

*HYE SHARZHOM
Armenian Action
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45th Year

Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

Photo: Natalie Agazarian

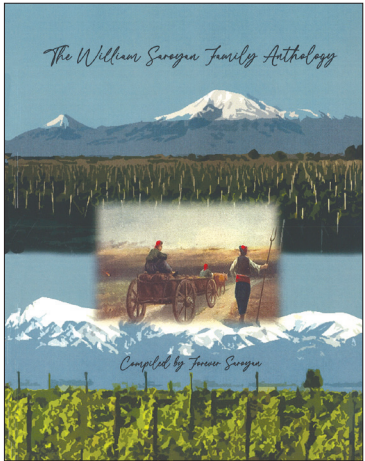
Left to right: Dr. Hagop Ohanessian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, and Dr. Bedross Der Matossian.

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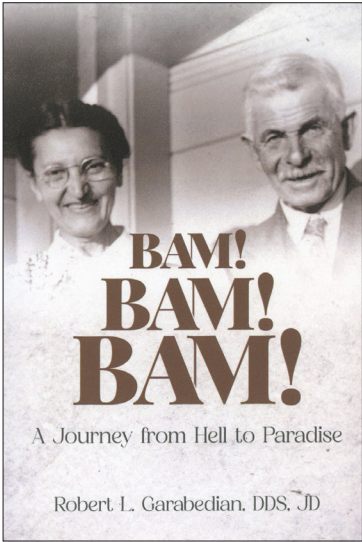
Th Armenian Studies Program would like to thank the donors, authors, and publishers for the following books, periodicals, videos, and archival gifts, either offered personally, or to the Program.

Yeghia Nercessian, Pico Rivera, CA, for a copy of his book *Armenian Numismatic Studies*, (Los Angeles, CA: Armenian Numismatic Society, 2000, 2009, 2017), Vol. I-III, in English and Armenian. This book is about coinage during Armenia’s Ancient and Medieval periods.

Charles J. Janigian, San Jose, CA, for a copy of his book *The William Saroyan Family Anthology* (Forever Saroyan, LLC, 2023), 150 pp., in English. This book contains poetry and stories by family members who Saroyan inspired. It includes works by Saroyan’s uncle, cousins (four generations), children, and grandchildren.

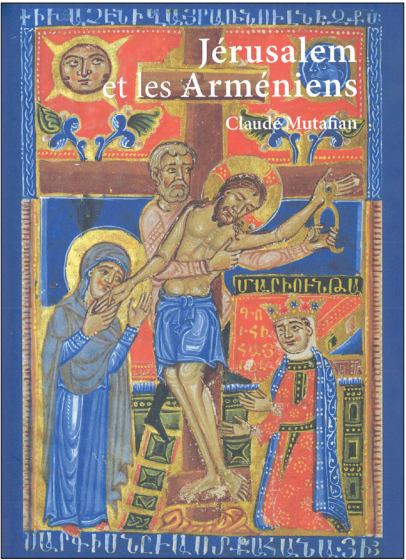


Ovaness Ovanessian, Glendale, CA, for a copy of his book *Armenian Demands for Justice* (Los Angeles, CA: Ketab Corp., 2016), 715pp., in Arabic, English, French, German, Armenian (Eastern & Western), Russian, and Persian. This book is a multi-language work, originally written in 1916 by Fa’iz al-Ghosain, an eyewitness who lived with Armenians and gathered information about Armenian atrocities at the hands of the Ottomans.



Dr. Robert L. Garabedian, Fresno, CA, for a copy of his book *Bam! Bam! Bam!: A Journey from Hell to Paradise* (San Antonio, TX: Halo Publishing International, 2023), 131pp., in English. This book is an homage to one man’s family history and a testament to the indomitable human spirit. The book is about Garabedian’s grandparents and their escape from the Hamidian massacres in the late 19th century.

Dr. Claude Mutaſian, Paris, France for a copy of his book *Jérusalem et les Arméniens jusqu’à la conquete ottoman [1516]* (Jerusalem and the Armenians until the Ottoman Conquest [1516]) (Paris: Les Bell Lettres, 2022), 517pp., in French. This lavishly illustrated book is dedicated to the history of the Armenian presence in the historic city of Jerusalem, from ancient times to the present. The Armenian Quarter is home to the most important repository of Armenian culture outside of Armenia. Dr. Mutaſian gives an extensive overview of the important contribution that the Armenians have made throughout history to the Old City of Jerusalem.



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<http://www.fresnostate.edu/artshum/armenianstudies/library/index.html>

California State University, Fresno
Armenian Studies Program

Spring 2024 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
General Education-Breadth, Humanities, Area C2				
• Arm 1B-Elementary Armenian (Class #32649)	4	10:00A-11:50A	MW	B. Der Mugerdechian
General Education-Breadth, Arts, Area C1				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia (Class #33447)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B. Der Mugerdechian
General Education-Breadth, Area D2				
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies (Class #33659)	3	9:00A- 9:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
General Education-Integration, Area IC				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Culture (Class #33730)	3	10:00A-10:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Culture (Class #33514)	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	H. Ohanessian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Culture (Class #37742)	3		DGT CAMP	
Upper Division Armenian Studies Course				
• ArmS 108B-Arm History II (Class #32648)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B. Der Mugerdechian

GET A MINOR IN ARMENIAN STUDIES
CONTACT PROF. BARLOW DER MUGRDECHIAN

HYE SHARZHOOM

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Dr. Mutaftian Discusses Historical Armenian Presence in Jerusalem



Dr. Claude Mutaftian.

