

## IN MEMORIAM: EPHREM-ISA YOUSIF

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PARIS, FRANCE

It is with great sorrow that we learned that Ephrem-Isa Yousif passed away in Paris Tuesday, 3 July 2018, aged 74.

Ephrem-Isa Yousif was born in 1944 in Sanate, an Assyrian-Chaldean village in northern Kurdistan, in Iraq, not far from the city of Zakho. He started his studies in Mosul. Due to heart problems that finally took over him, he moved to Nice in 1974. He earned a doctorate in Ancient Civilisations from the University of Nice (1980) and a diploma in Philosophy from Toulouse (France, 1980). Since 1981, he taught philosophy, Arabic language and literature there until 1992, when he moved to Paris.

There, he went on teaching philosophy in various institutions. Fuelled by his love for the French language he was involved in the promotion of French as a member of the Association of French Language Writers (ADELF) and a scientific counsellor for the publications of the Haut Conseil de la Francophonie (International Organisation of La Francophonie).

He wrote about his childhood in Sanate and never forgot his home country, which he celebrated in his books. He wrote extensively about Mesopotamian culture and heritage. Beginning in 1995, he also became chief editor of two collections at L'Harmattan Publisher: "Libre Parole" and "Peuples et Cultures de l'Orient". He was a founding member and a fervent supporter of the Société d'études syriaques

(Society for Syriac Studies) in France, whose annual meetings he attended. He was himself a prolific writer making available to a wide audience in France and French-speaking countries the history and culture of Christian Mesopotamia.

As a transmitter of cultures, he built bridges between the various religious communities of Northern Iraq: Kurds, Assyro-Chaldeans and Muslims alike. He was for a long time part of the Kurdish Institute in Paris and sat for three years on its executive board. He was the Institute's correspondent with Christian communities in Kurdistan whom he knew so well. He played an important role in Paris and in Kurdistan, organising conferences and lectures on Mesopotamia and its legacy. He recently gave a paper on the fate of these communities during a conference organised by the Kurdish Institute in Paris at the Senate (Palais du Luxembourg), 30 March 2018.

Ephrem-Isa Yousif was an important voice of the Assyro-Chaldeans in France and in Iraq, ecumenical and generous of his time and energy for their cause. He will be remembered as a man of peace and culture and an active proponent of the history and traditions of Mesopotamia.

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