SAS Conference on “Republic of Armenia” Held in San Antonio

Left to right: Tsolin Nalbantian, Seda Ohanian, Barlow Der Mugrdechian, George Bournoutian, Vartan Matiossian, Sergio La Porta, Bedross Der Matossian, Ari Sekeryan, Richard Hovannisian, and Jakub Osiecki.

Staff Report

It was more than 100 years ago that an independent Republic of Armenia was established, the first Armenian state since the fall of the Kingdom of Cilicia in 1375. The Society for Armenian Studies organized an international conference, “Innovative Approaches to the History of the First Republic of Armenia, 1918-1920,” to mark this anniversary and to bring together scholars who would shed new light on the First Republic of Armenia.

Dr. Richard Hovannisian Speaks on “Armenia: A Daring Adventure”

David Safrazian

“ar My Armenian identity is shaped by the Armenian flag and it gave me a sense of purpose. It was to be idealistic and not a realist,” said Dr. Richard Hovannisian. Dr. Hovannisian was invited to give a lecture titled “The Republic of Armenia: A Daring Endeavor, 1918-2018,” on Thursday, November 1, in the Charles and Alice Gureghian Cultural Center in Fresno. Dr. Hovannisian’s lecture was part of the Conference, co-sponsored by the Armenian Communities Department of the Gulbenkian Foundation, took place on Thursday, November 15, 2018 in San Antonio, Texas. The SAS also held its Annual Membership meeting that same day, in conjunction with the Middle East Studies Association 52nd Annual Meeting.

Knights & Daughters of Vartan Recognize Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian as “Man of the Year” and Stefani Booroojian as “Woman of the Year”

Staff Report

The Knights and Daughters of Vartan announced that Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian and news anchor Stefani Booroojian are to be honored as “Man of the Year” and “Woman of the Year” at a special Banquet to be held on Sunday, March 30, 2019.

An Exhibit on Armenians and Early Armenian History Opens at the Fresno County Historical Museum

Matthew Pajouh

An Exhibit on “Early Armenians in Fresno County” has recently opened on the second floor of the Fresno County Historical Museum, located at the Fresno Fairgrounds. The Exhibit displays many interesting artifacts and focuses on the early history of Armenians in Fresno County. The Exhibit is centered on religion, agriculture, business, and important Armenian monuments as well as featuring those Armenians who have made a significant contribution to the San Joaquin Valley.
Armenian Studies Program
Book/Video/CD Archival Gifts
Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Prof. Sergio La Porta, and the Armenian Studies Program would like to thank the donors, authors, and publishers for the following books, periodicals, videos, and archival gifts, either offered personally, or to the Program:
Hrant Dink Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey, for copies of: Adana with its Armenian Cultural Heritage (2018), 127pp., in English and Turkish; Develi with its Armenian Cultural Heritage (2018), 143pp., in English and Turkish; Siyava with its Armenian Cultural Heritage (2018), 163pp., in English and Turkish; and Armenian Studies Past to Present (2018), 57pp., a report that outlines the worldwide state of Armenian Studies.
Ara Sarafian, Gomidas Institute, London, for a copy of Dr. Sarkis Karayan’s Armenians in Ottoman Turkey, 1914: A Geographic and Demographic Gazetteer (London: Gomidas Institute, 2018), 664pp., in English. This volume is the product of more than twenty years of research and documents the more than 4,000 Armenian towns and villages in pre-World War I Ottoman Turkey.
Sharon Toroian, Fresno, for a copy of the May 19, 1981, Fresno Bee. The front page of the paper covered the death of noted author William Saroyan.

The activities organized in Fresno to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Homenetmen. His talk was co-sponsored by the Homenetmen Fresno Sassoon chapter, the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, and the Hamazkayin Taniel Varoujan chapter.
Dr. Hovannisian gave a fascinating presentation interweaving many topics, such as his family history and the early history of the First Republic of Armenia, with an overall theme of Armenian identity.
Dr. Hovannisian began his talk by discussing his own personal journey on how he discovered more about his Armenian identity. He then reflected on the challenges facing Armenia today, comparing the challenges Armenia faces today with those that Armenia faced after gaining independence in 1918.
The First Republic of Armenia was born in the chaos of war and Genocide and faced daunting challenges to simply survive its first year. By September 1920, the Republic of Armenia had been abandoned by the great powers and by December of that year the Republic collapsed.

In order to save the territory that remained, eleven thousand square miles, the Armenian government was forced to hand over power to the communists, but that did not help Armenia reclaim the territory promised by the Allies that was lost.

