

MOR ZAKKA IWAS TO CELEBRATE QORBANA IN ANTIOCH

(ZNSO: Damascus) According to the Syrian Orthodox News, on 2 April 2000, His Holiness Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church will celebrate the liturgy of the divine mysteries in Antioch, Turkey. According to this report, the seat of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch was in the city of Antioch until AD 518, when Patriarch St. Severus was deposed and forced by Justinian I to flee from the city. The Church established by St. Peter in A.D. 37 is in a cave and is now maintained by the government of Turkey as a museum.

Source: Mor Clemis Eugene Kaplan

THE CONTROVERSIAL ILISU DAM PROJECT

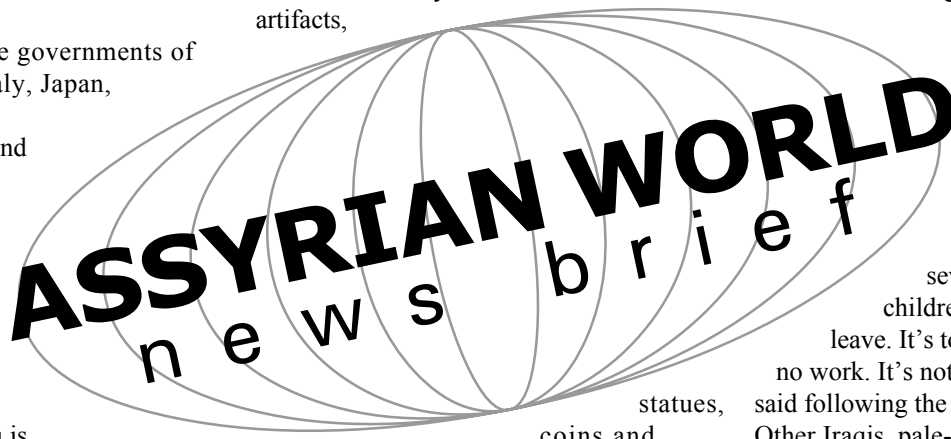
(ZNRU: Istanbul) The governments of Austria, Germany, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and the U.S. are currently considering extending official export credits or guarantees of about \$ 850 million to finance the Ilisu hydropower project in Turkey. Ilisu is at present the largest dam project in Turkey's pipeline. It is located on the Tigris river in South-East Anatolia, 65 km upstream of the Syrian and Iraqi border. The project is extremely controversial for a variety of political, social, environmental, economic, and archeological reasons. It appears to violate five policy guidelines of the World Bank on 18 accounts, and core provisions of the UN Convention on the Non-Navigational Uses of Transboundary Watercourses. The Ilisu reservoir will flood 52 villages and 15 small towns, including the city of Hasankeyf, and will affect 15,000-20,000 people. The exact number of affected people has so far not been established, since the surveys of the reservoir area were in part conducted by helicopter rides. Affected people are not being consulted.

The Ilisu reservoir will flood Hasankeyf, a Kurdish town with a population of 5,500. Hasankeyf is the only town in Anatolia which has survived since the middle ages without destruction. Being a rich treasure of Assyrian, Christian, Abassidian-Islamic and Ottoman history in Turkey, Hasankeyf was awarded complete archeological protection by the Turkish department of culture on April 14, 1978 (decision A-1105). The decision by the

department of energy to flood Hasankeyf violates this protection. Numerous cultural experts and activists in Turkey have appealed to the national authorities and the foreign companies to save Hasankeyf by changing the design of Ilisu. According to Olus Arik, a professor of Ankara University who supervises the archeological excavations at Hasankeyf, many cultural treasures cannot be transported, and that only 15 percent of all relics could be saved by evacuation.

