

Perspectives on Assyrian Nationalism

by Sener Akturk

Assyrians are the indigenous people of Mesopotamia. They pride themselves on being the heirs of the ancient Assyrian Empire. They still speak the language of Christ (Syriac) and were among the first Christians in the world. Their 'national' church sent missionaries to India, China and Japan as early as the seventh century. Their national identity, as they claim it to be, is as old as history; their forefathers founded one of the first civilizations on Earth, and their religion encompassed the entire Asian continent. Such claims of nationality and national history are thought-provoking for scholars who have studied the history of nationalisms. Thus, I seek to find the particular events and broader processes through which Assyrian nationalism is synthesized, raised and then failed.

In this paper, I will argue that a territorially and linguistically defined group of Semitic Christians adopted a secular national identity that was constructed for them by the Orientalist scholars and European missionaries. I will further argue that the internal sectarian division among these Christians and successive massacres and attacks of their Muslim neighbors necessitated the formation and adoption of a secular identity like the Assyrian nationalism. Then I will conclude by proposing that the incorporation of the Assyrians into a *Verbindungsnetzschafft* will enable a retention of their cultural and linguistic ties without the bloody repercussions of establishing an Assyrian nation-state (i.e. *Gesellschaft*) despite their demographic inferiority.

Mordechai Nisan's narration of the Assyrian people's history in his informative *Minorities in the Middle East* provides a starting point for a historical examination of the Assyrian national identity.¹ According to Nisan, Assyrians are the heirs of the ancient Assyrian Empire² and the ambiguity of defining this old Eastern community may be considered resolved if we accept their view, which says "We were Assyrians long before we were Christians."³ Ethnic solidarity assured no intermarriage between the Assyrians and other Christians or Muslims.⁴ Linguistic continuity of Syriac enabled these people to transfer their life experiences to succeeding generations.⁵ Jesus spoke the language of the Assyrians and a church stood in Urumiyah⁶ in the second century.⁷ The personality of Nestorius whose views were condemned as being heretic by the Byzantine Orthodox Church provided the Assyrians with the *raison d'etre* for a 'national' church.⁸ Born in persecution, these Christians in the Kurdistan Mountains would preserve their Assyrian identity, Syriac language and now their sectarian Christianity.⁹

Yet even Nisan, who asserts an *a priori* Assyrian 'nationality' into his interpretation of Middle Eastern history, cannot escape from contrasting pacific Assyrian Chaldeans of the Mosul plain with those brave Assyrian Nestorians in the Hakkiari Mountains, thus hinting at a fundamental sectarian division among the Assyrian people.¹⁰ Chaldeans are the followers of the Chaldean Catholic church which was established by a group of Nestorian clergy who formed a union with the Roman Catholic church in 1552 and recognized Papal authority in 1683, thus breaking from the independent Nestorian church.¹¹ The conflict between the two churches invited European involvement while

exacerbating division within the Assyrian community.¹² Assyrians' cooperation with the Europeans provoked the enmity of their Kurdish neighbors and Ottoman sovereigns, leading to the massacre of the Assyrians by the Kurds and the Turks in the First World War. The massacres of 1915 catalyzed the fledgling Assyrian national consciousness and also initiated a series of flights, as a consequence of which, Assyrians finally settled in the environs of Mosul in Northern Iraq.¹³ The various attempts to settle the Assyrians in Canada and Brazil were unsuccessful.¹⁴

By attaching Assyrian nationality to the ancient Assyrian Empire, Nisan asserts an Assyrian nationality that is 'as old as history.'¹⁵ On the contrary, the usage of the term 'Assyrian' as a specific reference to the people that we now know as Assyrians is fairly new. The Ottoman Empire, when it finally created a *millet*¹⁶ out of the so-called Assyrian people in 1844, created a Catholic Nestorian, that is, a Chaldean, *millet* as opposed to an Assyro-Chaldean or an Assyrian *millet* as the Assyrian nationalists would like it to be. The so-called Assyrians were commonly referred to as the 'Nestorians' or 'Chaldeans' before and at the beginning of the 19th century. In 1833, Eli Smith published a book about his research in Armenia and his visit to the Nestorian and Chaldean Christians.¹⁷ The term 'Assyrian' did not even appear in the index of his book. Smith identified the people that he met as 'Nestorians' or 'Chaldeans' and draw stark contrasts between these two groups.¹⁸ The Assyrian myth is likely to have been revived by the publication of the Orientalist Henry Layard's "Nineveh" in 1849.¹⁹ But even then, the usage of the terms Nestorian and Chaldean overwhelmed the usage of the 'Assyrian' for a while.

