

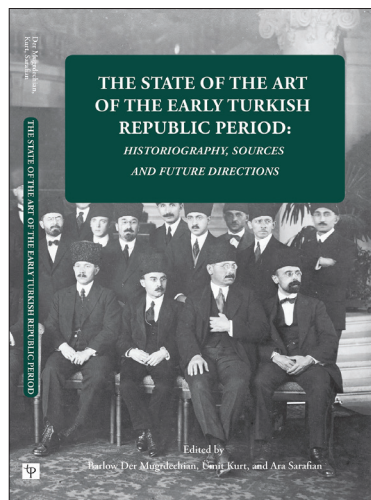
*HYE SHARZHOOM*  
*Armenian Action*  
*ՀԱՅ ՇԱՐՀՈՕՄ*



# 44<sup>th</sup> Year

## Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

## Ralph Shabazian Estate Gift of \$700,00 Will Provide Support for Armenian Studies Program



**SEE STATE OF THE ART, PAGE 6**

## Drs. Dennis and Mary Papazian Present New Memoir at Fresno State



*Photo: ASP Archive*

SEE **PAPAZIAN**, PAGE 6

On Thursday, February 23, 2023, Dr. Papazian and his wife, Dr. Mary Papazian, discussed his very interesting life, as documented in his book, *From My Life and Thought: Reflections on Armenian-American Journey*.

Shabazian never learned the Armenian language. However, he had a keen interest in the history and culture of his people and was proud of his Armenian heritage. He wanted to help make it possible for students of Armenian descent to pursue their education, especially learning about their Armenian heritage, their country's history, culture, art, music and language.



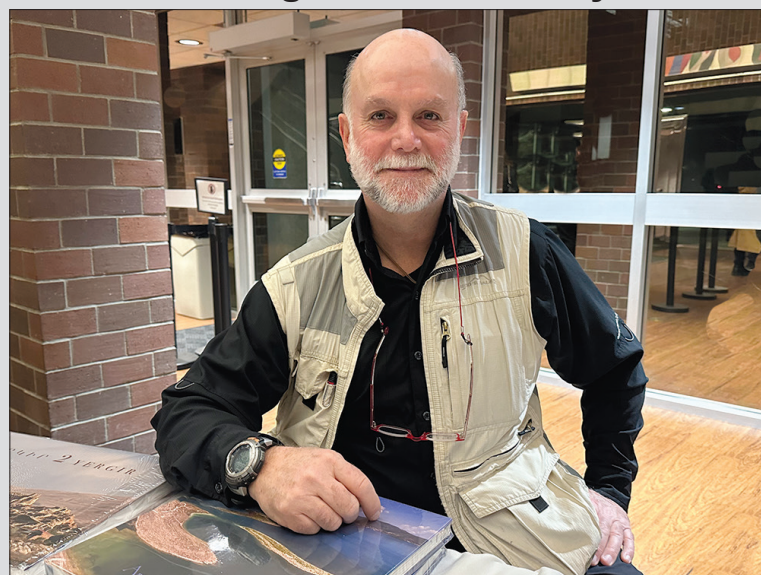
“Ralph Shabazian’s generosity will provide for the growth of the Armenian Studies Program and for the awarding of additional Armenian studies

Dr. Honora Chapman, dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, said, "Fresno State students who take Armenian studies courses will deeply appreciate this new endowment, since it will provide the funds they need in order to take inspiring coursework and achieve their dream of earning a degree. We are so grateful for Mr. Shabazian's gift that will continue to transform students' lives for generations to

SEE SHABAZIAN PAGE 4

NATALIE AGAZARIAN  
EDITOR

Khatcherian was born in Beirut, Lebanon, and later began to visit Artsakh and Armenia in 1988. He has actively participated in



*Photo: ASP Archive*

various activities of the Armenian Diaspora related to the Artsakh Movement (Karabakh). For almost three decades, Khatcherian has been presenting exhibitions, conferences, and photographic

lectures all around the globe, making Artsakh, Armenia, and Western Armenia an accessible reality for all. His photographs

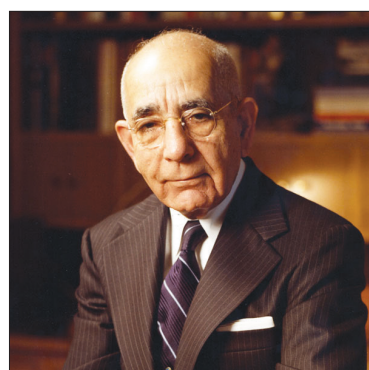
SEE [KHATCHERIAN](#), PAGE 7

## STAFF REPORT

Armenian Studies Program Coordinator Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian announced that the Leon S. Peters Foundation has continued their generous support of the Armenian Studies Program with a grant of \$30,000 for 2023. The Peters Foundation support for the Program over the past eleven years has reached \$330,000.

This continues the tradition

Leon S. Peters was respected as a businessman, civic leader, and philanthropist who lived and

SEE **PETERS**, PAGE 7

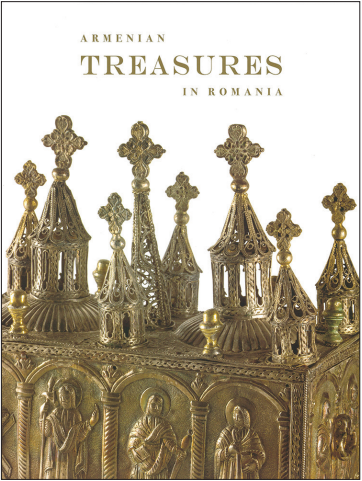
**Leon S. Peters** *Photo: ASP Archive*



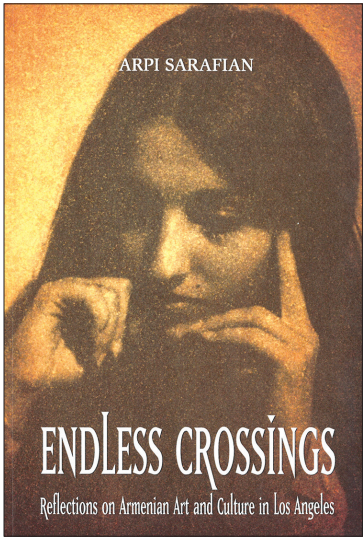
Armenian Studies Program  
Book/Video/CD Archival Gifts

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.

Maggie Goschin, Ararat-Eskijian Museum, Mission Hills, CA, for a copy of *Armenian Churches of Iran and Armenian Treasures in Romania*. *Armenian Churches of Iran* is authored by Shirley Avedian (Research on Armenian Architecture Foundation, 2021), 296 pp., illustrated with color photos. This important book discusses the 167 Armenian Churches in Iran. *Armenian Treasures in Romania* (Bucharest, Romania: Armenian Diocese of Romania, 2020), 406 pp., in English and Romanian, with color photos. This impressive volume documents the more than one-thousand year history of Armenians in Romania. The book includes photos and descriptions of Armenian churches, icons, religious objects, manuscripts, altar curtains found in the churches and museums of Romania.