Dr. Hovannisian showed photos of significant Armenians, whose contributions enhanced the early Republic of Armenia.
Dr. Hovannisian was the first holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA. He received his B.A. and M.A. in history from UC Berkeley and his Ph.D. from UCLA.
His dissertation, “On the Road to Independence, 1918” was a ground-breaking work looking at the formation of the Armenian Republic.
It led him to write a four-volume history of the Republic of Armenia, a project which he thought initially would take three years, but which turned out to be a thirty year journey.
Dr. Hovannisian joined the UCLA faculty in 1962 and was associate director of the UCLA von Goebenbaum Center for Near Eastern Studies from 1978-1995. He has published more than thirty books, seven on the Armenian Genocide.
Dr. Hovannisian was born in Tulaic, CA and did not speak Armenian fluently until he attended the Jemarian Armenian school in Beirut, Lebanon. He grew up in an English-speaking household and didn’t know much about his heritage or Armenian history. Since there were only a few Armenians in Tulaic, he did not have many Armenians to interact with.
Dr. Hovannisian did not know his father’s genocide story until just before his father’s death because his father never wanted to talk about the horrors he faced.
Dr. Hovannisian talked about the history of Homenetmen, the Armenian General Athletic Union, which was founded in Constantineople in November 1918. At the end of the lecture, Dr. Hovannisian was presented with an award by the Homenetmen Fresno Sassoon Chapter.

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http://www.fresnostate.edu/catalog/subjects/armenian-studies/armenian-mm.html

Dr. Richard Hovannisian

Hovannisian, From Page 1
Steven Sim and Ani Hovannisian Present Talk and Video on Research on Armenians in Historic Armenia

As Sim explained, “there is a policy in Turkish academia to misrepresent, or just ignore, Armenian objects.” He visited an Armenian graveyard near Van that had been misreported as a stoneworking area by Turkish archaeologists. When comparing the actual location to the historical drawing of the area, it was clear that the monuments described on paper were not correctly drawn and certain gravestones were misrepresented, or just left out completely. “It’s not a big monuments that Turkey has destroyed, it’s small things as well,” stated Sim. He referenced a statute of King Gagik Bagratuni, which had previously been held in the Ani museum. It was too large to evacuate, so the Armenians buried it in hopes of saving the statue. Although it was later found, it disappeared again after the monument was redone by the Turks. “The standing room only audience part of its Fall Lecture Series. The video follows Sim on his journey throughout Turkey and began a productive collaboration into research on the Armenian heritage in Turkey. On Tuesday, November 13, the Armenian Studies Program organized a talk by Sim and Hovannisian on “The Hidden Map of Historic Armenia,” as part of its Fall Lecture Series. The standing room only audience was treated to a special preview of the video The Hidden Map. The video follows Sim on his journey throughout Turkey and also discusses how the pair met. The video also focused on Hovannisian’s journey to discover her own ancestral roots in historic Armenia. The Hidden Map showed how Sim began his trip to Turkey searching for Armenian historical monuments. His journey began when he was searching for the Khtzkonk Monastery in eastern Turkey. Sim’s travel-guide noted that the historic complex had five churches. However, Sim found only one structure remaining when he visited, a mere 10 years after the guide was published. This led him on a decades-long search for other historic Armenian sites, only to discover that most were in ruins.

One day, Sim met Ani Hovannisian in an abandoned Armenian home. The pair struck up a friendship and began searching for Hovannisian’s ancestral village of Bazmashen, in the region of Kharpert. Her family memoirs detailed the many houses and schools in the region, and that there was no Turkish presence in the village. However, when they finally visited the site, there was little trace of the village, with only a few rocks remaining, and a few shards of red pottery. Some Armenian monasteries are being renovated and turned into museums. According to Sim, “there is nothing intrinsically wrong with that, but when the curator is the Turkish state, it can lead to unfortunate things.” These museums are portraying a skewed vision of historic Armenia.

Although Armenia today may not exist as a real place in Eastern Turkey, and may no longer ever be recognized as a place that existed in academic literature, Sim says “we are still going to continue to go there,” concluded Sim.

Visit the Armenian Studies Program Online Library and Photo Archive

The site can be accessed at http://www.fresnostate.edu/arthum/armenianstudies/library/index.html

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2) The Armenian Studies Program can also be supported in the future in estate plans.

Regardless of how a donation is made, each gift impacts the lives of students and faculty at Fresno State.

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Dr. Sergio La Porta (left) with Dr. Ümit Kurt.

Dr. Kurt Analyzes “Ordinary” Perpetrators in the Genocide

Behind every genocide are perpetrators, ones who promote and contribute to the acts of mass violence. However, a majority of these perpetrators are not top military officials, but rather the mass population who abide by this. This has become a focal point of Kazan Visiting Professor Dr. Ümit Kurt’s research: how such “ordinary” people can become involved in genocidal strategies.

Although he has studied its application in several instances of mass violence, he found a large gap when looking at Armenian Genocide studies. Dr. Kurt, in his second lecture as Kazan Visiting Professor for the Fall semester, analyzed the motivations of such “ordinary” perpetrators and applied them to several perpetrators living in Aintab during the Armenian Genocide. His talk, “Proactive Local Perpetrators: Mehmet Yasin (Sani Kutluğ) and Ali Cenani,” was given on Tuesday, October 16.

As Dr. Kurt said, “this story is not only the story of the big guys, it’s the story of every kind of ordinary guy.” Before he discussed his research, Dr. Kurt framed his lecture with an important clarification that explaining the actions of these men does not justify them by any means. “We are just trying to understand how any kind of normal, ordinary person can become a murderer.”