What is most remarkable about the 19th century is the explosion in the number of books written about the Assyrians, Nestorians and Chaldeans.²⁰ This fact alone testifies to an insightful correlation between Orientalist 'research', missionary activity and the rise of the Assyrian identity in the golden age of colonization. "Archbishop of Canterbury's Appeal for the Assyrian Christians" in 1886 marks the level of legitimacy the term 'Assyrian' gained in less than fifty years.²¹

Even today, the definition of an Assyrian is the topic of a heated debate. Based on its own investigations and consultation with scholars versed in historical and ancestry knowledge, U.S. Census Bureau has classified the following people as Assyrians: Aramean, Assyrian, Chaldean, Chaldo, Jacobite, Kaldany, Kaldu, Kassdem, Kasdu, Nestorian and Telkeffe.²² Yet the Chaldean church insists on preserving the term 'Chaldean' as part of its identity.²³ I assert that the Chaldeans' unrelenting resistance to the secular national identity building effort of their Assyrian brethren points out to the *incompleteness* of Assyrian nation building in the year 2001.

European-originated Christian Missions' impact over the Assyrian nationhood is an issue that has been and still is debated. Nisan emphasized the role of the Missionaries in standardizing Syriac, increasing literacy, and mobilizing nationalist thinking and encouraging political leadership.²⁴ On the contrary, Eden Naby, in his close examination of the Assyrian community in the Persian city of Urumiyah, claimed that the coming of the Christian Missions in effect put an end to Assyrian unity, as they brought Western education, coupled with Western Christian denominational dissension, to the Nestorian

Assyrians.²⁵ Moreover, children who attend Missionary schools were taught the languages of their mentors but the classical Syriac needed for connecting to Assyrian tradition, philosophy and literature was not taught.²⁶ Every Missionary school became a bastion of imperialist ambitions. The Lazarist Mission's influence was sufficient to establish Salamas (an Assyrian town in West Iran) as a Catholic, French-oriented base.²⁷ The American Mission became the exclusive organ of the Presbyterian Church, and rather than help the old church, Americans encouraged the establishment of a breakaway, native Presbyterian congregation.²⁸ By the beginning of the century the Presbyterian Church had effectively pushed the Nestorian culture in Urumiyah into the background.²⁹ Even though the British and American missions concerted their efforts, Assyrians sought Russian political protection and favor through mass conversion to the Russian Orthodox faith.³⁰ Nestorian Church property was transferred to Russian Orthodox control.³¹ As these examples reveal, religious identity and conversion patterns were correlated to a clientalist exchange of favors in which indigenous Assyrians converted to the denomination of the European power that is expected to provide the most benefits.

As a partial conclusion, since Assyrians did not have their own sovereign state or their own 'national' education system, external powers were able to manipulate and fragment Assyrian nationality. Assyrians needed to be able to form their national identity without any external (i.e. imperialist European) manipulation.

According to Eden Naby, many Assyrian intellectuals opposed the denominational fragmentation of the Assyrian community orchestrated by the European imperial powers. Even though acknowledging the economic and political benefits of the European interference, these intellectuals also understood that the denominational divisions and separate spheres of European influence prevent the unification of the Assyrian nation. The secularist-nationalist Assyrian periodical *Kukhva* began its publication in 1906, after all the Western missions established their periodical presses.³² *Kukhva* served as the organ of the newly emerging local Assyrian leadership and attempted to keep alive the nonsectarian Assyrian language, literature and cultural heritage, despite pressure from the Mission presses.³³ *Kukhva* voiced support for Assyrian unification efforts both inside and outside Urumiyah.³⁴ It also promoted efforts to improve inter-communal relationships between Assyrians and their Muslim neighbors.

Kukhva was a cause for and the expression of the first stirrings of Assyrian nationalism. Even though the Assyrian national myth was created by the European Missions and Orientalists,³⁵ once it is created, Assyrians gradually embraced this identity as a means to define themselves in an increasingly 'nationalized' world. Progressive Assyrians of *Kukhva* condemned the sectarian divisions and the foreign Missions, and called for the unification of the Assyrian nation on a secular basis.