Manuel Panossian, Newtown Square, PA, for a copy of *Armenian 19<sup>th</sup> Century Paper Church Tokens in the Ottoman Empire* (Manuel Panossian Collection, 2022), by Manuel Panossian, in Armenian and English, illustrated. This book is a survey of paper tokens issued in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by Armenian churches located in the Ottoman capital of Istanbul. The paper tokens served a monetary function, due to the disappearance of hard currency in the Empire, as a result of the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish war.



Arpi Sarafian, Glendale, CA, for a copy of her book, *Endless Crossings: Reflections on Armenian Art and Culture in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Tekeyan Cultural Association, 2019), 235 pp., in English. A mix of essays by Sarafian which explore the immigrant experience. Sarafian covers, in articles published in a variety of newspaper, the cultural and artistic life of the Armenian community in Los Angeles.

Robert Tatoyan, Yerevan, Armenia, for a copy of his book Արեւմտեան Հայաստանի Պիթիսի նահանգի Հայ բնակչութեան թիւը Մեծ Եղեռնի նախօրեակին (The Number of Armenians in the Vilayet of Bitlis, Western Armenia, on the Eve of the Armenian Genocide), (AGBU-Vahram Abdalian Cultural Fund, 2022), 205pp., in Armenian. Tatoyan presents a comparative and detailed analysis of the number of Armenians in the Western Armenian province of Bitlis (Paghesh), between the years of 1878 and 1914. He utilizes the Armenian Patriarchal census of 1913-1914 and Ottoman government statistics.



California State University, Fresno

Armenian Studies Program

Fall 2023 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
<b>General Education-Breadth, Humanities, Area C2</b>				
• Arm 1A-Elementary Armenian	4	10:00A-11:50A	MW	B. Der Mugrdechian
(Class #72634)				
<b>General Education-Breadth, Arts, Area C1</b>				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
(Class #73125)				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia	3	9:00A-9:50A	MWF	DIG SYNC
(Class #77283)				
<b>General Education-Breadth, Area D2</b>				
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies	3	9:00A- 9:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
(Class #73378)				
<b>General Education-Integration, Area IC</b>				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Culture	3	10:00A-10:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
(Class #73892)				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Culture	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	H. Ohanessian
(Class #73448)				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Culture	3			DGT CAMP
(Class #77379)				
<b>Upper Division Armenian Studies Course</b>				
• ArmS 108A-Arm History I	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
(Class #73772)				
• ArmS 120T-Arm Gen Experience	3	2:00P-3:15P		Kazan Visiting Prof.
(Class #77448)				

GET A MINOR IN ARMENIAN STUDIES

HYE SHARZHOOM

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Give Your Way to the Armenian Studies Program

There are many ways to support the Armenian Studies Program.

1) A gift today could come through the donation of cash, stock, or goods.

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

Hye Sharzhoom is an ethnic supplement of *The Collegian* and is the newspaper of the Fresno State Armenian Students Organization and the Armenian Studies Program and is funded by the Associated Students. Articles may be reprinted provided *Hye Sharzhoom* is acknowledged. *Hye Sharzhoom* welcomes prose, poetry, articles and other material from its student readers. For further information concerning the newspaper or the Armenian Studies Program contact us at:

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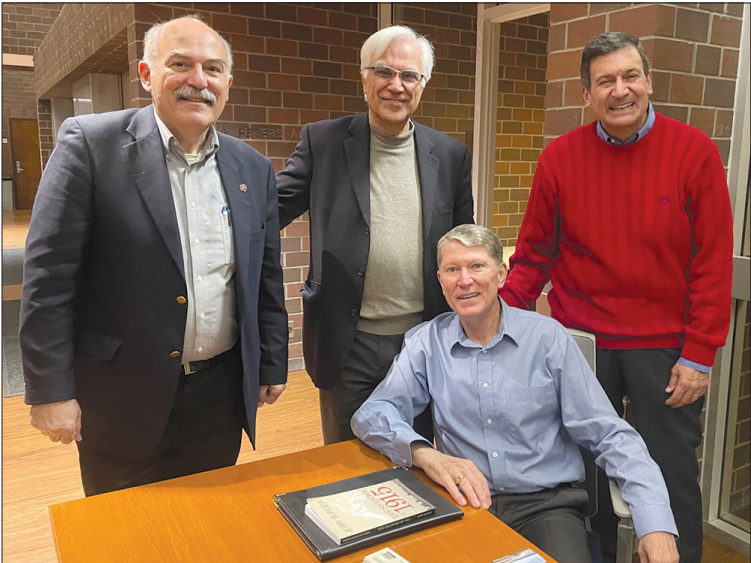
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Author Jerry Burger Speaks on His Novel-“The Shadows of 1915”



Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Varoujan Der Simonian, Dr. Jerry Burger, and Dr. Robert Vartabedian.

CHRISTOPHER PETROSIAN  
STAFF WRITER

Photo: Andrew Hagopian

“How do survivors and their families retain a belief in justice when atrocities go unpunished?” asks Dr. Jerry Burger, an expert in social psychology, in his book *The Shadows of 1915*.

Dr. Burger along with his colleague and friend Dr. Robert Vartabedian, were guest speakers for the Armenian Studies Program Spring Lecture Series on Friday, February 17, 2023. Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian of the Armenian Studies Program introduced Dr. Vartabedian, former President of Missouri Western State University, who, together with Dr. Burger, had a discussion about *The Shadows of 1915*.

The moment was a reunion for the two lifelong friends, as they reminisced about their time at Fresno State in the 1970s. After Fresno State, each would go on to become successful in their individual fields.

Dr. Vartabedian discussed Dr. Burger’s nationally acclaimed work in the field of psychology, as well as his success in fiction writing. He then highlighted Dr. Burger’s expertise in the field of “psychological processes of inhumane acts” and how this contributes to the effectiveness of his work.

The presentation consisted of reading excerpts of the books and a discussion between Dr. Vartabedian and Dr. Burger. Dr. Vartabedian connected reading the section of the Armenian Genocide in the book to the experience of discussing the genocide with family.

Dr. Vartabedian then began asking Dr. Burger questions to discuss the inspiration behind the book and the greater questions posed by it.

Dr. Burger’s extensive work in research and teaching in social psychology and his experiences with the Fresno Armenian community created an opportunity to explore the Armenian Genocide in literature. *The Shadows of 1915* is grounded in Fresno during the 1950s and explores an Armenian family’s internal struggles in dealing with the aftermath of a Genocide that occurred generations ago.

Dr. Burger read a scene exploring a woman’s account of

surviving the Genocide which he noted was “based on real first-hand accounts of survivors.” Throughout the reading, human sentiments and nature were emphasized, as Dr. Burger also reflected on the inherent emotion and meaning of his book.

Dr. Burger explained that as the title suggests, the story is almost entirely based on the Armenian Genocide, with the story itself taking place in the “shadow of the genocide.” Dr. Burger discussed the lack of recognition of the Genocide and added that he was shocked by the fact that “people who are very well-read, people who are very educated ... come up to me and say I had no idea.” He lamented this realization and added that he hoped his book would help rectify this fact. He added that this was one reason for his inclusion of the scene from 1915 and that he wanted he book to portray a definitive stance on what had happened.

