

**Les Araméens Du Bout Du Monde: La Mémoire des Chrétiens d'Orient.**

**The Arameans At the Very Edge of the World: Memoirs of the Eastern Christians,** By Georges Bohas. In French. Editions Universitaire du Sud. Toulouse Cedex, France, 1994. 178 pp. No Index.

*Reviewed by George V. Yana (Bebla)*

This is an unusual book, in the sense that its style departs from convention. The language is conversational, colloquial French, as it normally happens between friends. The words: “*the very edge of the world*” which are part of the title, come from the hostess who tells the author: “*what in the world can you see in Qamishly, it's the very edge of the world?*” The book is interesting because the reader is introduced to real people, not abstract analysis. Of course, a scholarly study of the Assyrians of Khabur, in Syria, is a valuable objective to be encouraged. But, one work should not be substituted for the other, as both are important.

Many of us would spend thousands of dollars to go to the Khabur, just to see and speak to its Assyrians. Georges Bohas has done just that, and the book has many pictures from the Assyrians, where you can see them as real people.

This book is important because it shows to the reader what the Assyrians of Syria think about themselves, their history and religion. Many authors investigating our historic identity use the name we have used to call ourselves. One of the arguments the French author, J.M. Fiey, uses against our Assyrian identity, can be found in his article: “L'Orient Syrien” or “The Syrian East”, and is presented under the heading: “*What did they call themselves?*” In this book, not only do we learn what they call themselves, but we also read interesting stories about their origins, about Queen Semiramis, General Agha Petros, Lady Surma, and how they crossed the Khabur River under fire from both, the British and the Arabs.

Clearly, Bohas does not intend to authenticate these accounts. What the author provides is a panorama of the opinions he hears. The reader is taken along on a trip to these Assyrian villages, where one meets a number of local people who talk to Bohas and offer their view on different topics. At times, they express opposite views of the role played by Lady Surma, and by others, during and following the Assyrian exodus. No surprise there, since we all see the world differently. Bohas is not endorsing or advancing any particular point of view. The reader wishing to read a scholarly account of any of the issues raised, will do better to refer to works such as Joel Werda's *The Flickering Light of Asia*; Joel Werda's *The Assyrian Tragedy*, W.A. Wigram's *Our Smallest Ally*, or past issues of the Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies.

It was by sheer accident that Bohas learned about Assyrian villages in Qamishly, where the people speak Syriac (Modern Assyrian). In his own words:

*“It was, therefore, completely by chance that I decided to study the modern Aramaic dialects and become interested in the people who speak them.”*

The author is a specialist of international renown in Arab linguistics. His remarkable knowledge of the Semitic languages uniquely qualifies him for the task at hand. In this project, the author visits and interviews the Assyrians living along the Khabur River, in North-East Syria. His visits have taken him to the area on several occasions: 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1991. The book is a composite of these experiences, presented according to this chronology.

In his conversations with the Assyrians, Bohas covers a broad array of topics, ranging from their origin, to their recent history, the way they bake their bread or how they produce mud bricks for construction, the particularities of their religion from the point of view of both the ordinary man and the Assyrian Archimandrite<sup>1</sup>, and the personal story of Immi Tchenne, an old woman, as she tells it herself. To communicate with his Assyrian hosts, Bohas uses different languages, including neo-Aramaic (Modern Assyrian), French, and Arabic.

The author explains (p.9) that he has been working on Syriac (Modern Assyrian), a branch of Aramaic, for a long time. In 1972, while he was preparing for his graduation in Arabic, he decided to follow his Syriac studies to an advanced level. Throughout his studies the author had considered Syriac a dead language. But later he decided to study these living dialects. He speculated that surely these people would have a history. Would they remember it? In the upheavals of the Middle-East, how did they maintain their traditions (if any), and how did they preserve their religion (which he had yet to define)?

