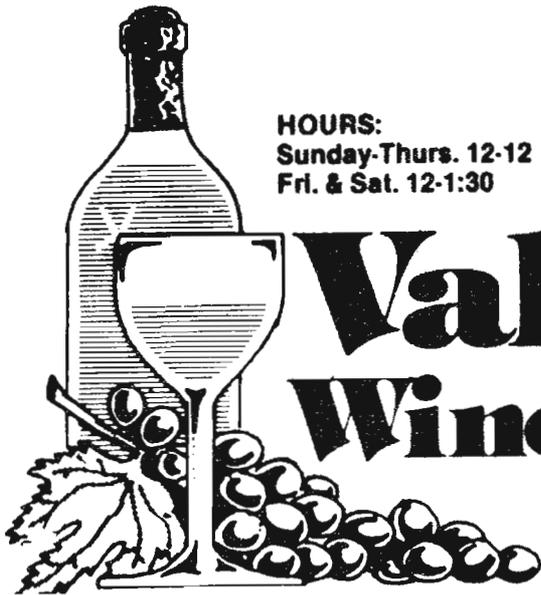
first to divide the year into seasons: Spring and fall and organized the first calendar in the history of man, dividing the year into 12 months, the days into 360, the day into 24 hours, the hour into 60 minutes, and the minutes into 60 seconds.

Fundamentally, the festival is derived from the heart of nature connected with agriculture which observed two important changes that nature undergoes: First, regretting the disappearance of greenery that is buried or destroyed in the fall; second, rejoicing to the rebirth of life that nature brings forth in the form of boundless quantities of crops. These changes had a profound impact on the Assyrian farmer and his way of life, whereby he celebrates three festivals: The first in the month of Tamuz (July), second, in the month of Tishrin (October), and the third, in the month of Nissan (April).

The God Tamuz is buried in the month of Tamuz; traditionally water is sprinkled to help him reach the underworld. In October, Tamuz travels down to the underworld to meet the Goddess Eresgikal. Ishtar descends down the underworld and resurrects Tamuz six months later, and by his resurrection revives life on earth . . . Kha B'Nissan.

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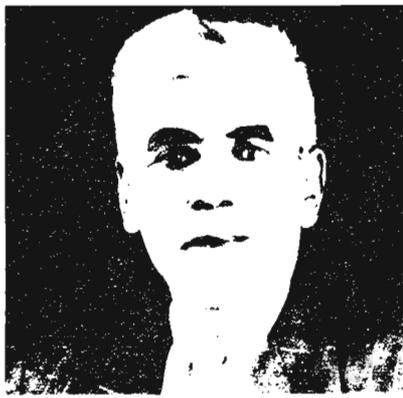
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IN MEMORY OF REV. MISHAEL S. NABY

By Eden Naby (Frye)

The Rev. Mishael S. Naby of Urmi and Philadelphia passed away on 13 of February, 1980. He had lived a full and fruitful life in the service of God, his fellow man, and his community.

Rev. Naby was born in Gulpashan on 18 Sept. 1898 to Shumun and Shakar. He graduated from the American Missionary College in Urmi in 1914. After suffering imprisonment and displacement during WW 1, he became a teacher. A vision of Christ led him to the ministry which he joined in 1934. In Philadelphia, he preached for the Assyrian Presbyterian community from 1952 to 1964. He is survived by his wife Lillie, daughter Eden, son Dante, a grand-daughter and a sister.

Known chiefly as a teacher, author, poet and pastor, Rev. Naby's memory is being honored by his family and friends through a fund, at Harvard University, for the purchase of books in the Assyrian language to assure the collection of printed Assyrian books at this world famous university library. Tax deductible donations made out to Harvard College Library for the Mishael S. Naby Assyrian Fund, may be sent to Dr. David H. Partington, Middle Eastern Librarian, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

While supplies last copies of Rev. Naby's books "The Key to Heaven" and *Psalms and Songs of a Persian* will be sent if requested by a note accompanying the donation to the Fund.

Editor's note: The Assyrian Foundation extends its condolences to the survivors of Rev. M.S. Naby.

PHRYDON ASHOURI

The Assyrian Foundation extends its deepest sympathy and condolence to Mr. and Mrs. Babajan Ashouri of Turlock, California on the recent loss of their son, Phrydon, in Tehran, Iran.

A memorial service, officiated by Reverend Wassil was held at the Assyrian Evangelical Church in

I have no longer the will nor the capacity to weep for failing colleagues, or friends, but I have the will to weep for those who still survive and fully aware that they are condemned to untimely death like yours.



Unlike other people we drift into oblivion broken-hearted, unjustly frustrated, denied self-fulfillment and the simplest and little joys commonly experienced in ordinary life — peace of mind and a bit of happiness.

You remember almost more than twelve years ago how we nightly tore away our nerves, suffered humiliation and sleepless nights and agony to have "The Baghdad Observer" the following morning at the newspapers stands.