"Kukhva editorial declared that although Assyrians had derived much benefit from the presence of the Missions, they were prepared now to build their own schools and churches and conduct their affairs by themselves. Struggle and hardship are better than being victimized and exploited by 'people...who sell their nation for a salary or a

position.’ The editorial ended by requesting that the Missions depart and take their ‘little disciples’ with them.’”³⁶

Condemnation of the foreign Missions was the end result of a severe sectarian division that divided the Assyrians into four different *millets* in Persia. Unlike the Armenian and Jewish communities in Urumiyah, the Assyrians had four *milletbashis* (community heads) serving Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Russian Orthodox and Nestorians separately.³⁷ In another case, the Persian Constitution of 1906 had given the Assyrians (yet they were referred to as “Chaldeans/Nestorians”) the right to send one delegate to the legislature.³⁸ Yet, the Russian interference in the relationship between the Assyrian community and the Iranian government, through the institution of the Russian Orthodox Mission, had lost the Iranian Assyrians their first opportunity for legitimate participation in government.³⁹

The dedication of the Western Missions to the proselytism of the native Christian church led to sectarian dissent in a *millet*, which had persevered as a unit for centuries under Islamic governments.⁴⁰ Being aware of this fact, progressive Assyrians attempted to neutralize the discord wrought by the Missions through fostering better relations with the Persian authorities, opening channels of communication among Assyrians divided by sect and separated by geography and improving conditions in Assyrian territories so that migration to the West would not be the sole alternative available to the ambitious youth.⁴¹ World and local events conspired to doom the attempt.⁴²

The First World War was a disaster for the Assyrians. Threatened by the Kurdish and Turkish attacks, Nestorians of (Ottoman) Hakkari fled to the Russian occupied Urumiyah and once the Turkish troops captured Urumiyah in 1918, most of the Assyrians fled to the British occupied Northern Iraq. At the end of the war, the surviving Assyrian community had become too widely scattered to attempt a unification on the scale of that preceding World War I.⁴³ The geographic unity had been destroyed.⁴⁴ At the end of the Great War, very few Assyrians stayed in Turkey and virtually none in Iran. Many Assyrians moved to Western European countries and the United States, creating an ever-growing Assyrian Diaspora within the Western world.

As a partial conclusion, the term Assyrian itself, along with the concept of an Assyrian nationality were created by the Orientalist scholars and foreign Missions in the 19th century. Yet once created, the Nestorians and some Chaldeans, embraced this national identity as a means to overcome the religious-sectarian confrontations that they face. We are also justified to say that the same secular and nationalist minded Assyrians attempted to integrate the Assyrian society into the political and social framework of the Islamic society within which they lived. But their efforts were crippled by the European powers that benefited from an enmity between Muslims and Christians and the ensuing instability in the Middle East. At the same time, even though many neighboring Muslim communities (i.e. Iraqis, Syrians) gradually transformed themselves into societies (= *Gesellschaft*) with national bureaucracies, national education and mass media, Assyrians, due to their failure to establish a nation state, remained as a *Gemeinschaft*.

After the Great War, efforts for Assyrian nation-building concentrated in Iraq since Iraq became the only Middle Eastern country with a significant Assyrian population. Assyrian integration into the Iraqi society was remarkably problematic yet more fruitful was the construction of an Assyrian nationality and nationalism in the Iraqi territory.

Throughout the years of British Mandate in Iraq, Assyrians supported and served to protect the British colonialism from Arab insurrection. As Hanna Batatu notes, the British-officered, locally recruited "Iraq Levies" were expanded and was now drawn exclusively from the small, unintegrated racial and religious minority of Assyrians.⁴⁵ The Assyrians Levies' devotion to protect the British colonialism and the tragic events like the Arab-initiated massacre of the Assyrians in 1933 perpetually alienated Assyrians and Muslims from each other.⁴⁶

Yet still the *Kukhva's* dream of integrating Assyrians into the political structures of the Middle East was partially realized in Iraq. Pyotr Vasili, the founder of the Iraqi Communist Party, was an Assyrian.⁴⁷ "Arabized" Assyrians and "Arabized" Chaldeans made up 22.7% of the Iraqi Communist Party in the 1941-1948 period,⁴⁸ a ratio that is disproportionately high with regards to the Assyrian minority's share in the Iraqi population. Moreover, the Iraqi government formally recognized the Assyro-Chaldean cultural and linguistic rights in 1972, but little was done to give a concrete significance to this declaration.⁴⁹

Hanna Batatu divides the people that we think of as Assyrians (in Iraq) into three groups: 1) Arabized Chaldeans, who are two times more politically active and different than the 2) Arabized Assyrians who in turn, are politically active and distinct from the 3) "nonintegrated, unassimilable Assyrians whose name still irritates Iraqis".⁵⁰ In his narrative of an ex-Assyrian Levy and a politically prominent "Arabized" Assyrian (Tariq Aziz, Foreign Minister of Iraq), Adam Haddad mentions that at least one third of the Assyrian people prefer to call themselves as Chaldeans or Christian Arabs.⁵¹

Today, the Assyrians are considered to be the third largest ethnic minority in Iraq.⁵² In 1991, they were believed to represent 133,000 people, or less than 1 percent of the population.⁵³ We would expect this number to be even lower because of the increased migration of the Assyrians to the Western countries after the Gulf War. The demographic inferiority of the Assyrians makes it impossible for them to establish a *Gesellschaft* in the form of a modern nation state. Unless we approach to the problem from a different (i.e. postmodern) vantage point, Assyrians are doomed to live as a deprived "community" among other communities (i.e. Kurdish, Turkoman) within the framework of an Iraqi "society."