When asked “What led you to write the book in the first place?,” Dr. Burger replied by mentioning his upbringing in Fresno and continuous exposure to the Armenian community. From this, he learned a lot about the history of the Genocide and different perspectives. “Every Armenian family had a story, a sad story, from the Genocide,” observed Dr. Burger.

“It’s very much alive in these families. There is very intense emotion surrounding Turkey and the Turks.” He then discussed how his book tackles the nuanced issue of reconciliation after the Genocide.

Dr. Burger described how the main character in the book, an Armenian man, and his non-Armenian fiancé, have a conversation that explores the matter. “Hatred is not an answer but neither is forgetting,” says the main character, a quote that Burger feels many Armenians can relate to.

Dr. Burger mentioned that his goal was not to write a book about Genocide, but to explore its aftermath. This is why *The Shadows of 1915* mostly unfolds in the year 1953.

The discussion then led into the research necessary for such a project. Dr. Burger noted how his goal was to include real location names as much as possible to

Ara Sarafian Presents Gomidas Institute’s New Publication on Remembrances of Tehlirian

EDDY THURBER  
STAFF WRITER

Groundbreaking testimony. On January 23, 2023, the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State hosted renowned historian Ara Sarafian to speak on his new publication, *Remembrances: The Assassination of Talaat Pasha* (Gomidas Press, 2022). This is the first English translation of Soghomon Tehlirian’s memoir as related to Vahan Minakhorian and is a firsthand account of Tehlirian’s role in the assassination of Talaat Pasha.

Talaat Pasha, was one of the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress, and was a chief architect of the Armenian Genocide. He fled to Berlin following the end of World War I. In 1919, an Ottoman Turkish Court Martial verdict found Talaat Pasha guilty of crimes committed as part of the CUP and he was condemned to death *in absentia*.

Sarafian co-founded and presently serves as the executive director of the London-based Gomidas Institute, which conducts research and publishes information on the Armenian Genocide. Considered “the leading authority on the history of the [Armenian] genocide in the English language” (*The Nation*), Sarafian has been the subject of two movies about his work, “Blue Book” and “100 Years Later.”

Sarafian began his presentation by giving the background on how Tehlirian’s memoir was written and later published. Sarafian then discussed Soghomon Tehlirian’s early life.

Born into a well-to-do family

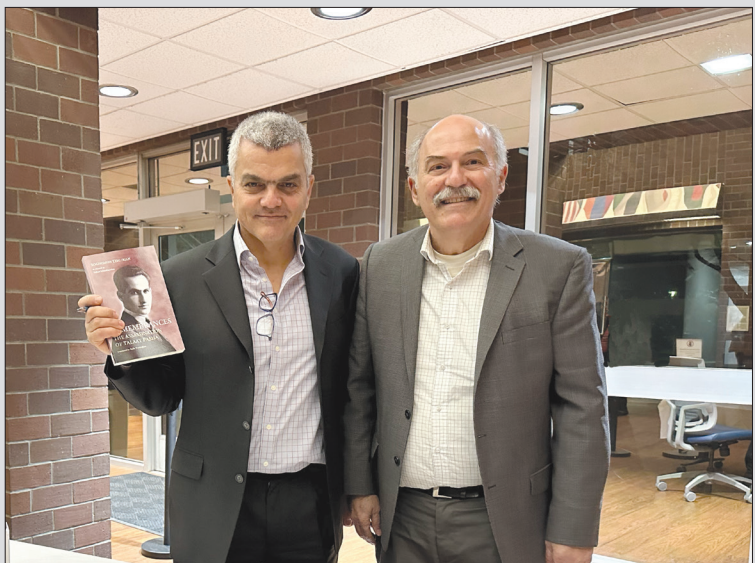


Photo: Andrew Hagopian

Ara Sarafian, left, with Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

in Yerznga, Turkey, in the late 1800s, Tehlirian was attending school in Germany when World War I broke out. He joined a military group in the Caucasus to fight against the Ottomans after being trapped in Serbia when the war began. He was under the command of General Antranik, one of the most famous and well-known figures in Armenian history.

Tehlirian had three “tours of duty,” where he witnessed the massacres of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey. These events and his experience with the Armenian refugees his unit escorted to safety showed him the scale of the violence perpetrated by the Young Turks. It strengthened his Armenian identity and the sentiments which would eventually lead to his involvement in the assassination of Talaat Pasha. After the assassination on March 15, 1921, Tehlirian was arrested and tried, but was swiftly released on a “not

guilty” verdict after a two-day trial.

Soghomon Tehlirian wrote an account of his life in the early 1940s while under Nazi occupation in Serbia, and much of Sarafian’s research focuses on Tehlirian’s narration of the events to his three editors who wrote the original Armenian version together, and chiefly his words to Vahan Minakhorian, who spearheaded the Armenian edition.

It was a successful work at the time and considered as the most accurate, truthful, and first-person narration of the events that occurred under Operation Nemesis.

The Armenian Studies Program is appreciative to Ara Sarafian for visiting Fresno State to discuss his new book, *Remembrances: The Assassination of Talaat Pasha*, the most accurate memoir of Soghomon Tehlirian based on firsthand testimony from the man to whom Tehlirian told his story.

Artsakh State University and Fresno State Agreement

STAFF REPORT

Dr. Armen Sargsyan, Rector of Artsakh State University and Dr. Saúl Jiménez Sandoval, President of California State University, Fresno signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on December 7, 2022.

The MOU outlined the possible ways in which Artsakh State University and Fresno State could develop and carry out collaborative research and education activities that are desirable, mutually beneficial, and contribute to fostering a cooperative relationship between the two institutions.

According to the agreement, “The area of cooperation shall include, subject to mutual consent, any activity or program at either institution as considered desirable and feasible on either side to foster and develop the cooperative relationship between the two institutions.”

Among the areas that the two institutions envision working together on are: Teaching,

capture a view of the community appropriately. His interviews with the Fresno Armenian community also helped him in writing the book.



Artsakh State University.

Photo: ASP Archive

research, collaboration of faculty and students, staff development etc., as deemed beneficial by the two institutions:

Establish ties of friendship and cooperation,

Joint research activities (including exchange of faculty members and research students),

Joint teaching or supervision of students,

Staging joint seminars, conferences, academic meetings and special academic programs,

Education abroad on the part of undergraduate and graduate

students, including exchanges, and internships,

Exchange academic materials, research publications and other instructional information,

Collaborative academic programs which may involve cultural activities and strong field visit component. This may be for groups or for individuals on Independent Guided Study Programs

This Memorandum of Understanding is for a period of five years.

Overall, this discussion touched on many interesting topics such as reconciliation after Genocide, perceptions of justice, and other works that cover the Genocide.



## Kef Time Fresno II Draws Hundreds to Enjoy Traditional Armenian Music

NATALIE AGAZARIAN  
EDITOR

“The sound of the music, the lights, the atmosphere... you find yourself singing along to every word, dancing with the people around you. Other times, you are just standing in awe, taking it all in. It’s a feeling of being completely immersed in the moment, and nothing else matters except the music and the experience,” said Michael Mazman, former president of the Fresno State Armenian Students Organization.