This is why, as he writes, he returned to Tell Sakra. (p.10). Once there, he asks his hosts to inform him on their history and origins, and what had brought them to the banks of the Khabur. He was referred to a man he calls the ‘Old Man’ [literally, the Ancient One]. The ‘Old Man’ begins his history of the Assyrians as follows (p. 21):

*“For us, history begins with Shem. He was the son of Noah, the one who built the Ark during the flood. Noah had three sons, the elder was Shem, then Ham and Awad. Shem came down here, at the Billad esh-Shem, that’s why it is called the country of Shem. Shem had five sons. The eldest, Aram, the second Ashur, the third Ilam, the fourth Lot and the fifth Ishapat. Aram took the coastal plains of Syria, Mesopotamia became Ashur’s share, and Ilam went to the land of the Persians, Iran. Iranians were first called Ilamians, then came a new tribe, the Medes, then another one which was very populous and was called the Persian.*

*“We are the children of Ashur, the Armenians are the children of Aram and the Arabs, the children of Lot. The Persians are the children*

<sup>1</sup> Archimandrite, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, “is a dignitary in an Eastern church ranking below a bishop; specifically: the superior of a large monastery or group of monasteries.” The Random House College Dictionary adds the following meaning to Archimandrite: “abbot” or “a title given to distinguished celibate priests.”

*of Ilam; the Jews, the Israelites, the Palestinians, all these are the sons of Ishapat.*

The 'Old Man' goes on to recount the story of Shamiram [Queen Semiramis]. (p. 23).

*After Sargon II, Queen Shamiram appears in history. She is the most famous queen of the Assyrians. Before her, there never was a queen with such a personality. Her name was Shamiram Addé. Addé is the name of her father. There are people who say she didn't have a father or mother. In fact, her father is known. Wasn't she called Shamiram Addé? Maybe he did not acknowledge her. Her mother, was certainly ashamed, so she gave Shamiram to some shepherds, and took refuge in a convent.*

*At this time, King Ninus was ruling. He had a Vizier who used to travel across countries and lands. One day he came across the shepherds who were taking care of Shamiram. The vizier had no children, no posterity. He took Shamiram for his daughter and brought her home, where she grew up as his daughter. There was a famous army general, named Kalendaro, who was victorious in all his combats. One day he saw Shamiram, fell in love with her and asked for her hand. The vizier accepted the request and Shamiram became the wife of General Kalendaro.*

*In the mountains of Asia Minor, today's Turkey, there was a citadel with very good fortifications. King Ninus decided to conquer the citadel and for that, he chose Kalendaro. General Kalendaro besieged the citadel and launched several attacks, but without success. When Shamiram saw him so sad, she said to him: "Don't worry and don't discuss this with anyone. Give me your garments, your arms and all your gear, without saying anything to your troops. Everything I do will be done in your name. Above all, do not tell the king. Tonight, the citadel will be yours, your troops will enter it. You will tell the king that you conquered the citadel, not Shamiram". She asked for twelve soldiers, and that same night she took the citadel and the Assyrian flag was flying atop the walls. When the King came to see Kalendaro, because he was such a straightforward person he couldn't lie, so, he told the king who was the real conqueror, namely, Shamiram his wife. When the king saw Shamiram, he fell in love with her. To have Shamiram for himself, King Ninus sent General Kalendaro to a dangerous mission, sending some of his own men along, with instructions to kill the General should he survive the mission. In fact, the men of King Ninus did kill the general. According to the movie made of Shamiram, a movie made in the west, which I saw in 1954, in Aleppo [Syria], before reading the book of the historian, the grand vizier is the one who killed King Ninus. The 'Old Man' explains that, King Ninus married Shamiram, but was killed by his grand vizier, who placed the cadaver in Shamiram's room, behind the door. The vizier called Shamiram in her room, locked the door behind her and brought*

people to bear witness to the murder of King Ninus by Shamiram. To this day, the history books of the Arabs and of the world maintain that Shamiram killed her husband. All this is lies; she did not kill her husband, he was killed by the vizier, a certain man called Sarraï. After locking Shamiram in the room, the police and the viziers were brought in to condemn her to death. Meanwhile, the king's first wife managed to escape from the palace, and alerted the soldiers of the king and those of Shamiram. She gathered a lot of people, even Chaldeans and Babylonians, and set them up against the vizier, telling them that he was the one who killed the king. A great battle ensued and the vizier was killed. After Shamiram was freed, she went up to the balcony, and without any delay, proclaimed herself Queen of the Assyrians.

