

News About Our Language

- A special book containing various studies on Modern Assyrian (Neo-Aramaic) is soon forthcoming. The book is a publication of the Harvard Semitic Studies edited by Professor Wolfhart Heinrichs, Chairman of the Department of the Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. Contributors to this book are:

Georg Krotkoff, Johns Hopkins University
Edward Odisho, Loyola University & City Colleges of Chicago
Konstantin Tsereteli, U.S.S.R.
Solomon Sara, Georgetown University
Yona Sabar, University of California, Los Angeles
Samuel Fox, Chicago
Robert Hoberman, University of New York
Otto Jastrow, Universitat Erlangen-Nurnberg
Estiphan Panoussi, University of Tehran
Gideon Goldenberg, Hebrew University
Bruno Poizat, Paris University
Wolfhart Heinrichs, Harvard University

Gabriele Younan, West Germany It is important to point out that the book is supported by a grant from the Assyrian Fund to the name of the late Dr. David Perley.

- Dr. Gabriele Younan, a German lady married to an Assyrian, is a distinguished writer on the history, culture and the national movement of the modern Assyrians. A few years ago she published her book, ASSYRIANS TODAY; Culture, Language & National Movement. Recently she produced her second book entitled, THE ASSYRIAN JOURNALISM in which the author traces the history of the Assyrian journals and newspapers and gives a detailed and annotated list of no less than 135 periodicals. Dr. Younan is currently planning to produce her third book on the bibliography and history of the Modern Assyrian dialects. All her books are in German.

- Professors Fabrizio Pennacchietti and Mauro Tosco of Italy have finished the final draft of a book entitled, SOVIET NEO-ARAMAIC TEXTS to be published by the Istituto Orientale di Napoli. The book will contain six

texts written by Soviet Assyrians between the years 1932-1937. It is worth mentioning that the original texts were written in a Cyrillic-Latin Alphabet especially designed by the Soviet Assyrian linguists and writers.

- The Assyrian writer, Michael M. Mammo, currently resident in Sweden, has published two textbooks on teaching Beginning Assyrian. The books, which have the title of LISHANI, represent a step forward in methodology because the author, unlike the previous Assyrian textbook writers who had hardly demonstrated any sense of modern methodology, has certainly adopted some of the modern principles in language teaching. The books also contain some beautiful and well-colored illustrations that are of great help to young learners.

- The Illinois State Board of Education had approached Dr. Edward Odisho for the purpose of designing a set of questions for an Oral Comprehension Test to be administered by the Board for all Assyrian Bilingual Teachers who wish to be certified as bilingual teachers. The Test was completed a few months ago and some Assyrian teachers have already taken the test. Needless to say, that this is the first time a formal test in Assyrian language is approved and administered by a reputable educational institution.

- Mr. Bailis Shamun is currently in the process of collecting data and materials for an English-Assyrian Dictionary. The work is still in its early stages and it will take quite a few years to finish.

- Professor Konstantin Tsereteli of the U.S.S.R. and the most distinguished author in the field of the linguistics of Modern Assyrian, is still working on his Assyrian-Russian Dictionary. But it is unfortunate that he is facing some printing difficulties as there is no experienced Assyrian printer capable of doing the work for the moment.

- Deacon Shmuel Giliana, a resident of Chicago, has recently published, in Assyrian a huge volume of over 900 pages on the ancient and modern history and life of the Assyrians. Although the book does not adhere to a systematic research approach, it still is a remarkable achievement of one man who has spent long years of his life in compiling its contents. What is even more remarkable is the fact that the author has self-typed the book in an attractive format with a minimum number of errors. The book is also beautifully bound.

- Dr. Edward Y. Odisho had his book, **THE SOUND SYSTEM OF MODERN ASSYRIAN** published by Verlag Otto Harrossowitz, Wiesbaden/Germany. Harrossowitz is the most prestigious publisher in the world in the field of Semitic Languages and the Middle Eastern studies. Although the book deals with the linguistic structure of Modern Assyrian, it, nevertheless, contains a long introduction on the history of the Assyrians since the downfall of Nineveh. This historical introduction is the first of its kind since it attempts to substantiate for the first time the continuity between the history of Ancient and Modern Assyrians. This part of the book has taken three years of work that is based on hundreds of references. The following are some off the comments on the book:

"I have examined manuscript by Dr. Odisho of Loyola university entitled the Sound System of Modern Assyrian. This is an outstanding contribution to modern Assyrian, one of the most fascinating living semitic tongues....and Dr. Odisho is unequaled in his qualification to treat the subject."

"As regards the book, I liked it very much. It is excellently done. It fills a vacuum, and I couldn't think of any other person who has more intimate knowledge of the whole subject."

Prof. Dr. Otto Jastrow
Universitat Erlangen Nurnberg

"After reading the first four chapters, I must say that I liked what I read. A lot of fascinating information presented in a clear and methodical way."

Prof. Dr. Wolfhart Heinrichs
Harvard University

- Professor Fabrizio Pennacchiotti is also working on the edition and comparison of three Neo-Aramaic (Assyrian) versions of the popular liturgical poem attributed to Mar Narsai known as SOGHITHA D-GAYYASA. The first version goes back to Dawid Kora which was published by E. Sachau in *Uber die Poesie in der Volkssprache der Nestorianer* in 1896. The second version has been published in 1957 in Kirkuk/Iraq by Monsignor Joseph Alishoran. The third version was transcribed by Dr. Pennacchiotti from a manuscript owned by

Shabo Mikhail of Baghdad and who regionally
Romta in Tyari Leytha.

comes from the village of