Mr. Shimshon I am not writing an obituary but uttering a painful cry of protest for the survival of the rest and the very few honourable men in the condemned cell of journalism. The very few who have no alternative but to face their tragic and suicidal death similar to yours.

We are all aware that death is a physical reality for the layman that may come gradually giving warnings or small hints and fainting glimpse of hope, but our death is a daily possibility that may strike unexpectedly at the breakfast table or during a peaceful evening walk. And unlike other people we are daily haunted by nightmares and nightly crucified by news items at the editing desk somewhere in bleak and badly lit rooms.

We are denied normal death since our lives are tragically self-accelerating towards death and booby-trapped that may be triggered off without warning and without the faintest glimpse of hope.

Mr. Shimshon I am not wallowing in self-pity as much as I am protesting against having to lead, as you did, a ghost life constantly nailed at the finger tip of unwanted and never thought of suicide.

Baghdad Observer
Feb. 2, 1980

Bless You
Saadoun Fadhil

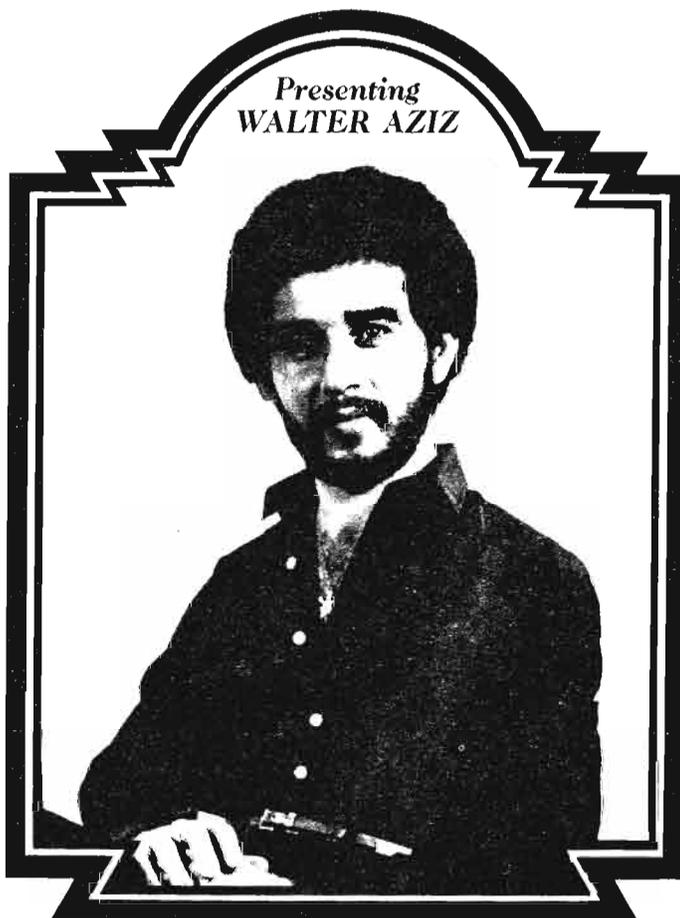
Turlock. This was followed by a memorial dinner where eulogies were presented.

Phrydon is also survived by a brother, Fredrick of Danville, California, and two sisters, Florence Yonan of Pleasanton, California and Flora Kingsbury, of Concord, California.

"Thou has created us for Thyself, and our heart cannot be quieted till it may find repose in Thee."

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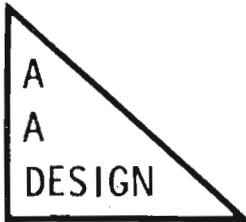
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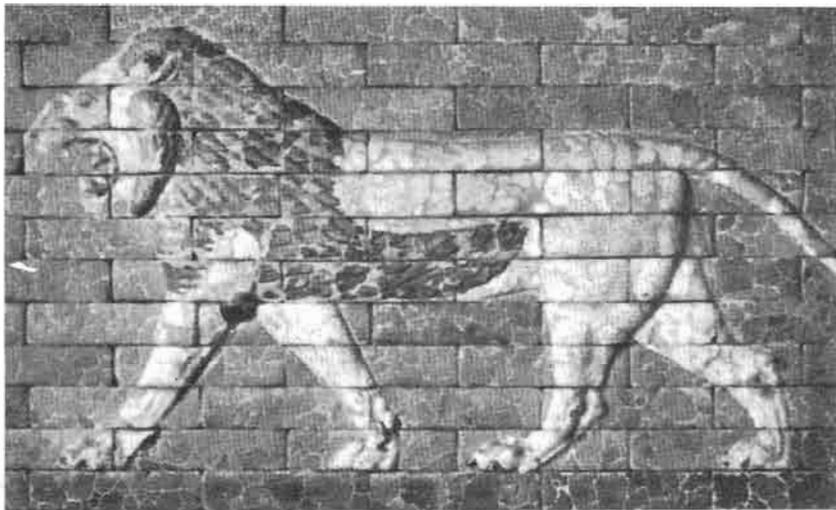
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