After the success of its revival last year, “Kef Time Fresno II” was “back by popular demand” this year on Saturday, January 28, 2023. Word spread quickly after last year’s event, and the Kef Time Legacy Band partnered with the Triple X Armenian Fraternity to host “Kef Time SoCal” in September of 2022. This year, “Kef Time Fresno II” sold out in less than a week. It was organized by the Kef Time Productions Committee and held at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church.

“On behalf of the Kef Time Productions Committee, it is personally rewarding and a pleasure to organize this event that serves to bring the Fresno Armenian community together and to preserve the music of our ancestors,” said Andrew Hagopian.

The Kef Time Production Committee also gives back to the community, as proceeds of the evening were donated to the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State.

The dinner and dance were attended by Armenian community members from Northern and Southern California, the Central Valley, and the East Coast. Younger and older generations joined together for an evening of pure bliss – dancing side by side, enjoying a classic *kebab* dinner, listening to traditional Armenian folk music, and laughing among family and friends.

It certainly was and continues



The Kef Time II attendees enjoying the evening.

Photo: Marc Bouldoukian

to be a popular event – this year with over 400 people in attendance.

A memorabilia “Kef Time II” shirt, depicting the Fresno community, was sold at the dance and the net proceeds were donated to the Armenian Studies Program.

“It was nice to see the younger generation enjoying the old traditional music,” said Hagop and Silva Arikian. “It brought back a lot of memories from when our parents used to listen to those songs, and it was nice seeing a young band bringing back the songs we don’t hear that often anymore.”

“I love that I can get together with other Armenians who share a love for their culture,” said Vartouhi Kevranian from San Francisco.

“I love the sense of community Fresno gives me and how spending time with other Armenians makes me feel at home.”

The event truly embodies the characteristics of the Armenian people: hospitable and friendly, coupled with a deep-rooted appreciation for the culture. The Fresno Armenian community

was established in the early 1880’s, and has since expanded to consist of churches, cultural centers, museums, and regular events. These establishments and recurring events in Fresno are major contributors in upholding the Armenian identity, and “Kef Time Fresno” serves to do just that.

“The Armenians in Fresno have always been very welcoming and appreciate me for being more than just a musician, and that’s what really matters to me,” said Kef Time Legacy band member Michael Kamalian.

Kamalian travels from Wisconsin least annually to join his friends on stage for a night of music-making and memories.

“What I love about performing in Fresno is that I know the community on a personal level. I have met so many people and have created friendships in the community,” said Kamalian.

The “Kef Time Legacy Band” members are: Phillip Hagopian on the *oud* and vocals, Michael Kamalian on clarinet, Andrew Hagopian on percussion, Mal Barsamian on guitar, and Jim

Karagozian on *kanun*.

“I enjoy working with my fellow musicians on stage, entertaining our community leaders, family, and friends,” said Andrew Hagopian.

“To look out into the crowd and see a group of Armenians coming together in unity, holding pinkies and line dancing, is a wonderful feeling.”

“Kef Time Fresno” helps to encourage the maintenance of

culture in the Fresno Armenian community through its exhilarating appeal.

It shows the support Armenians have for one another within the community, and how the music unifies Armenians of all ages and backgrounds.

“Personally, dancing was my favorite part. It was cool to see everyone dancing together and being a part of that. I think ‘Kef Time’ is a great way to bring the Armenian community together and strengthen bonds between all of us through our culture,” said Clovis North student Anthony Zohrabian.

Beyond the allure ‘Kef Time’ has on its attendees, it also encourages young Armenian musicians to delve into the musical realm of their ancestors. “I started playing *doumbek* a few years ago, and it was through my exposure to Armenian folk music that I became interested in this instrument,” said Mazman.

The effect that events like “Kef Time Fresno II” have on the younger generations provides hope for the perseverance of Armenian culture.

Through creating friendships, listening to familiar melodies, learning dances, and inspiring the next generation of Armenians, “Kef Time Fresno II” is likely to become a reignited tradition in the Fresno Armenian community for years to come.



Left to right: Michael Kamalian, Phillip Hagopian, and Andrew Hagopian.

Photo: ASP Archive

## Armenian Students Organization Enjoys Friendsgiving Event



The Armenian Students Organization enjoyed a “Friendsgiving” event on Tuesday, November 26. More than 30 members gathered at the home of ASO President Sara Beberian to share an evening of food and games.

Photo: ASO Archive

Armenian Students Organization

SHABAZIAN, FROM PAGE 1  
come.”

Shabazian’s parents, Aram and Mary Khatoonian, came to Fresno after fleeing persecution in Armenia in the early 1900s. Aram was a decorated U.S. soldier, having earned the Purple Heart and the Silver Star for capturing 11 German soldiers in World War I. Aram and Mary settled in Turlock after they married, where Aram farmed cantaloupes and later became a foreman for a melon shipping company.

Shabazian was born in Turlock in 1932. The fourth of six children, he graduated from Turlock High School and continued his education at Modesto Junior College. He began his career in the men’s clothing business, working as a senior in high school at the Turlock Toggery until its closing in 1988. He continued working for about another 10 years at Rossini’s Menswear in Modesto until he retired.

“Ralph was a frugal man who lived very simply and, due to his lifestyle, he was able to save. This allowed him to use that savings to enrich the lives of others after his passing,” said Rosemary Selland, Shabazian’s sister. “Ralph once said to me that ‘money was to be respected and used wisely.’ I think I can safely say his personal use of money, and his choice of charities to donate his money to, bears that out.”

In his professional life, Shabazian “dressed” hundreds of men, including congressmen, doctors, lawyers, businessmen, farmers and many others. He had impeccable taste in clothes and a sense of style that many admired. Shabazian remembered his customers’ names and clothing sizes and seemed to know what would look good on them.

He even modeled clothing for the store’s advertisements in the local newspaper. Once, he was even chosen as “Bachelor of the

Year” in Turlock.

A man of many interests, Shabazian enjoyed traveling and went on many educational travel trips with California State University, Stanislaus. He was an avid reader and enjoyed music from the 1940s and classical music, including opera and the symphony orchestra.

He was skilled at tennis and took home numerous trophies in competition. He once took a 310-mile, eight-day pontoon trip down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon and wrote of his experience for the *Turlock Daily Journal*. Later, he delighted in taking friends and family down the rapids of the Stanislaus River in his own raft.

Shabazian is survived by his siblings, Armen Shabazian of Carson City, Nevada and Rosemary Selland of Carmichael. He also leaves behind 10 nieces and nephews and numerous cousins.



Reflections on a Semester at the American University of Armenia



Eddy Thurber participating in a photo shoot for future AUA promotional material.