“The kings of the neighboring countries came to congratulate her; among them there was Aram the king of the Armenians. He saw her, so majestic, so beautiful...and he too was very handsome, explaining why she falls in love with him immediately. They both made a treaty of alliance and unity of the two kingdoms, Assyrian and Armenian. She would remain Queen, and he would become her vizier. In fact, this crafty king wanted to take advantage of the occasion, and to replace Shamiram. He fixed the date of the wedding and asked Shamiram to bring her army to begin the festivities. We will get married, and we will unify the two kingdoms and let there be music. But Shamiram was not foolish, she had guessed that the stunned king had placed his army in a state of fighting readiness and had told them that the Assyrians would come to partake in the festivities, therefore, it should be easy for him to settle scores and become king. Shamiram, therefore, placed her army in a state of alert, and said: If they come with the intention of participating in the feast, we will lay down our arms and we will celebrate together; but if they come to fight, we will kill them. In fact, the reconnaissance units she had sent out informed her that the other side was coming with a great army, in a war formation. She wanted to start negotiations, but the Armenian king told her: It is without question that you cannot remain queen. I will become king. If you accept, there will be no war. Shamiram responded by saying that ‘either surrender or you die’. Shamiram went on the attack, and told her soldiers to catch Aram alive, but he was killed in combat and his army defeated. Shamiram placed the body on the terrace of the palace for three days, hoping that he would come back to life.

At this point, the author says that an Armenian named A. Ohanessian, called his attention to the fact that the Armenian version is markedly different, and Abouna -- one of the Assyrian friends of the author -- recounts this version.

“Ara, the king of Armenia, was spending happy days with his wife Nobakht. He was very handsome, and as soon as Shamiram saw him she fell desperately in love with him. She made forceful propositions, and she also made threats, but all in vain. Ara remained obstinately faithful to his young spouse. Then, Shamiram attacked the kingdom,

*while making sure her soldiers will not harm Ara. Unfortunately, Ara died in combat. Shamiram left him exposed for three days on the sacred terrace, hoping that he be revived. Nothing happened.”*

Here, the author points to some similarities between the two versions and more, as follows (p. 29, footnote # 9): “Anyway, the hope of resurrection is, in both cases, three days, as if, during these three days, the dead was not completely dead; it shouldn’t be surprising then if we have to present our condolences on the third day, and also shouldn’t be surprising that the Messiah himself was resurrected on the third day.”

The ‘Old Man’ concludes the story of Shamiram by saying that when she reached old age and her son was married, Babylonians tried to persuade her son Ninam to kill his mother and sit on the throne. Shamiram had the intuition of what was going on so she called her son, told him to sit on the throne, and herself retired to the convent where her mother had died.

At page 76, the ‘Old Man’ replies to the author’s inquiry about Malek Lôko and Malek Yâko. He says:

*“They are both deceased, Malek Lôko in America and Malek Yâko in Canada. In fact, Malek Yâko had made peace with Iraq, but not Malek Lôko. As to Malek Lôko, our Patriarch Mar Shimun, mediated on his behalf and Ahmed Hassan El-Bakr granted amnesty to him and all Assyrians: those who wanted to come back were allowed to come back. He himself returned and was granted the best reception. What happened next is not clear, some say he was given a slow release poison. In any case, he died.”*

The author next asks about Agha Petros<sup>2</sup>, to which the ‘Old Man’ replies as follows (p.76):

*“Agha Boutros [Agha Petros] was an educated man, who at the beginning, was in the Turkish army. He had a French education, and was going to be a general. When the Assyrians came to Iraq, Agha Boutros had a brush with the English, for reasons unknown to me. [See footnote]*

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<sup>2</sup> “Petros was a capable soldier, but no administrator, and his personal ambitions soon caused him to fall foul of British officialdom, and made him, it is to be feared, a tool for not over-scrupulous French intrigue.” See Wigram’s book: *Assyrians and Their Neighbors*, page 220. Also: “the southern expedition was commanded by a younger Assyrian, who was destined to become in generalship one of the wonders of the great war. He is now known as General Agha Petros, and rightly called by western correspondents the ‘New Nebuchdnezzar of Assyria’. His native land was Baz,...some years before the war he was appointed as the Turkish Consul in Urmia.... For the deliverance of a large number of Kurdistan Assyrians from extermination at the hands of the Kurdish hordes by the diplomatic use of his consular authority, he received a medal from the Pope of Rome.... The wonderful achievement of this lion of Baz will appear in the progress of these chapters.” See: pages 65-66 of *“The Flickering Light of Asia”*, by Joel Werda.

At Footnote 11, page 77, Bohas goes on to say that Agha Petros was received in France along with some of his loyal friends. With his family, he took refuge in Toulouse, at the Château Novital, where he passed away in February of 1932.

