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ASSYRIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

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Newsletter



THE BIG ASSYRIAN QUESTION

In *The Big Assyrian Question* by Nashie Shamoon, a graduate student at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand she chronicles her journal of conducting research for her master's thesis which looked at the role of persecution within the self-identification of young New Zealand- and Australian-Assyrians. In November 2021, Nashie presented her thesis at a roundtable sponsored by the Assyrian Studies Association at the Middle Eastern Studies Association Conference. **Read more on p. 06**



UPCOMING ASSYRIAN EXHIBITION

Research team: Ms. Kathy Sayad Zadari, Esq., Professors Hannibal Travis, Erin Hughes, and Ruth Kamar, with California State University, Stanislaus, the research team is pleased to announce the opening of its exhibit: "Tell Our Stories: Artifacts of the Assyrian Genocide (1895-1924)." The exhibit will be held on the California State University Stanislaus campus, and will be open from **June 30, 2022, through August 7, 2022**. The exhibit and speakers program will be offered free of charge to the public. **Read more on p. 01**



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UPCOMING WEBINAR IN JUNE

Lolita Emmanuel is an Assyrian and Armenian musician, born on Cabrogal land (Western Sydney, Australia). In the upcoming webinar held on **June 17**, Lolita will be presenting research from her 2018 feminist ethnomusicological thesis, *Shamiram Sings: Negotiating Perceptions of Young Assyrian-Australian Womanhood Through Wedding Music*. To read the article, please visit our website to download this research publication. **Read more on p. 03**



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TABLE ON CONTENTS

Assyrian Genocide Exhibition at California State University, Stanislaus	1
Nahrain Rasho Awarded President's Postdoctoral Fellowship	1
Upcoming Assyrian Policy Institute Conference	1
Assyrian Meeting Held at Yonkers City Hall	2
Nineveh Academic Chair First International Congress	2
Upcoming Webinar with Lolita Emmanuel	3
<i>Returning Home: The Ambivalent Assyrian Experience in Turkey</i> by Abdulmesih BarAbraham	3
<i>Common Mental Disorders in Adult Syrian Refugees Resettled in High Income Western Countries</i> by Shameran Slewa-Younan	4
<i>Sayfo, an Account of the Assyrian Genocide</i> by Abed Mshiho Neman Qarabash	4
Assyrian Studies Archival Initiative Update	5
Upcoming Assyrian Studies Association Grants	5
<i>The Big Assyrian Question</i> by Nashie Shamoon	6
<i>A Short History of the Assyrian-themed Citadel Outlet Mall</i> by Julye Bidmead	7-9

This newsletter is created and published by the Assyrian Studies Association, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization that promotes interest in and the academic study of the longue durée of the Assyro-Mesopotamian heritage through supporting research, scholarly publications, and collaborative projects. It facilitates contact and exchange of information between scholars, academic organizations, and communities across various disciplines. ASA functions as an instrument to advance studies on the Assyrian people and their culture on an academic level.

ASSYRIAN GENOCIDE EXHIBITION AT CALIFORNIA STATE, STANISLAUS

by Ruth Kambar,
Board of Director
Assyrian Studies Association

The Research team: Ms. Kathy Sayad Zatari, Esq., Professors Hannibal Travis, Erin Hughes, and Ruth Kambar, with California State University, Stanislaus, the research team is pleased to announce the opening of its exhibit: *Tell Our Stories: Artifacts of the Assyrian Genocide (1895-1924)*.

This exhibit will explore the Assyrian Genocide era (1895–1924), the subsequent experience of Assyrians resettling in the USA from Turkey, Urmia, and elsewhere in the former Ottoman Empire, and the exploration of oral history, documents, and historical artifacts that illustrate, to some small degree, how Assyrians survived war, genocide, and displacement over the years.

This exhibit is partially funded through a grant awarded by California Humanities to the University. The exhibit will be held on the California State University Stanislaus campus, and will be open from **June 30, 2022, through August 7, 2022**. During the exhibit period, we will invite scholars of migration and Assyrian history to more fully describe the genocide and its aftermath.

The online component of the exhibition will made a selection of oral histories, images, and documents available around the world. It will be hosted by CSUS this summer. Themes of the online exhibit include the historic ties of the Assyrians to their historic homeland, testimonies in writing and by video concerning persecutions and extermination policies in the genocide period and in Iraq and Syria subsequently, and the resilience of Assyrian communities in the homeland and in Diaspora.