Photo: ASP Archive

EDDY THURBER  
STAFF WRITER

I studied abroad in Armenia for the Fall semester of 2022, together with four other Fresno State students, and had the time of my life. Travel is always exciting no matter where you go, but my semester in Armenia was particularly productive and meaningful for me, both as a student and as an Armenian. I learned a lot about the world and about myself. The experience has greatly strengthened my Armenian identity as I learned to read, write, and speak Armenian and discovered that I could navigate my newly discovered homeland.

As a Christian, the experience changed my life as I learned to rely on God through prayer, separated by not only thousands of miles, but also a twelve-hour time difference from my family and closest friends. I would have had a very different experience without the mental grounding brought about by my faith.

In terms of the day to day, American University of Armenia (AUA) is a wonderful school. The administration was notably friendly and jumped at any question our group had with quick fixes and cheery responses; more so than I have seen in any institution that I have been a part of. From a professor bringing Armenian food to our last day of class, to watching classic movies in a different professor’s home, to debates about capitalism, I had an amazing time in class. Many of the professors at AUA are from the Diaspora, which gives them a unique perspective on the geopolitics and business classes I was taking. It is a very different experience being taught by someone who witnessed a Palestinian refugee camp in

Lebanon or saw the aftermath of an airstrike against the Kurds in Iraq, than it is listening to a professor whose experience has been limited to the classroom.

The other international students studying at AUA, in particular, were the highlight of my stay. I met many diasporan Armenians and other non-Armenian students hailing from far-off countries such as the Netherlands and Dubai. I forged amazing connections with them as we learned about each other’s lives and taught each other our languages.

The local Armenian students were very welcoming to us and endlessly curious about life in America and showing us life in Armenia. It was very interesting to contrast our experiences in Armenian culture and especially the Eastern Armenian dialect and traditions, with my own Western Armenian background. The local students are more welcoming to outsiders than many in America are. There was definitely a contrast between the older and younger generations, however, as those raised in the Soviet era were generally less trusting. Nonetheless, I had positive interactions with nearly everybody I came into contact with.

I absolutely loved my stay and highly recommend that any student, especially those with Armenian ancestry, learn more about the Kashian Foundation Scholarship and the opportunity to study at AUA. The Kashian Foundation program sent me to Armenia with all expenses paid and the AUA liaisons for the program are amazing people. If you have any interest in deepening your understanding of Armenian culture, learning some Armenian, or exploring a new country, you must study in Armenia.

Dr. Kurt Discusses Importance of Studying Micro-Histories in Understanding the Armenian Genocide

CHRISTINE PAMBUKYAN  
STAFF WRITER

“As I immersed myself in the literature and explored primary sources from Ankara to Aintab to Yerevan, it became clear to me that forced displacement, rhetoric used by the Turkish state to fend off international accusations of the Genocide and the potential Armenian demands for reparations in their eyes was a tactic in the systematic and planned effort to annihilate Ottoman Armenians in Asia Minor,” stated Dr. Ümit Kurt, Assistant Professor in the School of Humanities, Creativity Industry, and Sciences and an affiliate of the Center of the Study of Violence at the University of Newcastle, Australia.

On Friday, December 9, 2022, Dr. Kurt, author of *The Armenians of Aintab: The Economics of Genocide in an Ottoman Province* (Harvard University Press, 2021), was the final speaker in the Armenian Studies Fall 2022 Lecture Series, and gave a presentation on “Microhistories of the Armenian Genocide.”

In this lecture, Dr. Kurt analyzed the Armenian Genocide through the lens of the individual actors of the Genocide and the agency they have, rather than interpreted through the lens of the government. He also focused on the local elites of the regions in which the Genocide was conducted and how they acted. He did this by explaining their motives for participating in the Genocide, together with the main organizer, the ruling Committee of Union and Progress.

Dr. Kurt begins his lecture by explaining how he became interested in the study of the Armenian Genocide. “Searching for something with a flesh and blood connection to Turkey’s past... my past, and my very own upbringing as a Turk... I learned more of the mass atrocities and forced deportations carried out in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire. I learned as well as of the early purges conducted by the Ottoman ruling elites against non-Muslim groups within the Empire – Armenians first and foremost in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century,” stated Dr. Kurt.

Dr. Kurt explained how he grew up in a Turkish household, where his Arab father forbade his Kurdish mother from teaching their children about her culture and language. This left a deep impact on his feelings about the country that he grew up in. “As a child, I used to eavesdrop while my mother was speaking Kurdish with my grandmother and aunts. When my father came in the room, the conversation suddenly switched to Turkish. This led me to develop a certain kind of resistance to everything about Turkishness and the nationalism surrounding it,” added Dr. Kurt.

Next, Dr. Kurt explained how historiography has changed in the last decade. In contrast to the study of holocaust history, which has access to numerous primary



Photo: Andrew Hagopian

Dr. Ümit Kurt, left, with Prof. Barlow Der Mugerdechian.

sources, it was more difficult to find information on local histories of the Armenian Genocide.

“Until the late 1990s, Middle East Studies programs in the English-speaking world were dominated by scholars who refused to admit that there was an Armenian Genocide. It was they, like Stanford Shaw and Bernard Lewis, who were training their graduate students; writing reviews like Andrew Mungo; and publishing books which would then be cited by Justin McCarthy, creating an academic loop,” stated Dr. Kurt.

Dr. Kurt added that this has recently changed. Many scholars of diverse backgrounds, including Armenians, Kurds, Turks, and Americans, have restructured the narrative and provided more accurate histories of the atrocities and events that took place during the Armenian Genocide. Despite this, Dr. Kurt maintained that “existing studies unfold the narrative of the annihilation of the Armenians and other minority communities primarily from the perspective of the perpetrators, central political elites, and European political actors, rather than from the intersecting perspectives of the international, national, and local agents.”

This historiography also lacks primary sources about the violence perpetrated against Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks.

Dr. Kurt explained that “in comparison with the Holocaust, as well as other genocidal acts and mass murders such as in Rwanda and Cambodia... we have to date essentially no substantial understanding of the

motives of grass-root perpetrators who enabled and enacted the Armenian Genocide.” He added that in his research, he found that “this lack of information on the motives leading to the destruction of Armenians is because such information is usually extracted through a systematic study of archival resources, testimonial accounts, trial records, and the perpetrator accounts.”

“Being the perpetrator of a mass crime such as genocide is not unique to certain individuals... none came into this world as perpetrators,” emphasized Dr. Kurt. Therefore, it is important to study the local perpetrators, the people who were present for the local massacres, to understand why and how the Genocide was carried out.

Dr. Kurt concluded his presentation by mentioning that “the Armenian Genocide was a mass murder committed by a wide range of perpetrators. The individuals involved in this criminal acted in accordance with their own decisions regardless of the circumstances; therefore, individual responsibility is essential.”

“The Armenian Genocide was as much a bottom-up process as it was top-down process,” concluded Dr. Kurt. “The relations between the central powers and local authorities were not unidirectional but multifaceted.”

Dr. Kurt’s presentation, along with other lectures in the Armenian Studies Program Lecture Series, are archived on the Armenian Studies YouTube Channel at <https://bit.ly/armenianstudiesyoutube>.