To begin his analysis, Dr. Kurt discussed the motivations of these “ordinary” perpetrators. While there was a strong anchor in ideological reasoning, there were also prospects for material gain as well. Muslims in Aintab were eager to act on deportation orders so that they might advance their own personal interests. “Participation of local people is generally considered a necessary condition to ensure the effectiveness of genocidal policies,” Dr. Kurt explained. With this in mind, he moved on to examining specific members within the Aintab branch of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). Dr. Kurt analyzed the actions of Ali Cenani, the president of the local CUP branch. Cenani organized massive deportations of Armenians from Aintab, even those who were specifically exempted from such orders. He would specifically draw up false charges in order to frame the Armenians as a dangerous force. Cenani also distributed weapons to the Muslim community and instigated massacres in Aintab. Throughout all of this, he was collecting personal property of the Armenians.

Similar actions can be seen in the life of Mehmet Yasin, a military dispatcher at the railway station near Aintab. He was responsible for supervising convoys of Armenians and their deportation by rail. However, the reality was cruel treatment at the hands of those in charge. Yasin would not only allow massacres of the deportees, but also participate in them, collecting their personal property after the fact. Yasin was also obsessed with maintaining dignity, both physically and culturally. He prevented any Armenians from creating a paper trail, going so far as imprisonment and death. Dr. Kurt commented that this “sends a message to other Armenians who keep records.” Yasin also wanted to go so far as changing place names, both of villages and their people, in order to remove traces of a multinational Turkey.

Dr. Kurt described the role of “ordinary” perpetrators as part of a symbiotic relationship. “Genocidal process may be designed by the central authority, but it’s inevitably guided by the locality.” Without the efforts of local officials such as Cenani and Yasin, the genocidal strategies could not occur. It was not a special role, nor did it require unique circumstances. “It could have been me, it could have been you, and it could have been everyone.”

Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Steven Sim, Ani Hovannisian, and Dr. Hapog Ohannessian.

ANNE RUBIO
EDITOR

Few people were able to travel at a pile of rocks scattered across a field, even fewer were able to distinguish that the historic monastery was located there. Scottish explorer Steven Sim has spent nearly 40 years doing just that. From his days as an architecture student, he made the startling discovery that many of the historic sites in Turkey are actually Armenian. However, very few have been left standing. Five years ago, Sim and producer Ani Hovannisian met by happenstance in Turkey and began a productive collaboration into research on the Armenian heritage in Turkey.

Regardless of how a donation is made, each gift impacts the lives of students and faculty at Fresno State.

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Dr. Sergio La Porta (left) with Dr. Ümit Kurt.

Dr. Kurt Analyzes “Ordinary” Perpetrators in the Genocide
Sarafian on Armenian Demography

David Safrazian

"Much of Armenian history has been expunged from Turkey, not only in a physical sense, but also in the sense of memory as the nation of Armenians has been systematically erased," stated Ara Sarafian. "States write out history, and they can write people out of history, and if Armenians don’t write their own history, then their history will also be erased."

Safrazian, director of the London-based Comitas Institute, visited Fresno State on Thursday, October 25, to present the new publication Armenians in Ottoman Turkey, 1914: A Geographic and Demographic Gazetteer by Dr. Sarkis Karayan. The book provides detailed information collected over more than 20 years of research documenting the more than 4,000 Armenian towns and villages which existed before the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Karayan, who was born in Lebanon, began his research into the topic of Armenian demography when educator Dr. Stanley Kerr asked him, "how does one really know how many Armenians were killed in the Armenian Genocide of 1915?" Dr. Karayan concluded that to know how many were lost, one first had to know how many Armenians there were in the Ottoman Empire prior to 1915.

The accepted number of Armenians lost in the Genocide is approximately 1.5 million Armenians, but according to Dr. Karayan, the numbers were greater. Dr. Karayan used Ottoman Turkish sources, and also Armenian documentation to come to his conclusions. According to Dr. Karayan, there were about 2.4 million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire in 1878, although the official Turkish position is that there were significantly fewer Armenians, in the range of 800,000-1,200,000. This position, repeated by some scholars in the United States, is in line with estimations of the Turkish denial. After 1915, there were about 2.2 million Armenians who disappeared, so there were more Armenians killed then initially thought. Dr. Karayan’s research helps to undermine the official Turkish historiography of the period.

Dr. Karayan used Armenian sources, which had never before been used, in compiling his demographic data. Among the important records are those found in the Armenian Patriarchate of Turkey. He also used the records of Western European travelers, who visited throughout the Ottoman Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries. His meticulous research will provide the basis for further scholarship in the field.

Dr. Karayan was determined to find the statistics on every village that was inhabited by Armenians in Ottoman Turkey and Armenia. Sarafian stated that Armenians in Ottoman Turkey, 1914 is a significant work because now there is a reliable source for information about the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in the English language, thus making it more accessible.