ANCIENT CASTLE FOUND IN SOUTHERN BET-NAHRAIN

(ZNRU: Baghdad) Iraqi archeologists have discovered an ancient castle dating back to the pre-Islamic era in southern Bet-Nahrain's Babil Province- 60 miles south of Baghdad. According to the al-Zawra Weekly the castle contained many artifacts,



statues, coins and earthenware pots of different sizes. Abdul-Hameed Aggar, the head of the excavation team, said that bricks gilded by engraved gypsum were used in the castle, indicating "technical innovation" in the building. The excavation began last year in Babil province, which is also the site of the historic city of Babylon. Aggar said other houses and castles discovered in the excavation had designs showing they were built under Parthians and Sassanids — Persian dynasties that reigned between the third century BC and seventh century AD. Last December, Iraq said its archeologists discovered 397 artifacts that dated back to about 2500 BC at an ancient site in southern Iraq.

TURKISH INTERIOR MINISTRY FORBIDS NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

(ZNDA: Istanbul) The Interior Ministry of Turkey forbade the New Year celebrations, including Assyrian *Kha b'Neesan* and the Kurdish/Iranian *No-rooz* in Tur-Abdin. The city of Mardin's mayor, Osman Akkoyun, said that the rejection of his people's demand to celebrate their New Year did not agree with the spirit of the recent peaceful developments in that region. Both *Kha b'Neesan* and *No-*

rooz (New Day in Farsi), occur on the first day of spring or Vernal Equinox.

ASSYRIANS IN JORDAN PLEA FOR PAPAL HELP

(ZNAF: Amman) Over 10,000 Iraqi Assyrians living in Jordan attended the parade in the Amman Stadium on Tuesday, waving the Assyrian flags as shown on CNN News Hour. The Assyrian community was urged by the Catholic priests in the Misdar neighborhood of Amman to greet the Pope and hand him a letter to pray for the end of nearly 10-year-old U.N. sanctions on Iraq. The United Nations imposed sanctions on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in 1990. Earlier this week, some 500 Assyrians had attended the Sunday Mass and pleaded for the Vatican's help in obtaining visas to emigrate to Australia, Canada, the United States and Europe.

"It's very difficult to leave Jordan," said Souad Ibrahim, who has been stranded with her husband in Amman for the past seven years trying to join her children in Australia. "I want to leave. It's too expensive here. There's no work. It's not good for food," Ibrahim said following the Sunday mass. Other Iraqis, pale-faced and wearing their threadbare Sunday best, echoed her appeal, saying there was no work here and they were relying on family overseas to send them money.

HANNIBAL ALKHAS EXHIBITION OPENS IN HOLLAND

(ZNDA: Enschede) Last Friday, March 17, the Syrian Orthodox Archbishop Mor J. Jeshu Cicek together with the highest officials of the city of Enschede, the Deputy Mr. J. Kristen and the alderman Mr. Swart, opened the exhibition of the Assyrian painter at the "Jannink Museum" in Holland. Mr. Alkhas' works will be on display until April 23. Around the same hall where Mr. Alkhas' paintings were displayed, a special section was also dedicated to the Christian Assyrian-Suryoyo culture of Tur-Abdin. For this occasion the Syrian Orthodox Monastery of "Mor Ephrem Suryoyo" has offered three ancient Syriac books, both over 800 years old, the different Syrian Orthodox priestly attires, among them one of Archbishop Mor J. Jeshu Cicek and crosses and church decorations. These and other traditional "Tanouro" and "Gorouzto" customs nicely characterized the life of a Tur Abdin village.



Fete

The teachers of St. George's Assyrian Language School thought they should organise a gathering where the school children can spend sometime together, outside of the classroom.

One of the Organisers, Rivina Jando, said "the day was organised to initiate some activities, and give a chance for the children to interact socially with each other."

The fete took place in the churchyard, 12th March 2000. It drew the after-mass crowd, which enjoyed the food, and drinks on offer.

However, the children, were busy getting their hair, and faces painted. In addition, some of the teachers got their hair painted, which added to the relaxed atmosphere.