The exhibition and speakers' program will be offered free of charge to the public.

UPCOMING ASSYRIAN POLICY INSTITUTE CONFERENCE

The Assyrian National Conference in Washington, D.C. seeks to bring Assyrians together to discuss issues pertaining to the Assyrian Diaspora, including the future of Assyrians in the countries that form their traditional homeland. Through three days of discussions, panels, workshops, networking, advocacy, and brainstorming sessions, attendees from across the country will analyze issues affecting our communities and explore solutions to undertake as a collective. To register for the conference, please visit AssyrianPolicyConference.org



Photo Credit: Nahrain Rasho.

NAHRAIN RASHO AWARDED A PRESIDENT'S POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

Nahrain Rasho, a Ph.D student of Political Science at the University of California, Davis was recently awarded the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Arizona for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Rasho's research explores issues of human rights, including local ethnic minority representation, marginalization, and demands for self-determination. She argues territorial autonomy increases local-ethnic group grievances and triggers demands for self-determination by local ethnic minority groups. Rasho used interview data with Assyrian Christian elites and civilians in Northern Iraq, she traces the consequences of autonomy arrangements in Northern Iraq on self-determination demands by indigenous Assyrian Christians.

Her dissertation, is funded by the U.S. Institute of Peace and the Russell J. Dorothy S. Bilinski Educational Foundation. To learn more about Nahrain's research, please visit her website, nahrainrasho.wixsite.com

ASSYRIAN MEETING HELD AT YONKERS CITY HALL

by *Ruth Kamar*,
Board of Director
Assyrian Studies Association

On Saturday, April 2, 2022, John Constantine, Esq., organized and addressed the Yonkers City Council and the Assyrian community at Yonkers City Hall for the annual Assyrian Flag Raising to celebrate the 108th Anniversary of the Assyrian American Association in Yonkers and of the Assyrian New Year 6772. During the actual flag raising, Ms. Samara Brakhia of New Britain and Mrs. Ana Constantine sang an Assyrian Patriotic song.

Mr. Constantine and the City Council presented Qasha Adday Francis with a Proclamation to mark the anniversary. Dr. Ruth Kamar, member of the Assyrian Studies Association Board of Directors, spoke about her work for the ASA Archive, asking fellow Assyrians to contribute to the extensive body of artifacts that include documents, photographs, oral histories, videos, and films. She also reminded her Assyrian audience that she would like to add their oral histories to the seventeen oral histories she has recorded, fourteen among the Yonkers Public Library Assyrian Oral History Project. Dr. Kamar concluded her short address, followed by a brunch at the Mar Mari Assyrian Apostolic Catholic Church in Yonkers, where she shared a preview of the *Assyrians in Motion* film, recorded by John (Aghajan) Baba in 1937 to advertise his Assyrian Press in Chicago.



Photo Credit: Ruth Kamar. Photo of the Assyrian meeting at the Yonker's City Hall in March 2022.

NINEVEH ACADEMIC CHAIR FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

Assyrian Language, History and Culture
Salamanca 23-25 May 2022



UNIVERSIDAD
DE SALAMANCA



Photo Credit: Nineveh Academic Chair.

NINEVEH ACADEMIC CHAIR FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

Assyrian Language, History and Culture
University of Salamanca
23-25 May 2022

At this first international Congress, the Nineveh Academic Chair will allow experts in Assyrian language, history, and culture to debate upon the true Assyrian legacy as a whole. Much has been written and discussed about the ancient Assyrian people, but after the fall of Nineveh in the 7th century BC, their international influence declined considerably, but they continued to exist under various imperial powers until modern times. Information about the Assyrian people and their legacy reached the Western world very late and in a biased way. An update on the true historical, linguistic, and cultural legacy is sorely needed. We have invited world-class experts in Assyrian language, history, and culture to provide a real insight into the aforementioned domains. We believe that the time has come for the 21st century society to know the true historical, linguistic and cultural reality of this people.