Each village or town in historic Armenia and Turkey has both an original Armenian name and a new Turkish name, that is meant to erase the memory of Armenian history. Sarafian demonstrated this by showing various maps with the names of these villages and detailed population statistics from Ottoman Armenian, and Turkish, who lived in each area.

"Even Turkish people are interested in the topic of demography because they have been denied access to this information about the Armenian Genocide," concluded Sarafian.

Dr. Sarafian would like to take the book to Turkey, to allow Turks to consider what their own government has said about the Genocide.

The book has an important historical role to play, but it also has a significant political task to combat continued denial of the Armenian Genocide.

Hye Sharzhoom Begins 40th Year of Publication

Hye Sharzhoom

December 2018

Hye Sharzhoom is operated by students under the guidance of current Armenian Studies Program Director Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, who also was a staff writer for the first issue in 1979. This semester a new group of students is continuing the tradition.

For students, Hye Sharzhoom has also been a learning experience and has provided an opportunity to interact with faculty and the community. They cover stories, learn how to hone their writing skills, and offer their opinions. Due to the support of its loyal readers, Hye Sharzhoom has been distributed free to more than 5,000 people throughout the world. While the bulk of the readership is in the United States, Hye Sharzhoom reaches distant shores as well. There are subscribers in Armenia, the Middle East, Australia, Europe, and in South America. Wherever there are Armenians, there is Hye Sharzhoom.
It was William Saroyan’s wish that his home in Fresno, CA, would one day be turned into a research center. Thirty-seven years after his passing, Saroyan’s wishes were at first ignored by the Saroyan Foundation after his passing in 1981. Prof. Der Mugrdechian explained that after Saroyan’s passing the Foundation decided to sell the property and use the proceeds to establish a special Saroyan exhibit at the Fresno Metropolitan Museum.

Saroyan’s house was therefore sold into private hands and passed through several hands until 2015, when Artur Janibekyan, founder of the Saroyan Cultural and Intellectual Foundation, purchased the house and decided to fulfill Saroyan’s dream. The official opening ceremony of the Museum was on August 31, 2018, which would have been Saroyan’s 110th birthday. A plaque on the Museum states that Saroyan’s home had been placed on the Fresno City and County Registers of Historic Places in 1989.

The Saroyan House Museum is not an ordinary museum that contains physical objects the author, rather, the Museum focuses on Saroyan’s life story. According to the Renaissance Cultural and Intellectual Foundation, the mission of the Museum is to “educate and present the author’s work through the eyes of William Saroyan and also reveal his talents as an artist; presenting them in a nontraditional style through holography.”

The House Museum has a unique futuristic feel to it. Inside, Saroyan’s life story is told through different uses of technology. However, on the outside the House Museum appears to be just an average home located in the middle of an ordinary neighborhood.

Before entering, I pictured the inside of the house, and how it would look like it did when Saroyan lived there. When I first stepped inside, I realized that this was not the case. An image of Saroyan’s face was projected on the wall. The image, composed of lines from Saroyan’s drawings, changes to reflect Saroyan from different points in his life, ending with Saroyan House Museum logo. An illuminated white wall, filled with rocks that Saroyan had collected from around the globe, is the next stop. Each stone represents a memory that Saroyan had, and Saroyan quotes are interspersed on the wall with the rocks.

The main hall of the Museum contains several separate sections. One wall has ten monitors on which movies or TV shows based on Saroyan’s works or interviews with the author are playing. There are also documentaries about him, including some made in Armenia. One of the long walls in the main hall is interactive, as images along the wall light up as the viewer passes by. One of these walls is devoted to images from Saroyan’s life, presented chronologically from his birth to his death. It was interesting to think how much of a world phenomenon Saroyan was because of all the photos of him with people from around the world.

The other main wall is devoted to Saroyan’s drawings and paintings. This is a little realized part of Saroyan’s legacy. Each of these drawings or paintings consists of lines and shapes done in an abstract style. I wondered what Saroyan was trying to communicate. A fourth wall displays book covers from Saroyan’s books, many of which he designed.

Finally, the most fascinating area in the museum is the hologram room. One stands in front of a room that appears to be Saroyan’s office with his desk and typewriter. Suddenly, Saroyan’s voice is heard and then Saroyan appears as a hologram. He then continues to speak while he strolls around his office. It was amazing observing this world-famous author being brought back to life. Saroyan said one of the most interesting quotes I have heard from an author: “My advice to young writers today would be for God’s sake don’t take anybody’s advice because then you’re not a writer. If you’re a writer you don’t need anyone’s advice, you don’t want anybody’s advice.”

The Saroyan House Museum is a place where the more time you spend, the more you will be able to learn. There are so many captivating aspects of Saroyan’s life that can be learned by visiting the House Museum.

Altogether, the Saroyan House Museum is a must see for visitors from Fresno or from any place in the world.

For reservations to visit the Saroyan House Museum, you can only make online by visiting the saroyanhouse.com website, and clicking on the “Make a Reservation” button.