By the end of the fete, the children, and some of the teachers looked as though they were involved in a nuclear waste spillage. With bright green, yellow, and red hair; it was a sight that unfortunately we could not bring to you. ■

Sennacherib Warda



P I C N I C

On Sunday 19th March, St. Aphrem Syrian Orthodox Church played host to a picnic at Fairfield Park. The turnout was in a word, 'modest', but this did not detract from the friendly atmosphere of the outing, among the families present.

Somehow, people managed to organise themselves into small groups, where the young played 'kick to kick', while those not

so young played cards; and others chatted away about the hot topics of the day. Even at one stage some of the women put on a cassette and got down and 'Khigged', for want of a better word.

As an interlude to the day, a minor 'battle of the sexes' raged on, as girls and boys sat on opposite sides of a bench and quizzed each other on all things important and not so important; each gender wanting to assert its might and intelligence. As per usual, some of the guys got a bit boisterous and stole some of the limelight. The results of the battle where for one reason or another inconclusive, but an objective eye would probably award victory to the girls. Overall, the outing turned out to be great fun. ■

It is an issue that is about to burst. Many events took place in the last month or so, and we have made best effort to cover them all.

But first of all, I would like to wish you a very happy New Assyrian Year. It is one of the few times through the year that we are drawn back to our roots. We celebrate a festival that is as old as time itself. Kha B'Nessan is a big link between us, and the ancient Assyrians. We should remember the meanings and stories behind this festival. The concept of renewal, and the beginning of a new cycle of life should be made part of our modern life. Every individual needs to make a new, fresh start, every now and then. Kha B'Nessan should be an opportunity to reevaluate our lives, and explore ways of bettering them.

Something that is about to make a new, and fresh start is our Web Site. We apologise for any inconvenience; the site should be up and running soon.

One plan for Nakosha is to expand its coverage to Sydney. Including more people to its mailing list, and seeking new writers to join its team are goals that Nakosha is working towards. So if you know of people who are interested in receiving Nakosha, please pass on our contact details, we would be more than happy to hear from them.

Nakosha is also seeking new writers in both, Melbourne and Sydney. So if you have a flair for writing, and journalism, please contact us.

Working with Nakosha opened doors to many new experiences. Journalism is a very exciting field - meeting new people, invitations to events, all the inside news, etc. - it tends to give you a wider scope on life. For me, the greatest part is meeting new people, and making new friends. And being our community, these people could be anywhere in the world.

On the 30th March 2000, I had the pleasure of attending an art show, Boghcheh, which is a project by the Fairfield Community Arts Network in New South Wales. I believe it was one of the greatest achievements of Art. The project brought Assyrian women, with women of other nationalities. These women have had the misfortune of experiencing displacement from their homeland.

The show will be in Melbourne between March 30th, and April 30th 2000. I do recommend it for every Assyrian, and non-Assyrian alike. The show is a good tool to present our current history to others, and it is also a good tool for us to understand the course of our lives within the events of modern history.

On a final note, on behalf of the staff of Nakosha, I would like to again wish you a happy New Assyrian Year, 6750, and I hope the festival of renewal brings good changes to us all. ■

Sennacherib Warda

2000 & Beyond

In keeping with its objectives for the year 2000, the Assyrian Australian Academic Society (TAAAS), held the first of its annual youth conferences. The ground aims were to encourage a positive attitude within the community towards TAAAS, and increase youth involvement in projects run by the organisation. But the core aim, as stated by Majidi Ann Warda (one of the conference organisers), was "to create a free, and equal space where young people can gain skills necessary to become tomorrow's leaders."

The conference, named 2000 & Beyond, was held at the Beachcomber Resort in Toukley, NSW. Over eighty people, between the ages of 14 and 30, took part in it. Over the weekend they were involved in a number of activities, and workshops.