Yet, according to the Assyrian representative of Sweden in the Fourth World Conference on Women, there are over three million Assyrians spread all over the world.⁵⁴ Despite the nationalist claims of the self-identified Assyrians on www.nineveh.com, it is not certain whether the three million Assyrians around the world would identify themselves as national Assyrians.

Since both subjective and objective definitions of a nation are unsatisfactory and misleading, we should treat any sufficiently large body of people whose members regard themselves as members of a nation as such.⁵⁵ Like the 41% of Tamil speakers who refused to consider themselves national Tamils and prefer identification as Muslims,⁵⁶ at least one third of the Assyrians in Iraq refuse to consider themselves as Assyrians and prefer to be identified as Christian Arabs.

Some Assyrians' preference of religious identification (Chaldean) over the national one (Assyrian) should not surprise us. Before the advent of the Modern Era, the world was divided between religiously defined multicultural global orders. As Richard Eaton brilliantly demonstrated in his "Islamic History as Global History," the pre-modern world had a cosmopolitan atmosphere that was multiethnic.⁵⁷ Similarly, Nestorian Christianity also had a cosmopolitan atmosphere that was multiethnic. According to the Assyrian nationalist myth, any historical connection to the Nestorian Church is considered to be a mark of Assyrian-ness. Yet, in the 8th century, Nestorian Church was described as *the most missionary church that the world has ever seen*.⁵⁸ Nestorian Missionaries traveled as far as India, China and Japan and converted numerous Indian, Chinese and Turkish people and kings to Nestorian Christianity.⁵⁹ From a historical perspective, it is unreasonable to claim that all the Nestorians and their historical associates, Chaldeans and Jacobites, are descendents of the ancient Assyrians. It is equally unreasonable, then, for the self-defined Assyrians of the 21st century to claim parts (or the whole) of the ancient Assyrian territory of the 1800 B.C.

History is complicated. Almost all of the ancient peoples and empires were shuffled and blended together throughout history; especially throughout the religious cosmopolitanism of the Medieval Ages. Thus, as Hobsbawm once noted, nations are not as old as history; indeed, the modern sense of the word is no older than the 18th century.⁶⁰ Assyrian 'nation' is not an exception to this rule. As my inquiry to the history and the causes of the Assyrian nationalism shows, the term Assyrian was invented, or rather, revived by Western archeologists and Missionaries like Layard and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Once invented, many Nestorians and Chaldeans gradually accepted this term (i.e. Assyrian) as their national identity. The massacres of 1915, the need to undermine the denominational divisions and similar pressures popularized the 'Assyrian' national identity even further.

What prevented the unification of the Assyrian peoples and the realization of the Assyrian national identity formation? The imperialist (i.e. Russian and Western) opposition to a secular identity formation; competition among the European powers to culturally and linguistically patronize the Assyrian people; and the failure of the Assyrian attempts for collective participation and representation in the political institutions of Iraq, Iran and Turkey are all valid answers that explain the *incompleteness* of the Assyrian national identity formation to a certain degree. Yet the Assyrians' failure to establish a nation state and their successive failure to teach and propagate the Assyrian language, culture and history on a massive scale seems to be the primary reason for the *incompleteness* of the Assyrian national identity. Nation is a social entity only insofar as it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state, the 'nation-state', and it is pointless

to discuss nation and nationality except insofar as both relate to it.⁶¹ Even though the aspiration to establish a nation-state is enough to mobilize nationalist thinking, aspiration alone is not enough to construct a full-fledged national identity.