This congress is open to anyone who wants to learn about the linguistic, historical, and cultural richness of the Assyrian people. To learn more about this congress, please visit their website at: <https://bit.ly/3spQnyT>

UPCOMING WEBINAR WITH LOLITA EMMANUEL

New Event - Friday, June 17, 2022

Lolita will be presenting research from her 2018 feminist ethnomusicological thesis, *Shamiram Sings: Negotiating Perceptions of Young Assyrian-Australian Womanhood Through Wedding Music*. The thesis examines how young women negotiate gender boundaries and expectations in Assyrian wedding music practices, revealing how women grapple with the concept of honor, inter- and intra-generational tensions in stateless diaspora. Emmanuel also demonstrates how young women use music to assert their own agency and expressions of Assyrian identity despite these challenges.

Emmanuel is an Assyrian and Armenian musician, born on the Cabrogal land (Western Sydney, Australia) and navigating many worlds. Emmanuel is a pianist, vocalist, music teacher and researcher. She is currently DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) candidate at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Emmanuel is currently an academic tutor in musicology at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and the keyboardist for hip-hop artist Rhyam Clapham aka DOBBY's WARRANGU: River Story project.

To register for this webinar, please visit our [website](#) for more information. *This event is virtual and registration is required.*

Gender, Musical Transformation and Assyrian Weddings in Stateless Diaspora

Friday, June 17 | 5pm (PST)

Join us for a conversation with Lolita Emmanuel, a Doctor of Musical Arts candidate at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Lolita will be presenting research from her 2018 feminist ethnomusicological thesis, *Shamiram Sings: Negotiating Perceptions of Young Assyrian-Australian Womanhood Through Wedding Music*. The thesis examines how young women negotiate gender boundaries and expectations in Assyrian wedding music practices, revealing how women grapple with the concept of honour, inter- and intra-generational tensions in stateless diaspora.



Lolita Emmanuel,
Doctor of Musical Arts candidate at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music

This is a virtual event. Registration is required.
AssyrianStudiesAssociation.org/webinars

NEW RESEARCH:

RETURNING HOME: THE AMBIVALENT ASSYRIAN EXPERIENCE IN TURKEY

by *Abdulmesih BarAbraham,*
Mor Afrem Foundation

Discrimination and precarious living conditions in Tur Abdin, in Southeastern Turkey, prompted Assyrians, indigenous Christian ethnic people to the country, to leave their homeland for Europe in the early 1960s. The process of migration continued for several decades and intensified with the militarization of the eastern provinces during the fight against the Kurdish PKK. Many Assyrian villages had to be abandoned. With an appeal formulated in a circular letter by Turkey's then Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit in 2001, the Turkish government encouraged Assyrians abroad to return to their former homeland, assuring them that their security and rights as citizens would be guaranteed by the state. At the beginning of the new millennium, the situation in Tur Abdin seemed noticeably improved. The end of the state of emergency in the eastern provinces and the application of rule of law in the wake of the reforms in the context of EU accession process contributed to this. Many of the Assyrians who emigrated re-visited their former villages, but also tried to rebuild churches and their mostly dilapidated houses. Clarification of ownership of land and properties after occupation and changes of legal basis became a key issue. **To read the article in full, please visit: <http://ojs.zrs-kp.si/index.php/poligrafi/article/view/282>**

NEW RESEARCH:

COMMON MENTAL DISORDERS IN ADULT SYRIAN REFUGEES RESETTLED IN HIGH INCOME WESTERN COUNTRIES

by Shameran Slewa-Younan, Thomas P. Nguyen, Maria Gabriela Uribe Guarjardo, Berhe W. Sahle, and Andrew M.N. Renzaho

In the latest publication by Shameran Slewa-Younan, an associate professor of mental health at the Western Sydney University, and her colleagues, Thomas P. Nguyen, Maria Gabriela Uribe Guajardo, Berhe W. Sahle, and Andrew M.N. Renzaho; they study the immense social upheaval and ongoing humanitarian crisis created by the 2011 war in Syria has forced millions of civilians to flee their homeland, many of whom seek refugee status in Western nations. Whilst it is known that the prevalence of mental illness is higher within refugee populations, this systematic review and meta analysis aimed to pool the prevalence rates of common mental disorders (namely post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and generalized anxiety disorder) in adult Syrian refugees resettled in high income Western countries.

Of the 4873 refugees included in the meta-analysis, the total pooled prevalence rate of having any of the three mental disorders was 33% (CI 95%, 27-40%), 40% for anxiety (CI 95%, 31-50%), 31% for depression (CI 95%, 20-44%) and 31% for PTSD (CI 95%, 22-41%). A meta-regression revealed that the total pooled prevalence rate for having any of the three mental disorders was not influenced by age, host country, duration in host country, educational or marital status. Despite significant study heterogeneity, the prevalence rates of common mental disorders in adult Syrian refugees resettled in high-income Western countries are significantly higher than reported rates in the general population.