Water sports, Soccer, Tennis, the Hawaiian pool party, and plain old relaxation were some of the ways to spend the leisurely hours. During the workshops though, the participants were involved in discussions that addressed a number of issues; including:

- Pride in the Assyrian Community.
- Ways to encourage the youth to excel.
- What we need to change and what actions are required to be successful.
- What the Assyrian community does well.
- The generation gap: Differences and Similarities.
- Issues facing our youth and possible solutions.

Other important issues that affect Assyrian youth were discussed. These included Sexuality, Drug abuse, refugees, boredom, and relationships with parents. "Almost everyone had a say about very important issues," said Ms Warda, "I think it gave the youth a chance

to be supported for once in their beliefs, without being told that their ideas are dumb and stupid."

A number of positive ideas were suggested to TAAAS. They included calls for an increase in social activities, such as parties, picnics, fairs, etc. There were also calls for the initiation of social changes, and serious actions on social problems faced by the Assyrian youth.

TAAAS was asked to initiate youth discussion forums, a drama group, a homosexual support group, a buddy system for newly arrived Assyrians, and community work schemes.

A big win for TAAAS was the interest shown by a number of individuals in joining with the various projects run by the organisation. Ms Warda said: "It's getting people involved in their community which is practically crying out for helpers...it's giving the youth a sense of responsibility."

Among many other projects run by TAAAS, like conferences are to become annual events. "We have had many calls for another youth conference," said Ms Warda "and hopefully it will be bigger and better next year."

The issues raised, and discussed through the conference have initiated a number of projects by TAAAS. These projects are aimed at raising awareness, and tackling the issues that affect the Assyrian youth. ■

Sennacherib Warda



Have you ever experienced depression? If so, why?

► Male/24/Sweden

► Yes, for the situation of our ppl, and some times my ekonomi sitoutin but now I have it mutch better, and some times it is so hard to find the right girl to get married with, and to know how I can help our nation. m m but I still love to be a assyrian :-).

► Female/36/Sydney

► Yes. When I first arrived in Australia 21 years ago due to inability to speak English

► Male/23/Sydney

► Yes, because of my parents. They hold traditional ideals and values, some of which clash with mine. I think it is mainly due to their failure to come to terms with the way of life in Australia, and their resistance to change.

► Female/34/North American Continent

► Dear Nakosha Friends, My answer to this question is no. I hope that no one will be put in any position to be affected



places, we used to experience terrible situations as well, but the support system was great. We all had our relatives near by, we could go see them and talk, that was a kind of indirect medicine which helped to overcome many unpleasant situations. These days when some one feels sad or that he/she is in an uncomfortable circumstance, we tend to lock ourselves, because we feel that no one may listen or that there may not be some one to listen. Unfortunately, I feel that we need help in these matters, because as a community we are not used to being alone, nor as individuals, by that I mean isolated completely. I feel very sad when I hear these days that some of our youth are committing suicide, because I wonder what made them feel such a sadness to do such a thing

which for us as Christians isn't acceptable. One would think that in these countries, our people will be happier and more satisfied, the sad thing is that many aren't and why? Well may be our experts in the respective fields of Psychology can answer these questions for us so that we can help keep our youth on track and happy. Thank you and excuse me for the details.

by depression. However, I'm sure that we all at one point or another, experience sadness to various degrees and how we get out of it I think depends on us as individuals in first place and then to our entourage, i.e. the people around us. Back in our respective birth

by the three men was that none of the Unicode committee's members knew Syriac, placing them in an unfamiliar position. The three men anticipated this problem and collected support letters from scholars and various community members endorsing the completeness of the Unicode Syriac proposal. Nelson worked on all the Syriac-related work during his own time. It took two long years and countless hours of work by the three men, before the Unicode proposal was finally approved in late 1999.

With the official approval of Syriac support in Unicode, 'Project Meltho' could now begin. Hiring a professional typographer, 'Project Meltho' received extensive financial support from the Assyrian community, as well as other Syriac-speaking communities and various Western scholars, to create the library of fonts that would be needed. The fonts are grouped under the three main categories, Estrangela, East-Syriac and West-Syriac, catering for all the world's Syriac speaking communities.