Many features of a full-fledged national identity emerge in the process of constructing political and legal, social and economic institutions for the nation-state. Karl Deutsch conceptualized the “making” of a nationality as a historical process of political integration that increases communication among the members of an ethnic group or a “people.”⁶² According to Deutsch’s formulation, *since* Assyrians failed in their attempt for political integration, *then* Assyrians also failed to make the progress from a *people* to a *nationality*. The “printing capitalism,” which Benedict Anderson holds responsible for the emergence of nationalism,⁶³ creates nationality insofar as it is a network of communications with a prevalent stream of national consciousness that flows within, informing and imposing national knowledge to the “people” who should be transformed into a “nationality.” An alternative scholarly perspective perceives nation-building as the process through which a *Gemeinschaft* (community) is transformed into a *Gesellschaft* (society). The concept of a people is very similar to a *Gemeinschaft*; whereas, the *Gesellschaft* closely resembles a “nationality.” Therefore, I feel justified to substitute *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* for a “people” and a “society,” respectively.

A *Gesellschaft* also necessitates a power elite that oversees the communications network and only allows the information that it approves. In other words, information is restricted and the communications network is closed (by a power elite) in a *Gesellschaft*. Nation-states are very capable of creating such closed networks of communication and ‘filtered’ information flows. Under these conditions, a *Gemeinschaft* can transform itself into a *Gesellschaft* either by establishing its own sovereign state or by becoming a constituent part of a multinational state with full social, economic and cultural rights.⁶⁴

Yet in our contemporary ‘postmodern’ world, communication flows through interpersonal and mass communication networks which often supersede and undermine the closed networks of the nation-states.⁶⁵ In accordance with the German terminology that was employed in describing the nationalization project, Richmond calls this transnational information network as the *Verbindungsnetzschafft*.⁶⁶

As Richmond observes, in reality, *Gesellschaft* relationships never completely replaced *Gemeinschaft*, but were superimposed on them, creating more complex social systems.⁶⁷ This is especially true for the Assyrian people, since they were made up of multiple *millets* (officially recognized Chaldean *millet* in the Ottoman Empire and four different *millets* in the Persian city of Urumiyah), and a *millet* is a community (i.e. *Gemeinschaft*) in the modern sociological sense of the term. Moreover, following the Assyrian nationalists’ failure to unify these religiously defined communities into a secular *Gesellschaft*, Iraqi elite superimposed its own secular Pan-Arabic *Gesellschaft* upon the Assyrian people through the nation-building efforts of the Ba’thist regime.⁶⁸ But the features of the Assyrian communities still persist and protect the ethnic Assyrians of Iraq from being integrated into the Iraqi *Gesellschaft*. Yet some other core features of a *Gemeinschaft*, like its reliance on religious-sectarian preferences, prevent the unification

of the various religiously defined Assyrian communities (=Gemeinschafts) into an overarching secular-nationalist Assyrian *Gesellschaft*.

Religious-sectarian and secular-nationalist propaganda and ideologies compete and reconcile in cyberspace. The well-preserved, non-integrated and unassimilable Assyrian *Gemeinschafts* found channels of expression in the emerging framework of the *Verbindungsnetzschafft*: The Internet is probably the most popular and certainly the most novel of these channels. Klas Gustafson's "Neverland in Cyberspace" attest to this situation by pointing out to the fact that "Assyria is the land that is not to be found in geographies, but has an address –in the Internet."⁶⁹ Albert Gabriel's article on the same issue has a slogan-like title which summarizes the relationship between the *Verbindungsnetzschafft* and the Assyrian nationalism: "Assyrians: '3,000 years of history, yet the Internet is our only home'."⁷⁰

But it is also important to note that the representation of the Net as escaping all authority is simply inadequate.⁷¹ Although the *Verbindungsnetzschafft* broke into the closed networks of the nation-states, it also allowed these states to devise far more sophisticated and exclusive structures of administration and surveillance by employing these new technologies.⁷²

Bearing all this information in mind, we can now draft a resolution to the 'Assyrian National Question' from a more contemporary (and postmodern) vantage point. In the classical *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft* scheme of national identity formation, the establishment of a nation-state was the necessary medium of national identity formation because only the nation-state had enough resources to construct and control a national network. However, the advent of the *Verbindungsnetzschafft* created alternative networks out of state control by making means of communication available to many individuals and communities. Individuals and communities can create their own cultural-linguistic-religious networks by their own initiative. Thus, they do not desperately need government endorsement to promote their (indigenous) culture and language as they used to. Yet, they still need government permission, that is, a right to access the available technology within the territory of the nation-state. Today, it is easier to give concrete meaning to the concept of social and cultural rights since the implementation of these rights does not require direct government endorsement or participation anymore.