To read the article in full, please visit: <https://bmcpsychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-021-03664-7>

NEW BOOK: *SAYFO, AN ACCOUNT OF THE ASSYRIAN GENOCIDE BY ABED MSHIHO NEMAN QARABASH*

Book Preview

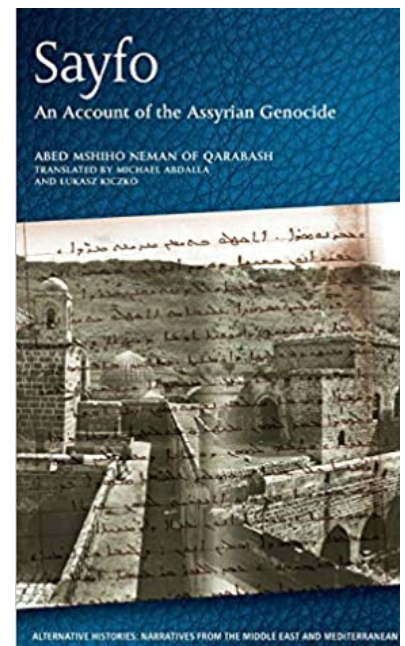
In this newsletter, we are highlighting a book that the Assyrian Studies Association financially supported: *Sayfo, An Account of the Assyrian Genocide* to honor all the Assyrians who were lost in past genocides.

Given its important context, this text is one of the few surviving eyewitness sources on the Assyrian Genocide, written by a seminarian living in greater Tur Abdin (the southeast of today's Turkish state).

perspective is one that is little known and less discussed.

Translated and annotated by a master of Syriac with an in-depth knowledge of modern Assyrian history, this text creates a unique opportunity for new and progressive scholarship. The Assyrian Genocide is one of the forgotten atrocities of the 20th century. The physical destruction was but one element; it also caused demographic shifts, loss of territory, generational trauma and linguicide, along with cultural genocide/ethnocide and identity erosion.

If you interested in reading this historical book, please visit [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or visit your nearest bookstore.



ASSYRIAN STUDIES ARCHIVAL INITIATIVE UPDATE

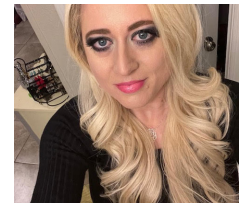
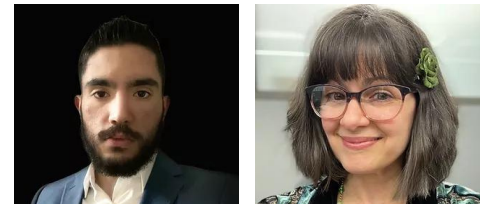
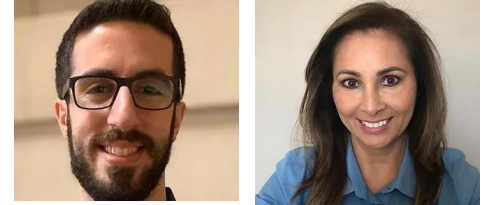
by Ruth Kamar,
Board of Director
Assyrian Studies Association

The members of Assyrian Studies Association's Archival Committee are pleased to announce that we are currently cataloging and collecting Assyrian historical materials. The Archival Committee is responsible for the development and implementation of the Heritage Archive Initiative; to identify historical materials in need of preservation and archiving; to seek out-of-print books in need of digitization and/or preservation through archiving; and to coordinate with the Fundraising Committee for financial support.

For the last two years we have set out to catalog our current collection, including the Modern Assyrian Research Archive (MARA) materials. At present, we are interested in scanning your family photos, books, documents, and film. Because we are particularly interested in preserving materials from our transnational diaspora, we encourage you to contact Ruth Kamar: rkambar@assyrianstudiesassociation.org to donate, lend for scanning, or to ask questions about the importance of your family items.