Windows 2000 Professional was officially launched by Microsoft during February, and the initial release uses Unicode version 2.1 as its base character encoding. For the first time in history the majority of the world's languages will all be supported under a universal computer operating system. The Syriac fonts

developed under 'Project Meltho' will be released by the Syriac Computing Institute in the first half of 2000, and will be usable with Windows 2000 Professional, Service Pack 1.

Users in the Western world who are interested in having Unicode Syriac support as well as Project Meltho's numerous Syriac fonts are advised to purchase a copy of the Windows 2000 Professional, Service Pack 1. This copy will enable users throughout the world to change text input to right-to-left and enter (Estrangela, East or West) Syriac text using either a standard phonetic keyboard layout or an Arabic based keyboard layout. With the release of Windows 2000 supporting software, such as MS-Office 2000, the implications are that programs that today support only English will, with future releases, also support Syriac.

With the help of Sargon Hasso, George Kiraz and Paul Nelson, the Syriac language has finally entered the 'Information age'. The once separate and isolated ambitions of these three great men have converged to electronically preserve the Syriac language for perhaps the next one thousand years. The successful completion of this project marks a great milestone in the preservation and maintenance of the Syriac language, a language that traces back over 2,700 years. ■

David Chibo

PROJECT MELTHO

Both men quickly came to the realisation that the implementation of the new 'Project Meltho' was dependent on Unicode support for Syriac. After they had put together and presented a proposal for Syriac support for Unicode, the Unicode committee informed the two, of Sargon Hasso's earlier work. The three then collaborated in putting forward one single proposal.

The proposal was sent to the Unicode committee in late 1997. The three authors of the proposal were invited to attend the Unicode Technical Committee meeting to answer questions related to their proposal. George Kiraz and Paul Nelson attended the meeting and answered all the questions asked by the committee. During this momentous meeting a committee vote took place, and the committee accepted the proposal in principle.

One of the main problem that was encountered

Kha B'Neesan

At this time of every year, Assyrians the world over celebrate Kha B'Neesan and welcome in the Assyrian New Year, the celebration of revival and the renewal of life.

As legend would have it, nature returned once more to a state of equilibrium, after it had adorned itself with the 'cloak of sadness' for three days at the murder of the young Tammuz, beloved husband of Ishtar, and his subsequent return to life once more after Ishtar pleads with the gods.

At their first encounter, Ishtar is said to have fallen in love with the shepherd Tammuz, who in turn asks for her hand in marriage. Hence, Ishtar the goddess of love, marries the shepherd Tammuz, who is elevated to the god of fertility. As a result, their marriage endows the earth with fertility, and renewal of life is ensured.

The myth would further have it that at one stage Ishtar descends to the Nether World (land of no return) and coupled with this, Tammuz is killed and he too, as a result, descends to the Nether World.

During these events in the underworld, everything on earth is withering away. Trees and plants will not green and animals and humans alike are sterile.

When Ishtar pleads with the gods to restore Tammuz to life, the gods agree, but to a partial reprieve only; whereby Tammuz spends six months in the world of the living and the following months in the Netherworld. Hence Tammuz is restored to life on the 1st of Nissan (April), first day of spring. The event is marked by the renewal of life on earth and the promise of fertility, and Tammuz returns to the Nether world by the end of August, the onset of autumn.

The myth of Tammuz and Ishtar was the primary myth surrounding the celebration of Kha B'Neesan at Ashur (or Babylon), whereby the New Year festival lasted for twelve days.

The legend of Tammuz and Ishtar may sound trivial to our sophisticated minds, but this on closer inspection seems to justify a primeval human need, that is, the need for renewal, change and rebuilding.