The ‘Old Man’ goes on to say that

*“after the departure of Agha Petros, there were maleks, like Malek Loko, Malek Yako, Malek Sma’il, Malek Khammo. Briefly, each tribe had its malek. Malek Loko and Malek Yako were officers in the British army. They, too, could not get along with the British, therefore they agreed to leave the British and come to France. So they came to Syria and asked for political asylum. As you know, Malek Yako was from the tribe of Tyari<sup>3</sup> and Malek Loko from the tribe of Tkhouma. But put together, they were a small part of the Assyrians, only those who came to Syria. There were other maleks, like Malek Khoshaba [who came to be known as the “Lion of Tiari” according to Joel Werda’s the “Flickering Light of Asia”, p.75], for example, who were against the idea of coming to Syria. And his tribe was four times the size of those of Malek Yako and Malek Loko combined. Even among the members of the Tkhouma tribe there were those who were against Malek Loko. Those who didn’t want to go to Syria, stayed in Iraq. So some stayed in Iraq, some went to Syria, and some went to Canada and America.*

*“The Assyrians came to Syria in several waves, the first were those with the two maleks. This must have happened in 1933. It came about thus: the British didn’t want to let them leave Iraq. When the Assyrians reached the River Tigris, the French authorities refused to accept them, they said: “We have no instructions to receive you; besides, you have no passports.”*

*“Meanwhile, the British sent the Iraqi army, telling it that these Assyrians are traitors, we should get rid of them. So, the Iraqi army started firing on the Assyrians aided by the British air force who were firing from the air. When the French saw what was going on, they let the Assyrians come in.”*

The author interviews the Assyrian Archimandrite to learn about their religion (p.135 and on). The priest begins with Nestorius and his quarrels with Cyril of Alexandria. Then he goes on to say that

*“the central point is that we cannot call the Virgin Mary the mother of God, we have to say she is the mother of the Messiah. But you should be careful. When Nestorius said this, he did not mean to deny the divinity of the Messiah, quite the contrary. How we can deny that when it is clearly stated in the Gospel, that of St. John for example, “In the beginning it was the Word” etc.. It is clearly said that the Word was*

<sup>3</sup> Tyari is in southeast Turkey, east of the river Zab, or more precisely, the upper Zab, known by the ancient Assyrians as Zabū Ellu, a tributary to the River Tigris. It is located near the upper reaches of the river, and about 100 miles west of Urmia.

*God. Therefore, we proclaim that the Messiah is God, but when he took on a body, when he became man like us, by the action of the Holy Spirit, he took a human nature. Therefore, the appellation Messiah encompasses the divine nature as well as the human nature. You see, they call us Nestorians, but Nestorius lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century while this doctrine originates four centuries earlier than him”.*

The author asks the priest about a book called Khoudra. The priest answers as follows (p. 140):

*“Khoudra is the prayer book. It contains all the prayers used during the year. It is divided in three parts, the first part begins at the Annunciation, in November, until the beginning of Lent; the second, until Pentecost; and the third for the rest of the year.”*

Bohas also asks about the Patriarchate, and how the patriarch is selected. The priest offers the following reply (p.141):

*“As soon as the sister of the actual patriarch realizes she is pregnant, she dedicates herself to God. This means that she stops drinking wine or other alcoholic beverages. In addition, as on a conventional fast, she never eats meat or fat. When the child is born, assuming it is a male, he is dedicated to God, and he too abstains from eating meat and fat. When he becomes twenty years old, he is consecrated as Bishop, and as soon as the patriarch is dead he is nominated in his place. . . . Fortunately, about ten years ago we returned to the election method.”*

Bohas asks what prompted this turnaround, and he is told that it followed the assassination of the Patriarch.