The members of our team include:

Ruth Kamar, Chairperson
Ramsin Adam
Tomas Beth-Avdalla
Christy Shalitta Hooper
Esther Lang
Elvin Golpashan
Ashley Khamis Errington
Julia Bajone Hallisy
Sarah McLennan, Web Designer



Top to bottom: Ruth Kamar, Tomas Beth-Avdalla, Ramsin Adam, Julia Bajone Hallisy, Elvin Golpashan, Christy Shalitta Hooper, and Ashley Khamis Errington.

UPCOMING GRANTS

- **Assyrian Academic Research Grant** - Applications available July 1, 2022. Deadline: September 1, 2022.
- **Children's and Popular Book Grant** - Applications available October 1, 2022. Deadline: December 1, 2022.
- **Assyrian Culture Research Grant** - Applications available November 1, 2022. Deadline: January 5, 2023.

To learn more about our grants, how to qualify, and to download the application, please visit our website: AssyrianStudiesAssociation.org/grants



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SHORT ARTICLE: THE BIG ASSYRIAN QUESTION

by *Nashie Shamoon*,
Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

“Will we survive?” This question, and its many iterations, have been at the forefront of the collective Assyrian mind between centuries and generations. Only natural, given the persecution our people have faced, persevered through, and survived, yet as time progresses there are next-big questions on the horizon. For example, “What does this ‘theme’ of persecution, which arguably forms the backbone of the traditional Assyrian identity framework and wider diaspora mean, today?” “How about in 5-, 10-, or 25-years’ time?” Moreover, “Do young Assyrians associate with this traditional-type identity?” “Will they in the future?”



Photo: Nashie Shamoon, a student at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

I sought to provide a response to the present-day-focused questions through my Master’s research, which looked at the role of persecution within the self-identification of young New Zealand- and Australian-Assyrians. Between July and September 2020, I conducted one focus group and five individual, semi-structured and in-depth interviews with eight Assyrians based in Wellington and Auckland, New Zealand and Sydney, Australia.

This research is personal, borne out of the questions I had growing up after I learnt of my great-grandfather’s journey to survival during the Assyrian Genocide, and his life subsequently thereafter. As a New Zealand-born Assyrian, I have never had to endure the *junjara* (suffering) my ancestors and people have—like many Western-born and/or -raised Assyrians. Despite this, I have always felt strongly about it as this idea of *junjara* has a powerful, ever-present existence in our very being, communities, and diaspora. To be an Assyrian often means to continuously remember and honor our people for all they have endured. I have regularly wondered, “Do other young Assyrians feel the same way?” “As intensely?”

Although my background played a natural, definite part in creating this research, it was also significantly fuelled by the near-omission of young Assyrians’ perceptions of persecution from identity standpoints, as well as the invisibility of New Zealand-and Australian-Assyrians’ voices, in the Assyrian-focused scholarship. In late-November, I had the privilege of partaking in Assyrian Studies Associations’ roundtable discussion, *Assyrian Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches and Navigating from Orientalism to Indigenous and Decolonizing Methodologies* at the 2021 Middle East Studies Association conference. I argued that the former is, perhaps, a product of the scholarship’s preoccupation with reclaiming our narrative and space. As in, Assyrians (and allies) are speaking for Assyrians’ history and existence—sharing our perspective—in the face of the hazardous stances which continue to further marginalise our truth. Whereas, the latter could be a discernment of the communities here as being small (an aspect also supported by our physical distance from the rest of the diaspora). While New Zealand has a very small Assyrian population, in contrast, that of Australia has formed a substantial part of the diaspora since the mid-2010s.

My thesis combined these issues and aimed to raise awareness of not only young Assyrians’ existence in the scholarship—and the wider community and diasporic dialogue(s)—but to highlight the need for New Zealand-and Australian-Assyrians within as well. In essence I found that due to a disconnection from the Homeland, most of the participants involved were creating a type of Western-Assyrian identity which was not concentrated on persecution or related themes. Instead, it captured the positive elements of the Assyrian culture and heritage against the backdrop of a safe, secure, and peaceful life in the West.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ASSYRIAN-THEMED CITADEL OUTLET MALL

by *Julye Bidmead*,
Director, Center for Undergraduate Excellence,
Office of the Provost
Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies

As a scholar of ancient Mesopotamian religion and archaeology, the Citadel Outlets (a sprawling discount mall just southeast of downtown Los Angeles), caught my interest as soon as I moved to Southern California. Driving down Interstate 5, I could not help but notice its fortress-like structure of terracotta and orange-colored walls adorned with reliefs of ancient kings and winged genii. But what really caught my attention was several gigantic Lamassu hovering over the complex. I quickly found the nearest freeway exit and wandered around the mall in wonder, fascination, and curiosity. The western exterior wall displayed a relief of King Sargon II facing a similarly styled relief of a winged geni. Etched across the legs of both figures were lines of faux cuneiform, the wedge-shaped script used for several Near Eastern languages. Towards the center of this walled structure, smaller pairs of Lamassu flanked the entrance to the Citadel's business offices. Stepping inside, I was awestruck by the attention to detail within the office. More replicas of Assyrian chariot reliefs with kings and genii were blended almost seamlessly with Art Deco designs.



Photo credit: Julye Bidmead.

For my research, the most intriguing Mesopotamian imagery at the Citadel Outlets is the genii and the Lamassu. Both figures were widespread in ancient Assyrian culture. The genii are winged benevolent hybrid divine beings whose iconography graced the walls of many Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs. Though varying in style, the genii are almost always bearded males with long waving hair and muscular builds, clad in Assyrian garments identical to the king, including the stylistic rosette bracelet and armlets. Horned helmets on their heads indicate their divinity. Like the ancient reliefs, the Citadel genii hold a pinecone in their raised right hands and a bucket in their left—objects used for ritual purification practices. Replicas of the lamassu at the mall also follow the design of the Khorsabad ones. The lamassu possesses a masculine human face and curly beard carved in exquisite detail. Feathered wings arise from its upper body, and sculpted legs and hooved feet give the lamassu a uniqueness not matched in other ancient artifacts. In palaces and other public buildings, both the genii and the lamassu often stood as monumental edifices protecting the king and, in turn, all his subjects from evil and calamities. To the ancients, they were familiar guardians who offered a sense of calm, order, and security, but what does their presence at the Citadel Outlet say to a modern viewer? Do they see them as make-believe fairy-tale figures, or do they convey the sense of "strength" that Schleicher envisioned? Again, this is not an easy answer, but perhaps a look at another contemporary example of a Mesopotamian-themed shopping mall in Los Angeles sheds some light. The Hollywood and Highland Center (now Ovation Hollywood), a multi-storied open-air shopping mall in Los Angeles, is a tourist mecca visited by thousands who want to shop while experiencing a taste of old Hollywood. Constructed in 2001 with a nod towards the silent-film era Hollywood, the mall included a "Babylonian Court"—a replica of the lavish movie set from D.W. Griffith's silent epic, *Intolerance* (1916). The movie set, and the mall, featured Neo-Assyrian motifs, including the winged genii, lamassu, and the stylized Assyrian tree. But sadly, the Mesopotamian imagery is now gone. Angelenos complained that the Hollywood and Highland Center was a homage to Griffith's white supremacist ideology and petitioned to have it replaced by something that reflects the modern 21st-century shopper. In July 2021, crews began dismantling the Babylonian displays, replacing them with Art Deco displays. In the future, will someone question the Assyrian imagery at the Citadel Outlet and fight for its removal? I hope not because the situation at the two malls is quite different. Yet, one could argue that the appearances of ancient religious and

mythological imagery taken out of context is cultural appropriation of a foreign culture, especially when considering the Orientalism and colonialism behind the discovery of these ancient artifacts. Is there anything to be gained from the use of ancient Assyrian imagery in today's culture? I think there is if done correctly. Understanding the imagery might lessen the feelings of blatant appropriation. For example, at the Citadel Outlet, placing plaques with QR codes linked to a short and unbiased explanation of the significant role of the lamassu and genii. This would spotlight the rich history of the Assyrian people, both ancient and modern. Looking at the religious figures not as something "other" or "exotic" in a "pagan" religion but as an integral component of another's worldview would provide an educational commentary and a sense of cultural context to the casual and likely uninformed shopper.

These ancient Assyrian themes were obvious to me, but why were they here in a mall in Los Angeles? Why are the Lamassu and genii, apotropaic and protective symbols from Mesopotamian religion, so numerous in this modern-day structure? These questions were not easily answered. The Citadel's website boasted, "Only in Los Angeles can you drive to an Assyrian palace to buy blue jeans and leather goods. Citadel Outlets, Los Angeles' only outlet center, has the distinct honor to be located behind an Assyrian Castle wall." There was little information about its history or connection to ancient Assyria.