The Museum is open Tuesdays-Saturdays.

The Saroyan House Museum at night.

Photo: Tufenkian Media

The Saroyan hologram room.

Photo: Tufenkian Media

Dr. Kurt Discusses Micro-History of Aintab in Third Kazan Lecture

The July 23, 1908 Revolution in the Ottoman Empire was a significant moment in the history of the Empire. There was great hope that the reinstatement of the 1876 Constitution would guarantee equal rights among all citizens of the Empire, including the Armenians. The new military, the Committee of Union and Progress, represented these early hopes, but over the course of the succeeding seven years, hopes for fundamental changes were progressively dashed. Ultimately the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire would be subjected to a Genocide.

History often addresses the role of great figures or great events, often at the expense of individuals, whose decisions shape the course of events. On Tuesday, November 6, Dr. Ümit Kurt presented one such example in his lecture entitled, “The Curious Case of Ahmed Necmdedin Bey: A Look into the Sociopolitical Climate in Aintab on the Eve of 1915.”

This was Dr. Kurt’s final lecture in a three-part series of lectures as the Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies for Fall 2018. Dr. Kurt’s research focuses on the city of Aintab, which held a significant Armenian population on the eve of World War I. Dr. Kurt, using a micro-historical approach, studies the role and agency that individuals had in the Armenian Genocide. Thus, his talks offered new insight by studying the periphery of the Empire.

How the Ottoman Constitution was perceived by Armenians, Turks, Arabs, Jews, and Greeks represented the central thesis in Dr. Kurt’s talk. He explained about how ordinary citizens reacted towards the Constitution, ultimately dividing the people of Aintab into two groups: those in favor of the new Constitution and those firmly opposed.

The story of Ahmed Necmededin Bey is central to this story as he ultimately was posted to the area of Salamiyya in Syria during the 1915 deportations and massacres of Armenians. Contrary to what might have been expected from an Ottoman official, Necmededin Bey actually played a benevolent role in the period by saving many of the Armenians of Aintab from annihilation.

Dr. Ümit Kurt, sixth from left, with students and faculty after his talk.

Photo: Christine Panahian

The historiography of the Armenian Genocide has often been told only through foreign sources, whether through Ottoman Turkish archives or through European archives, therefore neglecting the agency provided by Armenian sources. Sometimes these sources in Armenian are the only ones that can bring to light important events. In his lecture, Dr. Kurt presented his arguments using as a source the diaries of two men, Kriskar Bogharian and Fr. Nerses Tavukjian, both from Aintab and both of whom survived the initial deportations of Armenians. Their diaries shed light on the motivations of Necmededin Bey and explain some of his actions.

Necmededin Bey began his political career as kaimukam (district governor) of the area of Aintab. Because of his diligence, he was looked upon as a reputable and honorable man by both Armenians and Turks. Appointed during the reign of Abdul Hamid II, Necmededin Bey was opposed to the Revolution and refused to follow the orders of the CUP. A group of CUP agitators then surrounded his house in Aintab and beat him, and even threatened him with death. Necmededin Bey escaped and later was transferred to Syria. He continued in political service, even though he was a dedicated autocrat from the Abdul Hamid period.

Necmededin Bey was able to hold onto power because the CUP did not have its own bureaucratic and administrative cadres. Even after the revival of the Constitution, many bureaucrats throughout the Empire were still loyal to Abdul Hamid II’s regime. Although, the CUP attempted to purge the bureaucratic ranks they were not able to discharge everybody; some of them had made their own cadres to fill these posts.

Necmededin Bey was appointed as kaimukam of Salamiyya in 1915, and his efforts to improve living conditions for Armenians there and in particular his attempts to save Aintab’s prominent Armenian families still holds a place in the memory of Aintab’s Armenians. The diaries of Bogharian and Fr. Nerses both

The Saroyan House Museum.

Entrance to the Saroyan House Museum.
Masterpieces of Armenian Culture
Course Has Diverse Students

Hye Oozh
Fresno State's Armenian Radio Show
90.7 FM-KFSR

Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, standing, with students of the Armenian 148, Masterpieces of Armenian Culture class.

Photo: Berkez Der Hapogdissian

Dustin Vartanian
Staff Writer

For thousands of years Armenia's history has been filled with literary epics. Oral epics such as Heyk and Bel and David of Sassoun are a rich part of the fabric of Armenian culture. These epics created a storytelling tradition that explain the process of Armenia's conversion to Christianity. In addition, Armenia's literature has several masterful poems written by a variety of famous poets. The Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State gives students an opportunity to understand Armenia's literature and culture by offering a course called Armenian 148—"Masterpieces of Armenian Culture." "Masterpieces of Armenian Culture" is a survey of the works of Armenian authors from the fifth century to the twentieth century. The class also studies epics and oral history that date back as early as the 9th-7th century B.C. The epics and oral history help one to understand who the Armenians are and also about how they see themselves. "In this class we survey Armenian literature as a mean of understanding Armenian culture," stated Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, who teaches one section of the course. In order to understand Armenian culture, one must have knowledge of Armenia's past. Even though Armenian 148 is not a history class, it teaches students the history of the Armenians through literary works such as stories, epics, poems, and historical writings. Each student has a favorite part of the class. "The most interesting type of literature I have learned about are the epics. I liked learning about all the characters and my favorite character is the talking horse in David of Sassoun," said Elias Guerrero.