In conclusion, it is not just the Assyrians of Iraq but all the Assyrian communities (*Gemeinschafts*) around the world can develop their cultural and linguistic networks if their respective host states build the minimum technological infrastructure to make the *Verbindungsnetzschafft* structures (=Internet, cable TV, e.t.c.) available to the indigenous people. It is not unrealistic to envision a Northern Iraq that is interwoven with Assyrian (as well as Kurdish and Turkoman) cultural and linguistic networks (websites and local broadcasting in Assyrian). Resolution of the competition between sectarian identifications (Chaldean, Nestorian) and nationalist aspirations, and the form of the Assyrian national (re)unification, if it ever happens, may emerge within the relatively peaceful means of communication (i.e. internet/cyberspace) instead of violent inter-communal warfare. Then, Iraq can preserve its territorial integrity while becoming an

increasingly multiethnic state with its respective cyber-nations culturally flourishing within their *Verbindungsnetzschaf*ts. Thus Assyrians can ensure their collective identity, not through government agencies, sponsors or subsidies, but through self-initiated effort via the new means of communication.

Moreover, establishment of a separate Assyrian nation-state in Northern Iraq is out of the realm of possibilities because of the remarkable demographic inferiority of the Assyrians (less than 1 percent of the population) and the lack of national unity among them. Yet preserving the status quo would be synonymous with the denial of Assyrians' cultural and collective rights. Therefore, the multiethnic restructuring of the Iraqi state through a technologically advanced communications infrastructure seems to be a realistic solution to the questions and demands of the Assyrians. Iraqi government's formal recognition of Assyrian cultural and linguistic rights is an indication of its tolerance, if not willingness, of the flourishing of Assyrian culture. To give a concrete meaning to this formal recognition is possible if the Iraqi government allows the Assyrians actually to enjoy the cultural and linguistic rights that they 'officially' possess. The transformation of the Assyrian *Gemeinschaft*s into a *Verbindungsnetzschaf*t is already taking place in the Diaspora; but what is even more necessary is the incorporation of the Assyrian *Gemeinschaft*s of Iraq into a *Verbindungsnetzschaf*t. Thus, we can avoid the violent consequences of creating a *de jure* Assyrian nation-state (i.e. *Gesellschaft*) while actually allowing the religious-sectarian and secular-nationalist Assyrian communities to organize themselves around a *Verbindungsnetzschaf*t that is capable of fulfilling the need to retain cultural and linguistic ties among the Assyrians.

Appendix

Sample list of scholars who have published books about Assyrians or Nestorians, accompanied by the year of their birth and the year of their death in parenthesis, emphasizing the fact that most of these scholars lived in the 19th century when Colonialism and Orientalism were very powerful.

- 1) Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894)
- 2) Thomas Laurie (1821-1897)
- 3) Asahel Grant (1807-1844)
- 4) Adrian Fortescue (1874-1923)
- 5) William Chancey Emhardt (1874-?)
- 6) Edward Leves Cutts (1824-1901)
- 7) Charlotte Eliza Couling (1860-?)
- 8) Arthur John Maclean (1858-1943)
- 9) Justin Perkins (1805-1869)
- 10) William Walker Rockwell (1874-?)
- 11) Eli Smith (1801-1857)
- 12) David Tappan Stoddard (1818-1857)
- 13) R. Campbell Thompson (1876-1941)
- 14) Alex J.D. D'Orsey (1812-1894)
- 15) Paulos Karolides (1849-1930)
- 16) W.A. Wigram (1872-1953)
- 17) A. H. Sayce (1845-1933)

- 18) Erwin Cornelius Schonig (1901-?)
- 19) Christopher Johnston (1856-?)
- 20) George Smith (1800-1868)
- 21) George Stephen Goodspeed (1860-1905)
- 22) Carl Engel (1818-1882)
- 23) Francis W. Galpin (1858-1945)
- 24) Aubery Russell Vine (1900-?)
- 25) George Vance Smith (1816-1902)
- 26) Francois Lenormant (1837-1883)
- 27) Ronald Sempill Stafford (1890-?)

Notes

¹ Nisan, Mordechai. "Assyrians: An Ancient People, a Perennial Struggle," *Minorities of the Middle East*, Jefferson, NC, McFarland & Company, 1991.

² Ibid, p.156.

³ Bailis Yamlikha Shamun, "What's in a Name?" *The Assyrian Star* (Chicago), 34, 1, January-February 1985, p.9. cited in Mordechai Nisan, p.156.

⁴ Mordechai Nisan, Ibid, p.157.

⁵ Ibid, p.157.

⁶ City in northwestern Iran, in the Iranian Azerbaijan. Present day Reziyah, Urumiyah was an important city of Assyrian concentration from where the Assyrians fled to Hemedan in 1918. Also called Oormiyah.

⁷ Mordechai Nisan, "Assyrians: An Ancient People, a Perennial Struggle," *Minorities of the Middle East*, (Jefferson, NC, McFarland & Company, 1991).