Visit the Armenian Studies Program Online Library and Photo Archive

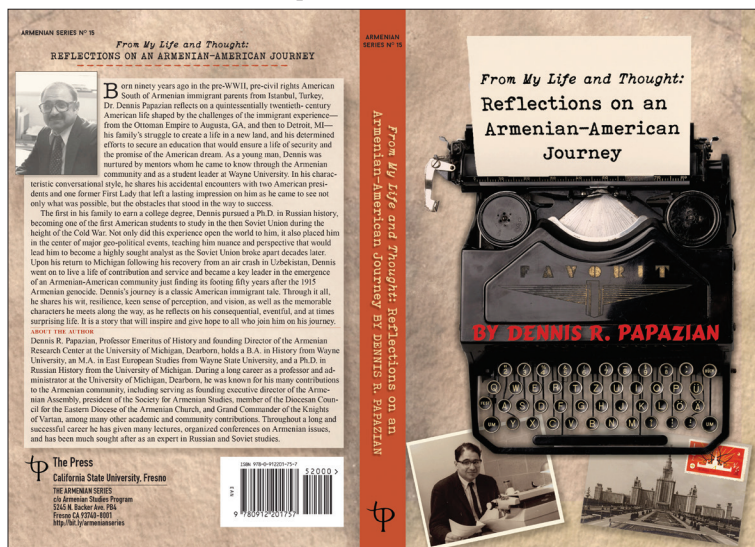
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Armenian Studies Website  
<https://fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies>





## Dr. Dennis Papazian's New Memoir



### PAPAZIAN, FROM PAGE 1

Armenian history.

Dr. Papazian's presentation began with a story of his father's journey to the United States at the beginning of the Armenian Genocide. His father was born Nahabed Zeronyan and he and his two brothers left Istanbul for the United States, acquiring a Greek passport using the name Charlie Pappas. After he entered the United States, Nahabed changed his last name to Papazian and the family settled in Augusta, Georgia, where he sold fruits door-to-door, until he saved up enough money to open a restaurant called "The Busy Bee."

Dr. Papazian was born on December 15, 1931, in Augusta. His family later decided to move to Michigan, where they could be closer to relatives. One of Dr. Papazian's earliest jobs was as a mail clerk for the Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company. He later attended college at Wayne University (later Wayne State University), where he was one of a small group of students to meet President Eisenhower at the White House.

Dr. Papazian later had the opportunity to meet and speak with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt as a result of his participation in the Collegiate Council for the United Nations. His meeting with Mrs. Roosevelt took an unexpected turn when she asked him if he came from a wealthy family. When Dr. Papazian replied "No" and asked why, Mrs. Roosevelt told him, "You could have had a brilliant career in politics." Dr. Papazian felt a bit offended by her comment, as he felt it was contrary to what the United States stood for. That conversation with Mrs. Roosevelt had such an impact on Dr. Papazian that later in life he chose not to run for Congress despite invitations to do so.

Another story told by Dr. Papazian was from his time studying for his doctorate at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Dr. Papazian had written a paper on Armenian history and was told by his professor that, "Little people cannot write their own histories because they won't be honest and accurate." Dr. Papazian was stunned by this comment but was not deterred from continuing to study

Armenian history.

Dr. Papazian and Dr. Mary Papazian discussed various experiences in Dennis Papazian's life such as the time he survived an airplane crash, his return to the United States from the Soviet Union to become a history professor, and how he eventually took a four-year leave from the university to help found the Armenian Assembly of America and to later become its Executive Director. As Dr. Papazian mentioned, this was very important considering that there were few Armenian institutions and Armenian Studies Programs when he was growing up.

Dr. Papazian was also heavily involved with the "Aid to Lebanon" program, which helped Armenians under threat during the Lebanese Civil War. The "Aid to Lebanon" program assisted orphans and widows, funded schools, and awarded microloans to Armenians in order to restart their small businesses that had been damaged during the Civil War.

At the end of this presentation, Dr. Mary Papazian read the speech that Dr. Dennis Papazian gave at the 70th Anniversary celebration of Armenian Independence, on June 4, 1988. The speech was a call for the Armenian people to come together and recognize the strength Armenians have when working together. Dr. Papazian discussed the history of the Armenian people and their perseverance through adversity, and the appreciation Armenians must demonstrate for the generation that survived the Genocide. He stated that Armenians must thrive on love, not hate, and that had there been no Armenian Republic of 1918, there would be no Armenia as we know it today.

Dr. Papazian's presentation was inspiring and many audience members continued the conversation with him after the lecture to learn more about his fascinating life.

Dr. Papazian's memoir is available through Abril Bookstore: <http://www.abrilbooks.com/from-my-life-and-thought.html> or the NAASR bookstore: <https://naasr.org/products/from-my-life-and-thought-reflections-on-an-armenian-american-journey?pos=1&sid=23ffde0db&ss=r>.

## Dr. Henry Shapiro Presents on His Book-"The Rise of the Western Diaspora in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire"

CAREEN DERKALOUSDIAN  
STAFF WRITER

"This book [*The Rise of the Western Armenian Diaspora*] tells the story of how Istanbul became the world's largest Armenian intellectual and demographic center in the aftermath of mass migrations caused by a civil war – a rebellion in the Ottoman Empire that took place in the seventeenth century," stated Dr. Henry Shapiro.

On Thursday, January 26, 2023, Dr. Shapiro, a Polonsky Fellow at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem, presented a lecture regarding his book titled *The Rise of the Western Armenian Diaspora in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*. In his presentation, Dr. Shapiro highlighted key aspects of his book, such as the causes of the Armenian mass migrations in the seventeenth century, and noted that it was his duty to bring Armenians into the narrative of Ottoman history, a history that tends to exclude non-Muslims.

Dr. Shapiro began his lecture by stating how he became interested in this topic. After completing his Master's degree at Sabanci University, he lived in Istanbul for six years. The time that he spent working in Turkish academia laid the groundwork for his book and shaped his interest in utilizing classical Armenian sources for the study of the history of the Armenians in the early modern Ottoman Turkish Empire.

When comparing books on Armenian and Turkish history, Dr. Shapiro came across a series of rebellions known as the "Celali [Jelali] Revolts" that took place in the early seventeenth century, which Dr. Shapiro referred to as a civil war. He found it striking that none of the books on Ottoman history took into account primary Armenian sources or even mentioned the Armenians at all. A key question that needed to be answered was whether or not the "Celali Revolts" were also discussed in Armenian historical accounts. In order to answer this



Photo: Andrew Hagopian

Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugardechian, Dr. Henry Shapiro, and Dr. Sergio La Porta.

burning question, Dr. Shapiro moved to Armenia and began studying classical Armenian, in order to ready the primary sources of the period.

While reading seventeenth century Armenian sources in the Matenadaran [Mesrop Mash-tots Manuscript Library in Yerevan], he discovered that the "Celali Revolts" were in fact mentioned in these texts and that they prompted mass migrations towards western Anatolia. This key finding inspired Dr. Shapiro to dig deeper into this topic by conducting a case study on Armenian mass migrations from Kemah in eastern Anatolia to Rodosto, a port city near Istanbul. He focused on Kemah, as it was once a site of holy pilgrimage for Armenians, and where many former Zoroastrian centers had been converted into churches or monasteries by St. Gregory the Illuminator.