Professor Ohanessian has many favorite topics in the course, including how Armenian poets and authors were directly impacted by the Armenian Genocide. Dr. Ohanessian also stated that he appreciated "how much Armenian writers are influenced by their life experiences."

The Armenian 148 class is diverse and students have different reasons why they enrolled in this course. Some did so because the class fulfills an upper division General Education requirement. Others are in the class because they had previously taken other Armenian courses, which interested them in taking Armenian 148 as well.

Some students are Armenian and wished to learn about the history of their ancestors. "I wanted to learn more about my Armenian culture. I really don't know much about it so, I thought this class would help," said Matt Alam.

Ani Sargsyan said she would now like to take other Armenian Studies courses while at Fresno State. She is planning to complete the Armenian Studies Minor because she found this class so interesting. "I am taking the Armenian Studies Minor because Armenian 148 was so interesting. I like learning about Armenian culture," stated Sargsyan.

There are also some students who are taking the class simply because of their interest in Armenian culture. "I have always been interested in Armenian culture and I know people who are Armenian and I am interested in learning more in other cultures in general," said Abigail Cunliffe.

Dr. Ohanessian enjoys having a diverse group of students in his classroom. "It is necessary to have a diverse student population in this course. It is an upper division General Education course which attracts many students. In my experience, I find that both Armenian and non-Armenians are engaged and curious about learning more about Armenian culture and taking other courses we offer."

Society for Armenian Studies Conference Brings Scholars Together to Discuss the Rep. of Armenia

SAS, FROM PAGE 1

Der Matossian (University of Nebraska, Lincoln) delivered the opening remarks at the conference and stressed the significance of bringing together scholars to discuss important new research on the Republic.

The conference was organized into two sessions: "The First Republic in the International Context," and "Gender, Person- alities, and Culture During the First Republic."

The first session, chaired by Toole Nallapati (Leiden University), consisted of three presentations. George Bournoutian (Jona College) spoke on "The Territorial Demands of the Armenian Republic: Reality versus Naive." His comments focused on the Armenian demands for land after the 1918 Mudros Armistice.

Bournoutian discussed the role of two Armenian representatives at the Peace Conference, Boghos Nubar Pasha and Anoush Aharonian. He pointed out differing visions for the territory of a future Republic of Armenia. However, their visions competed with the neighboring Allied powers, especially France, which had already claimed Cilicia for itself. He explained the difficult decisions faced by the Armenian representatives and the complexity of the changing political landscape. In the two years that it took to make a final settlement at the Treaty of Sevres, the realities on the ground had completely changed. The promises made by the Allies, in which the Armenians trusted, ended up unfulfilled.

Vartan Matossian (Armenian National Education Committee, New York) spoke on "The Recognition of Armenia: The Republic of Armenia in South America (1918-1920)." Matossian's presentation discussed the efforts of one of the early members of the Republic of Armenia, Vartan Matossian, to convince South American countries to recognize the Armenian Genocide in the aftermath of World War I. His efforts resulted in the recognition of Armenia by Brazil and Argentina in 1920, but the League of Nations ultimately rejected recognition of Armenia. Etienne Brazil served as a representative of the Armenian Republic in South America, although there was at the time only a very small Armenian community in Brazil. His one-man efforts left a large impact.

Artem Gevorgyan (University of Oxford) spoke on the topic of "Rethinking the Establishment of the First Republic of Armenia: Responses of Societies in Turkish and Armenian Press in Istanbul." Gevorgyan utilized Armenian and Turkish newspaper from the period of May-October 1918, to illustrate his argument about the differing expectation between Turks and Armenians regarding the question of the Republic of Armenia. The Armenians in Istanbul wanted to regain the trust of the Turks, by publishing articles that expressed their fidelity to the Turkish state. For the Turks, it was a question of what they may lose in the establishment of the Republic of Armenia.

The second session, entitled "Gender, Personalities, and Culture During the First Republic," was chaired by Barlow Der Megedchian (California State University, Fresno). The session included two presentations.


One woman, Katarina Zalian Manoogian made a significant impact in the life of the Republic. This was at a time when in the United States women still did not have the right to vote. Ohanian also discussed the Parliament of the modern Republic of Armenia, arguing that although progress is being made in including more women, there is more work to be done.

The final presentation was by Jakob Osiecki (Jagiellonian University in Krakow), who spoke on "The Trip of Apostolic Visitor into two sessions: "The First Republic in the International Context," and "Gender, Personalities, and Culture During the First Republic."

The only visit of a high-ranking Catholic clergyman to Armenia in this period was the result of having been officially invited to Georgia Osiecki discussed the visit to Armenia by the Vatican representative Antonio Delphace.