Still in this religious vein, Bohas questions another interlocutor by the name of Mr. Albert, whom we shall meet again in the following pages. On page 172, Albert provides the following opinion:

*“From what I have been able to see and hear, for the people, the difference between Nestorian and Chaldean does not bear on essentials, it is simply the title Mother of God or Mother of the Messiah (who was God). After reading doctrinal texts, such as Badger, Vol. 2, I am persuaded that if one does not have an advanced philosophical or theological education, one cannot grasp much. Moreover, all the texts, and rites are identical. The Chaldeans have kept the same prayers as the Assyrians. There is nothing but the question of the Mother of God and the marriage.”*

*“The marriage’? asks Georges Bohas. (p.172) .”Yes, with us, when a woman leaves her husband, the husband has the right to remarry. There is also the confession. In the past, confession existed among Nestorians, but this led to such abuses that it was abolished. Now, in the Church, five or six guys kneel, the priest begins the prayer, telling them that they should regret their sins, and gives them absolution without each having to tell their story in detail.”*

On page 146, the author brushes over recent Assyrian history, starting from the assassination of Mar Shimun on March 16, 1918, and the transmission of the patriarchate to his nephew, Mar Paulus Shimun, who passed away prematurely. He then cites Dr. Joseph Yacoub<sup>4</sup> Vol. I, p. 131:

*“When the Nestorian Patriarch Mar Paulus Shimun XXII died of tuberculosis on April 27, 1920, in the Baquba camp, he was replaced, Jun 20, 1920, by his nephew, Mar Ishaia Shimun XXIII, a 13 year old boy.”* Yacoub himself reports this by reference to the July 1920 issue of the periodical **The Assyro-Chaldean Action**, and he goes on to cite a brief history, part of which relates: *“...The Nestorian patriarch, Mar Paulus Shimun, who died in Baquba, was recently replaced by Mar Ishaia Shimun, the son of David, brother of the deceased Mar Shimun...the new Patriarch is 13 years old...this is funny, but fits very well in the schemes of the Anglican Ministers, who will make of him a docile instrument for the good of the Great Britain.”*

Yacoub continues:

*“And it was Surma Khanum, his aunt, who practically became the regent. This is the reason why, that same year, she was invited by the British authorities to present the Assyrian question in London. This was her first visit to Great Britain. For this occasion, at the request of Queen Mary, the spouse of King George V, she was officially named Lady Surma. According to the British, she was endowed with qualities of a chief: a clear and quick mind, an impressive physical beauty, the gifts of the heart as well as those of character and intelligence.”*

Bohas meets an old man in the village and asks him about Lady Surma, and his opinion differs significantly from the opinion reflected above. The old man accuses Lady Surma of being hand in glove with the British, and goes on as follows (p. 147-149):

*“She was educated by the English missionaries in Kochanes, and she even went to London to study. They even gave her their famous medal, The Victoria Cross. She wanted to get her hands on the government of the Church and the government of the people, with the help of the British.*

*“Shortly before that, in 1919, Agha Petros had began to act. He was a man of peace; he wanted to bring about unity among Chaldeans,*

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<sup>4</sup> “While many of us are already familiar with the name of Dr. Yacoub, unfortunately we do not know a great deal about his scholarship. Dr. Yacoub made an auspicious first appearance in 1984, with his seminal doctoral dissertation, *La Question Assyro-Chaldéenne, les Puissances Européennes et la Société des Nations (1908-1938)*. While this thesis has never been translated into English, it includes a voluminous bibliography and archival source references which can provide significant aid to the scholar of Assyrian history. See page 4 of the Editorial by Francis Sarguis, *The Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies*, Vol.XII, No.1, 1998. Joseph Yacoub is professor of political science at the Catholic University of Lyon, France.

Assyrians, Arameans and even the **Yezidis**. Evidently, Surma detested him.

*“In 1921, Mar Temateos [Timotheus], the bishop of India, a respectable old man, a great theologian, arrived in Baquba and was received by the House of the Patriarch. The conflict between Agha Petros and the House of the Patriarch was at its peak. Bishop Temateos [Timotheus] wanted to visit Agha Petros also. This was quite normal, because he, Agha Petros, was the supreme commander of the Assyrian forces (Rab Khela). Agha Petros had received a stack of decorations from Turkey, Russia, and France. The French called him General. When Bishop Timoteos [Timotheus] came to Agha Petros, the General took off his kepi. He was wearing a kepi similar to the French soldiers. He also took off his sword and put it on the ground. This meant that he recognized the rank of the Bishop of India, the power of the Church, as being superior to his rank. In short, he received the Bishop as if he, Agha Petros, was a simple faithful*

*“The Bishop asked Agha Petros about his conflict with the Patriarch (in fact with Surma Khanum), with the intention of mediating the conflict. Agha Petros replied: “Monseigneur, it is not reasonable that one person brandishes the cross of peace with one hand, and the saber of worldly power with the other.”*