As Armenians migrated westward and a new diaspora formed, two important Armenian authors emerged from Kemah, according to Dr. Shapiro. One of these, Grigor Daranalt's, composed a chronicle of his life in the seventeenth century, and the sole copy of this chronicle is housed in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The second important writer, Eremia K'eomurchean, was the first Armenian author to write

large-scale works on Ottoman history. K'eomurchean made significant contributions to Armenian literary tradition as a historian. Both of these authors played a major role in shaping Istanbul as an Armenian demographic cultural center.

Dr. Shapiro concluded his lecture by summarizing his first book and discussing his future research direction. "The book is a story of civil war in Anatolia, the 'Celali Revolts' that prompt disproportionately Armenian mass migrations because they were taking place in historical Armenian lands," said Dr. Shapiro.

"It is the story of settlements in western Anatolia and Istanbul told through the perspective of Ottoman Turkish archival documents.

Dr. Shapiro is currently working on his second book, which focuses on Armenian Catholic missionaries who became active in the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth century. He believes that the Armenian Catholics provide more historical examples of how the Ottomans used the talents of non-Muslims to govern their vast Empire.

In this way, Dr. Shapiro's research will continue to incorporate Armenian perspectives into the narrative of early modern Ottoman history.

### STATE OF THE ART, FROM PAGE 1

1945)"; by Talin Suciyan and Harry Harootunian, on "Abstracting the Peasant in Ottoman and Turkey's Historiography"; by Ari Şekeryan, on "'Loyal' Citizens of the Republic: Revisiting the Nationalist Policies of the Republic of Turkey and the Precarious Situation of the Armenian Community in Istanbul (1923–1928)"; by Christopher Sheklian, on "The Problem-Space of Secularism in the Early Turkish Republic"; by Ayşe Kose Badur, on "A Portrait of a Unionist in the Early Republican Era: Mehmed Cavid (1876–1926)"; and by Hans-Lukas Kieser, an "Afterword: Reassessing the Formation of Post-Lausanne 'New Turkey.'"

"This is an important book on a topic that has been understudied," said Prof. Barlow Der Mugardechian, general editor of

the Armenian Series. "A better understanding of the early Turkish Republic period is essential to understanding Armenian-Turkish relations today."

"The scholarship on Turkey's pre-republican history has made great strides over the past three decades, expanding the historical aperture to a plurality of actors and becoming more representative of diverse political, religious, and cultural groups involved in the transition to post-Ottoman Turkey," said Dr. Hans-Lukas Kieser. "The proliferation of research on late-Ottoman history, including notably the last Ottoman decade, has contributed to a thorough revision of republican Turkey's foundation in general and of the early Republic in particular. This is scholarly work in progress that grasps the republican nation-state as a post-genocidal polity."

Copies of *The State of the Art*

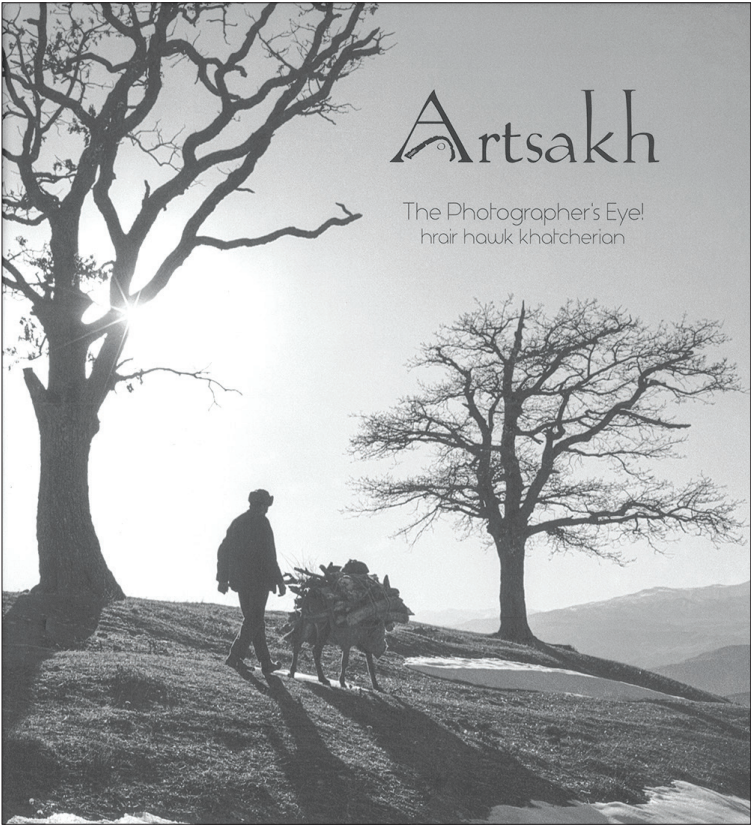
of the Early Turkish Republic Period are available for purchase from: Abril Bookstore, <http://www.abrilbooks.com/books/state-of-the-art-of-the-early-turkish-republic-period-the.html> or the National Association for Armenian Studies & Research (NAASR) Bookstore, <https://naasr.org/products/the-state-of-the-art-of-the-early-turkish-republic-historiography-sources-and-future-directions>.

A full list of the books in the Armenian Series of The Press at California State University, Fresno can be found at: <https://cah.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies/resources/armenianseries/index.html>.

For bulk orders, with a 40% publisher's discount, please contact the Armenian Studies Program, at 559.278.2669 or by contacting Prof. Barlow Der Mugardechian by email at [barlowd@csufresno.edu](mailto:barlowd@csufresno.edu).

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**Khatcherian, From Page 1**  
have appeared in numerous magazines, newspapers, books and publications.

Khatcherian began his presentation with a five-minute video showing a behind-the-scenes look at his photography process. There were many aerial photographs and montages of the beautiful monasteries and breathtaking landscapes scattered throughout the regions of Armenia and Artsakh. In fact, Khatcherian informed the audience that he once flew over Artsakh and Armenia eight times in order to obtain the perfect angles for his photos. He even enlisted the help of local residents and clergy to access hidden sites and enter war zones to capture the reality of the wars over the years.

Khatcherian photographed many monasteries in Artsakh, whose beauty demonstrate the craftsmanship of the Armenian people over time and the traditional Armenian style of architecture. Among those that Khatcherian photographed was Amaras Monastery, the first Armenian church built in Artsakh in the fourth century. This monastery also served another purpose – Mesrop Mashtots established the monastery as the first institution to teach the newly developed Armenian alphabet. Other monasteries he captured included Gandzasar and Yeghishe Kouys. During his travels, Khatcherian observed that the remote location of many of the monasteries throughout Artsakh and Armenia contributed to their survival. He noted that “the road it takes” to reach the monasteries can be so taxing that many people simply leave them alone.

