

## **Nemrod Simono** **A Remembrance**

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The thin ranks of Assyrian scholarship experienced a major loss with the passing of Nemrod Simono Saint Vincent in Tehran, on July 23, 2004.

Esteemed by many students in various countries who benefited from the language classes he winsomely taught, he will no doubt be best remembered for the impressive body of writing he leaves behind.

Rabi Nemrod was born in 1908, in Golizan (Salamas), a village in the plain of Urmia, Iran. He benefited from a rich education which included the following stages:

- 1920 - 1923 Lazariste Missionary School, Tabriz, Iran
- 1923 - 1931 Catholic Seminary, Urmia, Iran
- 1931 - 1937 Lazariste Missionary Seminary, Paris, France
- 1934 - 1937 Lazariste Theological Missionary Seminary, Dax, France
- 1937 - 1938 Theological University of Dominican Fathers, Rome, Italy

Since early youth, Rabi Nemrod aimed to become a priest, following in the footsteps of the great scholar from Salamas, Father Paul Bedjan. However, upon conclusion of his formal studies, he returned to his native Iran, abandoned the idea of a monastic life, and decided to serve his church and people in a lay capacity.

Rabi Nimrod played a key role in the publication of *Gilgamesh*, the most unique literary Assyrian periodical. He was there at its creation, served as its longtime publisher (1952-61), and for many years he was a member of its editorial board. The pages of *Gilgamesh* feature many of his contributions – whether they be essays, or various translations.

Rabi Nemrod was literary advisor to Rabi Kouroush Benjamin in the publication of his popular seven-volume Assyrian language textbook set. He was the steward and editor of all of the unpublished and semi-published works of his lifelong friend William Sarmas.

Rabi Nemrod proved himself a tireless worker and prolific in his creative output. His publications include:

- *The Grammar of Modern Assyrian* (Swadaya), 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 1969; 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 1981 (co-authored with Kouroush Benyamin). Tehran
- *Assyrian Verbs and Derivations*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 1974; 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 1981. Tehran . Translated into French by Bruno Poizat, colleague from Sorbonne, Paris, in 1979.
- *Selected Readings 1*, by Mar Thoma Odo (1853-1918) with commentary and translation of foreign words into Assyrian. (Tehran: 1983)
- *The Life and Works of Rev. Paul Bedjan (1838-1920)*. Selections from 40 volumes in both Assyrian & Farsi. (Tehran: 1984)

- Selected Essays of Aphrathat the Persian Scholar. 24 essays on the antiquity and beauty of the Assyrian liturgy (Tehran: 1981, 1984)
- John Alkhas, The Outcast Poet. Biography of a great poet and his collected works, with annotations. (Chicago:1991)
- Modern Assyrian Grammar for Intermediate classes. 41 lessons with study guide self-tests (Chicago: 1997)
- Biography and Collected Literary and Musical Works of William Daniel (2000)

Mr. Simono also authored at least 13 unpublished manuscripts, covering a wide range of linguistic, literary, and historical topics. For example, these include “Syntax of the Assyrian Language”; Dictionaries in Classical Syriac and Modern Assyrian (Swadaya); anthologies of various Assyrian Scholars (including Mr. Addai Alkas), The History of the Assyrian New Year [Kha-b-Nissan], and The History and Significance of the Rogation of Ninevites.

Not to be forgotten, is yet another very special legacy of Rabi Nemrod, which relates to his work with younger Assyrians in the propagation of his mother tongue. For many years, he was literary advisor to young writers in the Assyrian Educational Center (of the Assyrian National Council), Tehran, Iran. He provided training to Assyrian language instructors in Iran, America, and Australia. Following his teaching stint in Sydney, Australia, in 1985 the Assyrian-Australian Society honored him by establishing the “Nemrod Simono Scholarship”, which continues to assist university students.

Rabi Nemrod was proficient in some 11 languages. In addition to his abilities in Classical Syriac (Aramaic), Modern Assyrian (Swadaya), Western Aramaic (Targum), Latin, French, Italian, English, Farsi, and Turkish, he could also read Hebrew and Armenian. Many of us will remember his engaging manner of public speaking, his self-effacing style, and even the occasional rendition of an Assyrian ditty with a twinkle in his eye.

The departed Rabi is survived by Liza MarYoussef , his loving wife of 56 years, along with three daughters, one son, and a grandson.