*“The Bishop of India returned to see the Patriarch, and repeated to him what he had heard from Agha Petros, on the separation of powers. “He doesn’t want to interfere with what you are doing, therefore let him do his job on his side, to him the sword and to us the Cross.”*

*“Surma Khanum, who had no official function or any rank in the Church, began to insult the Bishop and added: ‘if you are not immediately returning to India, I will have you put in jail by the British military police.’*

*“As for Agha Petros, she banished him. He went to Baghdad, but there the British forbade him to put foot in Asia, in Arab countries. So, he went to France. He said: “In France I have friends; besides, I speak French.”*

In a chapter entitled “Cross-checking” (p. 153), the author recounts his interviews with Mr. Albert, a resident of Tell Tamir. Mr. Albert (his real name is Alparna, a Biblical name) is the grandnephew of Malek Yako, and Malek Ismail is his great-grandfather. Therefore, he does not see history the same way as the ‘Old Man’.

The author poses questions about the major events of Assyrian history, such as the exodus from the mountains of Turkey, then the crossing of the Tigris River, and the settlement in Syria. Mr. Albert begins as follows (p. 154):

*“In the East, religion plays a major role. There was the massacre of Armenians and all the Christians were scared. The neighbors were the*

*Kurds, and as always, the neighbors were ready to kill their neighbors in order to eat their sheep.*

*“Yes there were missionaries there, but I don’t think they played a major role in the exodus. There is someone here who is writing a thesis on the region, and pretends that before the arrival of the missionaries the Kurds and the Assyrians lived in harmony with each other, and that there were no problems. Well, no. It would be surprising. I don’t know when the missionaries arrived here, but I know that my great-great grand father, the one called Malek Ismail, was assassinated by the Kurds in 1842<sup>5</sup>, by the men of Bader Khan Beg. Here is how it happened: They had signed a peace agreement with the Kurds, and they told him to come with them in honor of their chief. “There, we will have an armistice and then we will talk”, they told him. All this is well known, and I have even read it in the books of the missionaries. So, they took him to Bader Khan Beg’s house, but the latter had not been informed of this visit. He thought that Malek Ismail had been armed when captured, and that he was a prisoner. Bader Khan, in the presence of all the people sitting around him, began to speak to Malek Ismail: “You are a brave man and I will pardon you if you convert to my religion.” At that time, Malek Ismail insulted him. He said to him: “Since I am a brave man, let me be with your wives for a while, this way you will have children who will also be brave.” At that point, Bader Khan Beg drew his sword and killed Malek Ismail in front of all the people assembled there. He regretted it afterwards, he said: “Nobody stopped me, I was angry. A brave person, it’s a shame to kill him like that.” A year or two later he found out that Malek Ismail was not made prisoner, but that there was an armistice. Therefore, he ordered those who brought him to his house to be executed. You see, there have been wars at all times, and between all peoples, and it did not take missionaries to trigger them.”*

At the end of World War I, there were talks about the fate of Assyrians. Mr. Albert continues his story about the talks concerning the Assyrians (p. 158):

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<sup>5</sup> It was in June of 1840, that W.F. Ainsworth and Christian Rassam, the emissaries of the Church of England, reached the mountains of Hakkary, and met with Mar Shimun. On the other hand, in 1834, the American Protestants, under the direction of Rev. Justin Perkins, had founded a mission in Urmia, Persia. Asahel Grant, a physician and the second senior missionary at Urmia, had already visited Mar Shimun twice by the time the English emissaries got to him. George Percy Badger, another ordained priest of the Church of England, began his missionary work in January of 1843, in Mosul. On July 3, 1843 a messenger brought reports to Mosul of a massacre of Syrians by Badr Khan, the Kurdish Amir of Buhtan. Perhaps the missionaries, and even specifically Badger, precipitated this disaster by interfering in the delicate balance of civil power in eastern Turkey. See pages 28, 30, 35, 37, and 40 in J.F. Coakley’s “The Church of the East and The Church of England”.

*“I will show you a picture of Surma Khanum....But in these negotiations the Assyrians got nothing; they had been promised a state. Because they [the British] had cut a piece from Turkey to join to Iraq, in exchange for Assyrian territories in Turkey. Because they [the British] couldn't take them back to their original place, they wanted to give them a new territory, you see, it is written under the picture. So, the plan was to create a small republic in the mountains of Kurdistan? That's what was promised, but as you see, nothing materialized.”*