Digging into the history of the Citadel Outlets, I found it was full of ancient Near Eastern references. In 1918, Southern California tire manufacturer Adolph Burgess Schleicher selected the name "Samson" for his Tire and Rubber Company. Samson, the last of the ancient Israelite judges, is synonymous with strength, might, and endurance and Schleicher wanted his tires to reflect those same characteristics. When Schleicher's factory outgrew its space ten years later, he purchased land in an industrial area of Commerce, CA, and commissioned the well-known Los Angeles architectural firm of Morgan, Walls, and Clement to build a new 23-acre factory that visually reflected the "Samson theme." The firm was a perfect choice as the firm had previously designed other landmark buildings, such as Los Angeles' Mayan and El Capitan Theaters, and was famous for its Art Deco and historic revival architecture. For Schleicher's factory, the firm selected a Neo-Assyrian design, specifically King Sargon II's (r. 721-705 BCE) capital city, Dūr-Šarrukīn. Dūr-Šarrukīn, meaning the "fortress or citadel of Sargon," which is located near the Tigris River in Khorsabad, Iraq.



Photo credit: Julye Bidmead.





Photo credit: Archive. KPCC.org.

Unfortunately, Schleicher's Samson Tire and Rubber Company was short-lived. Ten months after its lavish groundbreaking ceremony and before the factory had even opened for business, the stock market crashed. Business dwindled, forcing him to sell his palatial and much-beloved factory in 1931. The complex operated as a tire factory, through various owners, for 48 years until the structure was finally abandoned in 1978. An eyesore with broken windows and dusty façades, the factory sat defunct and was scheduled for demolition. In 1983 the city of Commerce rescued the complex from its demise. They purchased the property and renovated it as a mixed-use retail establishment, opening as the Citadel Outlets Mall on Black Friday, November 23, 1990. A few more years of redesign and expansion followed, resulting in the popular 35-acre discount mall we have today.

To understand the grandeur and the history of the present Citadel Outlets Mall, a trip back in time is needed--nearly 3000 years to King Sargon's ancient capital city. Sargon dedicated Dūr-Šarrukīn in 707 BCE, and it became the epicenter of Neo-Assyrian administration. When Sargon was killed unexpectedly in battle a few years later, his son and successor, Sennacherib (r.705–681 BCE), moved the capital to the more established locale at Nineveh. Sargon's magnificent city, like Schleicher's factory, was short-lived and stood as an abandoned ruin. In Dūr-Šarrukīn's case, the ancient city was largely unknown to modern scholars until around 1843 CE, when Paul-Émile Botta, the French consul at Ottoman-controlled Mosul, began archaeological excavations there. A decade later, in 1853, Victor Place, the next French consul, continued Botta's work. In summary, the French excavations revealed a massive palatial complex surrounded by a four-mile-long city wall. The royal palace alone contained 240 rooms, courtyards, and corridors. Monumental stone relief panels with royal processions, mythological scenes, and apotropaic figures decorated the walls of the complex. The Lamassu, the colossal hybrid mythical creatures combining the head of a human, the body of a bull, and the wings of a bird, stood on the gates and doorways as protectors of the ancient city.

While Botta's expedition marked the first major extensive archaeological exploration of an Assyrian city, the British were also actively digging up the ancient land. French-born English explorer and archaeologist Austen Henry Layard and Hormuzd Rassam, an Iraqi/Assyrian archaeologist from Mosul, worked on nearby Nimrud in 1845, later moving to excavate Nineveh. These early Assyrian excavations helped uncover some of the wondrous artifacts that grace our museums today. However, moving these artifacts to the museums in the 19th century proved to be rather challenging. For example, the massive lamassu, carved from a single block of gypsum, measuring almost 16 feet tall and weighing more than 40 tons, were too heavy to be transported. Drawings from Layard's excavations show the Lamassu being hoisted unto sleds to keep them intact. But Botta was not as meticulous; he cut off the lamassu's heads to transport them to the Louvre! From 1927-to 1935, an American team of archaeologists from the University of Chicago conducted several seasons of research at Khorsabad. The long-lost world of ancient Assyria was now known to the modern world. With archaeological expeditions taking place all over Mesopotamia by the late 1920s-30s, this imagery was firmly ingrained in the public consciousness and part of popular culture. It is not surprising that the architects selected an Assyrian theme for the Samson Tire and Rubber Company complex.



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