Richard G. Hovannisian (UCLA, USC, and Chapman University) was invited to offer concluding remarks at the Conference.

Dr. Hovannisian pointed out that the study of the First Republic of Armenia is now entering a new phase as new insight is being provided by scholars.

Hovannisian, the author of a four-volume history of the Republic of Armenia, emphasized how the study of the Republic has changed over the years. Hovannisian encouraged scholars to continue to reevaluate the Republic of Armenia in light of new archival sources.

The Society for Armenian Studies represents scholars and teachers in the field of Armenian Studies.

The aims of the SAS are to promote the study of Armenian culture and society; to facilitate the exchange of scholarly information pertaining to Armenian studies around the world; and to sponsor panels and conferences on Armenian studies. It publishes the peer-reviewed Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies, available on its website: sasocietyforarmenianstudies.com.
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CUP CONFERENCE, FROM PAGE 1

Prof. Der Mugrdechian convened the Conference on Friday, October 12, and gave opening remarks outlining the background of the topic.

Raymond Kevorkian

The keynote address was given by Dr. Raymond Kevorkian (University of Paris VIII, Sain-Denis [Emeritus]) on “The Young Turk Regime: Ideology in Command.” Kevorkian, who penned the authoritative The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History (2011) discussed certain aspects of the ideology that prevailed among Young Turks, observing in particular that the need for a centralized state was, for them, a fundamental and unquestionable principle. In particular Kevorkian developed the concept of how the CUP viewed the relationship between the state and army, and of society and the state.

Duygu Coşkunatuna

Duygu Coşkunatuna (Princeton University) spoke on “Homeland and Nation Revisited: A Discourse Analysis of the Memoirs of the Young Turks.” Her talk sought to explain the frame of mind of the CUP from 1908-1918. She utilized their memoirs, and the memoirs of their contemporaries in her research. Coşkunatuna discussed the establishment of the CUP concept of “homeland,” emphasizing the vagueness of its imagined boundaries. She provided a framework for the “making” of Turkishness and the results of that concept.

The second session of the Conference took place on Saturday, October 13, and was chaired by Dr. Sergio La Porta, Bateman Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State.

Dikran Kaligian

Dikran Kaligian (Worcester State University) spoke on “When Revolutionaries Must Govern: The Vicissitudes of ARF-CUP Relations.” After the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress gradually took control of the government of the empire, and began working with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, both in Parliament and in the countryside. Dr. Kaligian discussed the often-contentious relations between the two parties as the CUP attempted to generate public support for the constitutional system in the face of reactionary opposition while the ARF pursued rights and reforms for the Armenian community.

Dr. Kurt first examined the structure of the Aintab CUP branch, its organizational form, members and relationship with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation in the city. He also explored the nature of the relationship between Armenians and Muslims in the pre-World War I period. The scholars who participated in various commentary organizations “The Committee of Union and Progress: Founders, Ideology, and Structure” brought new insight into the CUP. Their research will be the basis for future studies on the topic.

Hans-Lukas Kieser

Dr. Hans-Lukas Kieser (University of Newcastle, Australia) presented his paper on “Talatat Pasha and Ziya Gökalp.” Both Talatat and Gökalp played a fundamental role in the development of the CUP ideology. Gökalp was the spiritual father of Turkish nationalism, whose impact is still being felt in Turkey. Dr. Kieser elaborated on the political friendship and interaction between these two leaders.

Dr. Kieser explored Gökalp’s impact on nationalism in the Republic of Turkey, both before and after World War I. He provided an in-depth study on Gökalp in the 1910s, when he promulgated the ideology of pan-Turkishism which was adopted by the CUP. After 1923 Pan-Turkishism became meaningless in its territorial dimension, but Dr. Kieser argued that Kemal Atatürk’s “Turkish History Thesis” was strongly influenced by it.

Yektan Türkyılmaz

Yektan Türkyılmaz (Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin) gave his presentation on “Evaluating the Determinants of the Variations in the CUP and ARF Relationships across the Provinces.” His paper explored the close contacts and even cooperation between the perpetrator political organization (the CUP) and the most prominent political organization of the victim group (the ARF). These relationships and interactions were experienced not in a linear fashion, but in a rather diversified and gradually transforming manner. Dr. Türkyılmaz drew on ARF, Ottoman, British and missionary archival documents, periodicals and memoirs for his paper.

The Armenian Studies Program and the CineCulture film series presented the Fresno premiere of the movie “Roots” on Friday, November 2, to an audience of Fresno State students and community members. Directed by VAe Yun, the 89-minute motion film was the first to ever be shown in the country. Lilit Martirosyan, who producer “Roots,” was invited from Armenia to be a discussant for the film. She is a 1996 graduate of the Yerevan State University, Oriental Studies Department, but found her true passion in her research. She is an avid blog followers, and always answers questions on his posts.

Dr. Kurt’s talk focused on how the Turks, Kurds, Arabs, and Jews of Aintab greeted the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) to introduce the community to the Exhibit and representatives of the Diaspora and visit Armenia it would be the basis for future studies on the topic.