⁸ Ibid, p.158.

⁹ Ibid, p.158.

¹⁰ Ibid, p.159.

¹¹ Ibid, p.161.

¹² Ibid, p.161.

¹³ During the massacres of 1915, Nestorians of the Hakkari mountains sought refuge in the Russian occupied Assyrian populated Persian city of Urmiyah. Once Turks captured Urmiyah in 1918, tens of thousands of Assyrians fled to the British occupied Iraq via the Persian city of Hemedan. When the Great War ended in favor of the Allies, Chaldean patriarch requested a European protected state for Chaldeans, Nestorians and Jacobites in Mesopotamia. Britain did not entertain this proposal. At the same time, Turkey and Iran refused the repatriation of Assyrians in Hakkari or Urmiyah. Finally, the Assyrians were resettled in the Mosul region in Northern Iraq due to the lack of any other viable options.

¹⁴ The attempt to settle the Catholic Assyrians (Chaldeans?) in Brazil faced fierce opposition from the Brazilian urban nativists who agitated to shut Brazil's doors in order to preserve racial purity and demographic proportion of the white-European (Aryan) race. For a further treatment of the issue, look at Jeffrey Lesser, "Immigration and Shifting Concepts of National Identity in Brazil during the Vargas Era," Luso Brazilian Review, 1994, 31:2.

¹⁵ Eric J.Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism since 1780. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000) p.3: "Nations, we now know, are not as old as history. The modern sense of the word is no older than the 18th century."

¹⁶ *Millet*, even though it means 'nation' in modern Turkish, referred to a (religious) community that was administered and contacted through a *milletbashimilletbasi* (head of the community) in the Ottoman Empire. It is crucial to notice that a *millet* is not a 'society' (=Gesellschaft) but a religiously defined 'community' (=Gemeinschaft), since the distinction between a Gemeinschaft and a Gesellschaft is fundamental for my argument in this paper.

¹⁷ Eli Smith, Researches of the Rev. E. Smith and Rev. H.G.O. Dwight in Armenia including a journey through Asia Minor, and into Georgia and Persia, with a visit to the Nestorian and Chaldean Christians of Oormiah and Salmas. Volume II. (Boston, Crocker and Brewster, 1833).

¹⁸ Ibid. "We were also not sorry to give countenance...to the Nestorians in opposition to the Chaldeans. For the latter seemed always to announce themselves as a Roman Catholic with a tone of self-congratulation for their orthodoxy...While the Nestorians declared their sentiments with diffidence, as if they expected a frown from everybody...for their heresy. It was not unimportant to show them, that they are not alone in their disapprobation of the papacy."

¹⁹ Austen Henry Layard, Nineveh. (New York, George P. Putnam, 1849).

²⁰ See the Appendix for a list of authors whose works have corresponded to the keywords 'Assyrian' or 'Nestorian' in the Joseph Regenstein Library in the University of Chicago.

²¹ "Archbishop of Canterbury's Appeal for the Assyrian Christians" published as an Appendix (A) of the Portuguese Discoveries, Dependencies and Missions in Asia and Africa, compiled by the Rev. Alex J.D. D'Orsey. (London, W.H. Allen, 1893).

²² <http://www.nineveh.com/2000/>. It is important to note that the same website endorses a proposal to unite all eleven identifications under the unitary title of the 'Assyrian.'

²³ <http://www.nineveh.com/2000/>. "Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syrian Orthodox Church and the Census 2000" by W.M. Warda.

²⁴ Mordechai Nisan, "Assyrians: An Ancient People, a Perennial Struggle," Minorities of the Middle East. (Jefferson, NC, McFarland & Company, 1991). p.162.

²⁵ Eden Naby, "The Assyrians of Iran: Reunification of a 'Millat,' 1906-1914" published in the International Journal of Middle East Studies. (volume 8, No.4, October 1977). p.239.

²⁶ Ibid, p.239-40.

²⁷ Ibid, p.240.

²⁸ Ibid, p.240.

²⁹ Ibid, p.240.

³⁰ Ibid, p.241.

³¹ Ibid, p.241.

³² Ibid. “By 1906, the year when *Kukhva* began publication, the three major Western missions had already established their periodical presses. The American periodical called *Zarira d Bara* (Ray of Light), was the first Assyrian language newspaper in Urumiyah and very possibly the first newspaper, in the modern conception of the term, to be published in Iran. It ran from 1850 to 1914. The Roman Catholic periodical, *Qala d Sharara* (Voice of the Truth) was founded in 1896. *Aurmi Artuduksyita* (Orthodox Urumiyah), published by the Russian Mission, appeared irregularly in the first part of the century but on a more regular basis in 1911, perhaps as a consequence of the Russian occupation of Urumiyah that year.” p.241.