At times Khatcherian went to extreme lengths to take some of the photos included in his book: photos of the Lachin Corridor in various seasons, Armenian fighter jets at their base, and even photos of converted Azeri weapons used during the war in 1992. Khatcherian told the audience that in order to get the best photographs that he had often been in dangerous situations, including once where he had been “only a 100 feet away from Azeris.” He also made sure to utilize his artistic abilities to

achieve the best photo possible. Khatcherian would carry various forms of equipment with him and stay in one place until the natural lighting was suitable. He used the example of his shot of Gandzasar monastery, where he waited all day until about 2:00pm, to capture the *khatchkar* [cross-stone] on the west facade. This monastery also contains illuminated manuscripts and is referred to as the “crown jewel” of monasteries.

Another theme throughout Khatcherian’s book is the prevalence of *khatchkars* throughout Armenia and Artsakh. Armenia has a deep-rooted history, and one particular *khatchkar* that Khatcherian photographed shows linkage to the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia. The *khatchkar* was found in the Lachin region, and Khatcherian made sure to take accurate measurements and carry reflectors to capture the nuances of the carvings.

Through his frequent travels to the region, Khatcherian was able to capture the same location over time, and compare the photos in his book. One side-by-side photo depicts over thousands of *khatchkars* in Nakhichevan, and another of the same spot with over 4,000 of them later destroyed by Azeris. Khatcherian went on to discuss the lack of interception from the United Nations in regards to the relics being destroyed and urged for more awareness of the obstructions.

Beyond simply taking scenic and historic photographs, Khatcherian most importantly captured the character of the Armenian people. “Even with all the blockades, the Armenians are still smiling,” stated Khatcherian. Multiple candid shots of resilient villagers and courageous soldiers demonstrate the unity, faith, and tradition the Armenian people have maintained for generations.

*Artsakh: The Photographer’s Eye!* serves as a tangible visual for the community. It contains the regions kept and lost, highlighting its cultural and natural beauty from various angles. Khatcherian created this photography book to depict the realistic history of Artsakh and Armenia, because as the saying goes, “a picture speaks a thousand words.”

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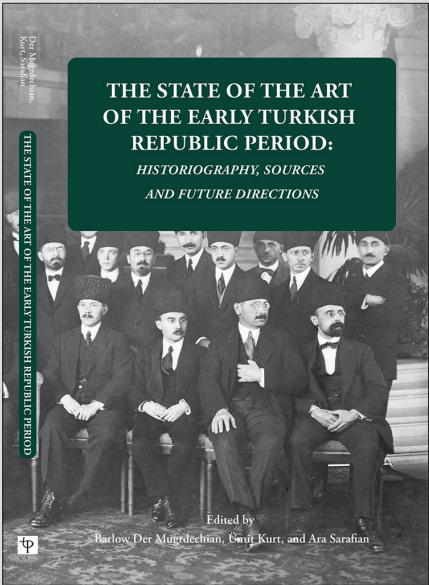
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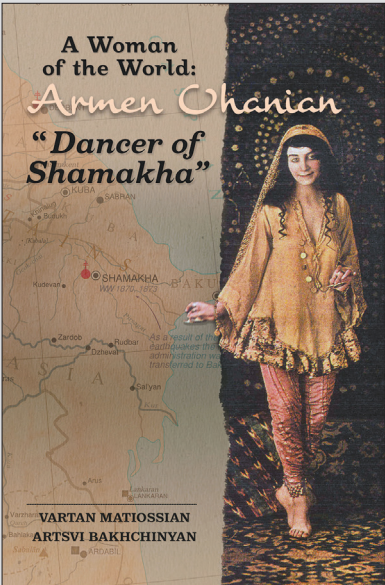
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PETERS, FROM PAGE 1

worked according to the highest ethical standards. He cherished his community and considered its well-being his personal responsibility.

Soon Mr. Peters assumed leadership positions in numerous organizations and also partnered with Fresno State to support a variety of initiatives. The Leon S. Peters Business Building at Fresno State honors the spirit of the man who served

on the University President’s Advisory Board, the Fresno State Foundation Board of Governors, the University’s Agricultural Board, and the Business Advisory Council of the School of Business and Administrative Sciences. For his many contributions to Fresno State, Leon S. Peters was posthumously awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by The California State University in 1997.

Since 1984 the Leon S. Peters Award has been presented

annually to a Central Valley business leader whose work exemplifies the values, ethics, and character of Leon S. Peters.

The Leon S. Peters Foundation was established in 1959 and since then, the Peters Foundation has become one of the community’s biggest benefactors, giving to higher education, hospitals, and arts organizations.

The Armenian Studies Program expresses its appreciation for the continued support of the Leon S. Peters Foundation.





**“GOJABASHIAN:  
BLESSED HANDS  
OF THE  
ARMENIAN HERITAGE”**

An Art Exhibit of the  
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Yervant Gojabashian

**Opening Reception-Meet the Artist**  
Thursday, April 13, 2023 • 6:00-7:00PM  
University Library-Second Floor Gallery

the Exhibit will be open Monday, April 10-Sunday, April 30, 2023  
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Program and CineCulture  
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**“MOTHERLAND”**

a documentary  
by Vic Gerami

**Zoom Discussion  
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**Friday, April 14, 2023 • 5:30-6:30PM**

Watch the film April 7-14, before the discussion.  
Details contact the Armenian Studies Program.



**“ARMENIAN ART:  
CURRENT DIRECTIONS AND FUTURE GOALS”**  
by  
**Dr. Christina Maranci**  
*Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies,  
Harvard University*

**Saturday, April 15, 2022**  
**Reception-6:00PM-7:00PM**  
**Presentation-7:00PM-8:00PM**

Smittcamp Alumni House, 2625 East Matoian Way  
Enter at Shaw and Maple-Turn right on Matoian Way.



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**Armenian Genocide  
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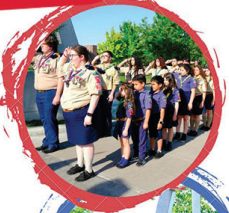


**2023 ARMENIAN GENOCIDE  
COMMEMORATION**

**MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2023**  
*Fresno State, Armenian Genocide Monument*

- 6:30pm | Laying of Flowers
- 7:00PM | Religious Program
- 7:30PM | Civic Program

*Keynote Speaker*  
**Karnig Kerkonian, Esquire**  
International & Appellate Lawyer  
Karnig Kerkonian is a lawyer, writer, and co-host of Frontlines, a program on law, human rights, and the Armenian experience.



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**The Bertha and John Garabedian  
Foundation Grants \$10,000 to ASP**

**STAFF REPORT**

Armenian Studies Program Berberian Coordinator Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian announced that the Bertha and John Garabedian Foundation has made a generous donation of \$10,000 to the Armenian Studies Program for 2023.

Together with donations from previous years, the Garabedian Foundation has awarded over \$165,000 in grants to the Armenian Studies Program.

The gift will be used for a variety of activities, including outreach activities and awarding scholarships. The Garabedian Foundation has been a long-standing supporter of the Armenian Studies Program.

**Hye Oozh - Saturdays 9:00 AM - Noon**  
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Hye Oozh is 90.7 KFSR’s weekly program dedicated to contemporary and traditional Armenian music and culture.

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