One can see parallels between the celebration of Kha B'Neesan 6750 years ago, and the celebrations we undertake at the end of each calendar year. We celebrate the achievements of the past year on New Year's Eve and farewell the year's setbacks and disappointments. Some of us make New Year's resolutions with the hope of achieving 'positive change' in the up coming year, in order to renew our commitment to our selves and to those around us.

For our ancestors nature, and the gods who controlled it, were at the center of their world, and any renewal or 'positive change' as put earlier was brought in with the oncoming of spring (Nissan), when nature would blossom bearing a myriad of fruits, vegetables and an abundance of food stores, as preparation for autumn and winter, when

Tammuz again descends to the underworld. To our ancestors, the Kha B'Neesan celebrations established harmony with nature and reaffirmed the bond between the community and the gods; the community being represented by the king in the temple ritual. For the king was the one responsible for the continual tending of earthly harmony and accountable to the gods. Thus, Kha B'Neesan paid homage to the gods and the king and a prosperous New Year was therefore assured. If the past year was not a prosperous one, then the Kha B'Neesan festival would fulfill a vital human need, in providing closure to disappointments.

On closer inspection, we find that despite our so-called sophistication, parallels can still be drawn between the needs of our ancient ancestors and ourselves. The closure and more importantly, renewal that was celebrated in the form of Kha B'Neesan still manifests itself in present day Assyrians and non-Assyrians alike, and the celebrations that at first seemed trivial to us, no longer do so.

On this occasion, I take the opportunity in wishing you one and all a prosperous Kha B'Neesan, filled with renewal and joy. ■



WHERE IN THE
WORLD IS
MADELEINE
BOUDAHK

We are trying to locate someone that may still be in Baghdad. Can you help or suggest someone who can help? Her name is Madeleine Boudahk. She is Assyrian. Her father sold real estate in Baghdad. Her son is looking for her. She could also be in Jordan or Syria. Please email us at kristina@paradise.net.nz Thomas Lazar and, Christina Dometakis

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| | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| هَيْبُ لُغَوِيٍّ | snee-gro | lawyer | sneeg-ra | هَيْبُ لُغَوِيٍّ |
| مُجْرِمٌ | soor-ho-no | crime | soor-kha-na | مُجْرِمٌ |
| عُقُوبَةٌ | neq-mo | punishment | neq-ma | عُقُوبَةٌ |
| مُحْكَمٌ | beth-dee-no | court | beth-dee-na | مُحْكَمٌ |
| قَاضٍ | dyo-no | judge | da-ya-na | قَاضٍ |
| بَرِيءٌ | bree-ro | innocent | bree-ra | بَرِيءٌ |
| مُذْنِبٌ | hoy-bo | guilty | kha-ya-wa | مُذْنِبٌ |
| قِسْطٌ | kee-noo-tho | justice | ke-noo-tha | قِسْطٌ |
| مِيزَانٌ | ma-sa-tho | scale [of justice] | ma-se-tha | مِيزَانٌ |
| مُدْفَعٌ | msa-thro-noo-tho | defence | msa-tra-noo-tha | مُدْفَعٌ |

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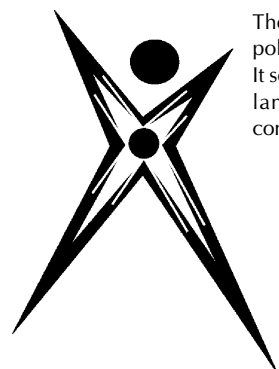
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The Assyrian Youth Group of Victoria is a non-political, non-religious and non-profit organisation. It seeks to promote the Assyrian culture, history and language, as well as the Assyrian name and community, bringing it to the world stage.

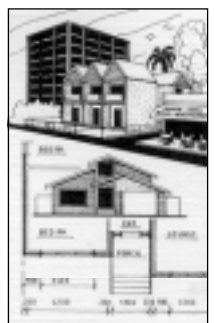
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