Jeffrey and Jason Ahronian, who are both graduates of Fresno State, are proud of designing and creating an Exhibit that would be exciting for the community. They were assisted in the planning and development of the Exhibit by Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Richard Ahronian, and Richard Hagedorn. Planning for the Exhibit began in November of 2017 after the Ahronians had visited the Fresno Fair and work on the Exhibit was completed by December.

The Ahronians worked closely with Brian Tatarian, President of the Friends of the Big Fresno Fair, and John Alkire, CEO of the Big Fresno Fair. They liked the idea of an expanded Armenian Exhibit and agreed to work on designing the project. Jeffrey and Jason collected the information, took photos, wrote text, and designed the layout on the wall and the interactive computer displays.

A reception was held on Thursday, September 6 at the Fresno County Historical Museum.

Sponsors of the exhibit included the Ahronian Family, the Ahronian Foundation, the Ahronian School of Business (Santa Clara University), the Armenian National Committee of Orange County, the Fresno State Asian Pacific Coalition, the Fresno State Armenian Studies Program and the Fresno State Armenian Student Association.

The scholars who participated in various commentary organizations “The Committee of Union and Progress: Founders, Ideology, and Structure” brought new insight into the CUP. Their research will be the basis for future studies on the topic.

Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Dr. Lilit Martirosyan, and Dr. Kurt. Students, Institute staff and the Valley Armenian community attended.

The Armenian Exhibit consists of a large pictorial wall with information about Armenian history, the Armenian Genocide, and about the migration of Armenians to Fresno and the San Joaquin Valley.

The Armenian Exhibit also features two kiosks which provide information and photos of prominent Valley Armenians, such as Jerry Tarkanian, William Savoy, and Kirk Kerkorian. Many other well-known Ar- menians in the community are included in the Exhibit.

More than 40,000 people visited the Historical Museum during the Fair, among them many Armenians throughout the Diaspora.
The Armenian Studies Program presents
“The Missing Pages: The Modern Life of a Medieval Manuscript, from Genocide to Justice”
Dr. Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh
(University of California, Davis)
In 2010, the world’s wealthiest art institution, the J. Paul Getty Museum, found itself confronted by a century-old genocide. The Armenian Church was suing for the return of eight pages from the Zeytun Gospels, a manuscript illuminated by the greatest medieval Armenian artist, Toros Roslin. Protected for centuries in a remote church, the holy manuscript had followed the waves of displaced people exterminated during the Armenian genocide. Passed from hand to hand, caught in the confusion and brutality of the First World War, it was cleaved in two. Decades later, the manuscript found its way to the Republic of Armenia, while its missing eight pages came to the Getty. The Missing Pages is the biography of a manuscript that is at once sacred object, and cultural heritage.

The Armenian Studies Program and the Lorenz Keyboard Concert Series World Music Series present
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In 2004 five outstanding Armenian instrumentalists formed the Cadence Ensemble. They continually expanded their repertoire and rapidly developed into what they are known for today: one of the world’s premier ensembles performing original works and arrangements by classical and contemporary European, Russian, Armenian, and American composers.

Co-sponsored with the Orpheus Chamber Music Ensemble.

Thursday, April 4, 2019 • 7:30PM
University Business Center, Room 191 Auditorium
Fresno State
Free admission and parking (with code)

The Armenian Studies Program and the Lorenz Keyboard Concert Series present
The Missing Pages

For educating the community on topical issues in matters regarding our rich Armenian cultural heritage.

The Knights and Daughters of Vartan “Man & Woman of the Year” Banquet
Honoring Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian and News Anchor Stefani Booroojian

Saturday, March 30, 2019
Fort Washington Country Club
10272 N. Millbrook, Fresno

For questions, please contact: Ara Karkazian 559-696-7185-ara@karkazian.com
Kevork Oflazian 559-289-2265-koflazian@yahoo.com

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MAN OF THE YEAR, FROM PAGE 1
Der Mugrdechian has been teaching at Fresno State for thirty-four years and has been the Director of the Program since 2008. He teaches a variety of Armenian Studies courses. He has served as President of the Society for Armenian Studies and has led student study trips to Armenia. Stefani Booroojian is a Fresno native and one of the most recognizable names in KSEE 24 News history. She has been on KSEE24 for 27 years and at the anchor desk since 1984. During that time, she has reported on many changes and events in the Central Valley.

She has recently made multiple trips to Armenia to report on projects that have ties to the Valley.

The Ahronians raised private funding from the community, which made the completion of the Exhibit possible. They have plans to expand the Exhibit every year with more photos and information. The community has been very receptive and supportive.

EXHIBIT, FROM PAGE 7
San Joaquin Valley who traveled to the Fresno Fair to see this new exhibit.

The Ahronians wanted to have everyone who visited to feel they have reached their goal. The Exhibit is open daily during the Big Fresno Fair held in October, but a tour of the Fresno County Historical Museum year-round can be scheduled year-round, by calling (559) 650-FAIR.

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