³³ Ibid, p.243.

³⁴ Ibid. “Kukhva also voiced support for unification efforts outside Urumiyah: the formation of cultural societies in Salamas and Tehran, a drive to build an interdenominational church for Assyrians in Tiflis, and a Society of Friendship and Culture formed in Tkumi (Tugun, a village in Hakkari, Turkey), which included among its members Assyrians and Kurds.” p.244.

³⁵ In this paper, I use the word ‘Orientalist’ and ‘Orientalism’ exactly as Edward Said uses it in his *Orientalism*. (New York, Vintage Books, 1979).

³⁶ Ibid. p.245.

³⁷ Ibid. “The corrosive influence of the foreign Missions manifested itself in another aspect of Assyrian relations with Persian authority. It was the practice of small *millats* in Urumiyah, as elsewhere in Iran, to deal with the Persian government through the offices of a community leader called *milletbashi* (community head). Unlike the Armenian and Jewish communities of Urumiyah, by the turn of the century the Assyrians had not one but four *milletbashis* serving Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Russian Orthodox, and Nestorians separately.” p.246.

³⁸ Ibid. p.245.

³⁹ Ibid. p.246.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p.249.

⁴¹ Ibid. p.249.

⁴² Ibid. p.249.

⁴³ Ibid. p.248.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p.248.

⁴⁵ Hanna Batatu, The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978). p.90.

⁴⁶ Ibid. "The Assyrians, a foreign and unassimilable people, whom the English employed as mercenary troops and whose very name still irritated Iraqis, had nursed a bitter hatred against Arab Mosul ever since 1933, when officers from this town played a prominent role in the crushing of a forlorn Assyrian rebellion." p.869.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p.404.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p.699-700.

⁴⁹ Mordechai Nisan, "Assyrians: An Ancient People, a Perennial Struggle," Minorities of the Middle East. (Jefferson, NC, McFarland & Company, 1991). p.166.

⁵⁰ Hanna Batatu, The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978).

⁵¹ <http://www.nineveh.com/levies/story1.htm>, Adam Haddad, "The Day Mam Nona Met Tariq Aziz."

⁵² Iraq: A Country Study, Federal Research Division- Library of Congress, ed. By Helen Chapin Metz. (Washington D.C., U.S. government as represented by the Secretary of the Army, 1990). The largest minority in Iraq is the Kurds, followed by the Turkomans.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ <http://www.nineveh.com/whoarewe.htm>

⁵⁵ Eric J. Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism since 1789. Programme, Myth, Reality. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990). p.8.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p.7.

⁵⁷ Richard M. Eaton, "Islamic History as Global History," published within Islamic and European Expansion. (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1993). p.24.

⁵⁸ Mingana, Bulletin fo the John Rylands Library. Vol.IX, p.347, cited in Rev. John Stewart's Nestorian Missionary Enterprise. (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1928). p.139.

⁵⁹ Rev. John Stewart, Nestorian Missionary Enterprise. (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1928) the entire book; especially chapters 3 through 8.

⁶⁰ Eric J. Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism since 1789: Programme, Myth, Reality. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990). p.3.

⁶¹ Ibid. p.10.

⁶² Ronald Grigor Suny, The Revenge of the Past. (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1993). p.7.

⁶³ Ibid. p.7.

⁶⁴ While conceptualizing a minority that is a constituent part of a multinational state, I think of the example of Canadian Quebec that retained its 'French-ness' to such a degree that in a country with 99% literacy rate (i.e. Canada) it is still possible to find Canadian citizens (in Quebec) who only speak French.

⁶⁵ Anthony H. Richmond, Global Apartheid. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1994). p.200.

⁶⁶ Ibid. p.200.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p.200.

⁶⁸ Amatzia Baram, Culture, History and Ideology Formation of Ba'thist Iraq, 1968-89. (New York, St.Martin's Press, 1991).

⁶⁹ Klas Gustafson, "Neverland in Cyberspace" published in Dagens Arbete (Sweden 1999) and also appears in <http://www.nineveh.com/neverland.htm>.

⁷⁰ Albert Gabriel, "Assyrians: 3,000 Years of History, Yet the Internet is Our Only Home" appears in the <http://www.cs.org/publications/CSO/csqinternet.html#Gabrial>.

⁷¹ Saskia Sassen, "Digital Networks and the State," published in Theory, Culture & Society. 17(4). p.23.

⁷² Ibid.

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