SARA BEBERIAN
STAFF WRITER

Jerusalem: the Holy City. A land that is important to Jews, Christians, and Muslims, and that has been contested for centuries. The period of the Crusades, from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, brought different leaders and religious authorities to rule over Jerusalem. However, in the eyes of many, the Armenians presence in the Holy Land has often been overlooked.

Dr. Claude Mutaftian’s lecture “Jerusalem and the Armenians until the Ottoman Conquest (1516),” based on his new book *Jérusalem et les Arméniens: Jusqu’à la conquête ottomane (1516)*, presented an overview of the history of Armenians and their impact on Jerusalem to an audience of Fresno State students and community members.

Dr. Mutaftian, the son of Armenian Genocide survivors, has taught for more than forty years at leading universities around the world including Paris, New Jersey, Havana, Mexico, and Yerevan.

He traveled from Paris to give a talk organized by the Armenian Studies Program on Tuesday, October 3, 2023, and to speak about his new book, *Jérusalem et les Arméniens*. The presentation was made possible through the support of the Ralph Kazarian Armenian Memorial Fund.

Written in French, his book highlights the contributions of Armenians to the Old City of Jerusalem and discusses the ties between the Armenians and Jerusalem that have existed for centuries.

Dr. Mutaftian highlighted the fact that despite the distance between Jerusalem and Armenia, there has always been contact between the two. Throughout history, Armenians have been attracted to the Holy City, as the holiest site in Christianity.

The Old City of Jerusalem is divided into four distinct quarters, which include the Christian Quarter, the Jewish Quarter, the Muslim Quarter, and the Armenian Quarter.

Dr. Mutaftian emphasized that the Armenian Quarter is distinct from the neighboring Christian Quarter.

The Armenian Quarter is the most important repository of Armenian culture outside

Photo: Natalie Agazarian

Armenia. The Quarter includes the Armenian Patriarchate, the Cathedral of St. James, the Gulbenkian Library, and the newly renovated Edward and Helen Mardigian Museum of Armenia Art and History.

Dr. Mutaftian described the inside of the Armenian Quarter “as if one is inside an Armenian village,” and it is evident that Armenians have been living in Jerusalem for centuries.

The Mardigian Museum exhibit that Dr. Mutaftian curated together with Dr. Raymond Kévorkian, contains many examples of Armenian art and Armenian religious artifacts, such as chalices, altar curtains, manuscripts, and other significant religious objects.

The St. James Monastery houses the second richest Armenian manuscript library in the world, with a collection of over 4,000 manuscripts.

The presence of Armenians in Jerusalem, however, stretches farther than even the walls of the Armenian Quarter, as the Armenians have possessions in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in the Christian Quarter, with their own chapel and altar to celebrate the Divine Liturgy.

How did Armenians come to administer all of these sacred areas? Lands that have been fought over for hundreds of years, lands that are considered priceless by the three most important monotheistic religions of the world.

Dr. Mutaftian explained that the history of Jerusalem and the Armenians dates even to the pre-Christian era. Dr. Mutaftian tied each major point in the lecture back to his thesis – that Armenians have always felt an attraction to Jerusalem.

Tigran the Great, in the first century BC, arrived near Jerusalem, and was about to enter the city, but when he learned that the Romans were attacking Armenia, he returned to Armenia. Many of Armenia’s most important figures had dreams of visiting Jerusalem or they visited Jerusalem after accomplishing amazing things in Armenia. For example, St. Gregory the Illuminator went to Jerusalem after converting Armenia to Christianity, and St. Mesrop Mashtots visited Holy Jerusalem after creating the Armenian alphabet in the fifth century.

Setrak Timourian’s New Memoir - *In Front of the Eyes of the World* - Topic of Panel Discussion

ANI SARGSYAN
STAFF WRITER

“Every day I used to go and touch the memoir and say – when is your time going to come?” said Maggie Mangasarian-Goschen, director of Ararat Eskijian Museum, in reference to a visionary memoir by Setrak Timourian.

On Saturday, November 11, 2023, the Armenian Studies Program held a Zoom presentation on the publication of Timourian’s memoir, *In Front of the Eyes of the World: The Memoirs of Setrak Timourian* (Armenian Series number 18, The Press at California State University, Fresno: 2023). Guest panelists included editors Dr. Vahé Tachjian, Dr. Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dr. Murat Cankara, and Maggie Mangasarian-Goschen.

Prof. Barlow Der Muğrdechian, a co-editor of the book, moderated the discussion.

“Setrak Timourian’s memoir is an important addition to the Fresno State Armenian Series,” said Prof. Der Muğrdechian. “It provides important insight about the life led by Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century.”

Goschen began by speaking about how her journey started in 2016 when she first received a call from Timourian’s granddaughter, Nazelie Elmassian, who wanted to donate some of her family heirlooms to the Museum. These family heirlooms marked the beginning of a journey in understanding the life of Setrak Timourian.

“When I visited Nazelie’s home, I felt I was in a time warp,” said Goschen. “I felt I was back in Kayseri, with all of the beautiful decorations and pictures.”

Goschen was given the manuscript and was asked to take it to the Museum, but she always thought the memoir had more potential than to just be displayed. After meeting with scholars and getting the blessing of the family, this project began. On February 26-27, 2022, the Ararat Eskijian Museum and the Armenian Dress and Textile Project organized “1860 Gesaria (Kayseri) to Los Angeles 2022”: An International Conference and Exhibit, based on Timourian’s memoir.

The next speaker, Dr. Murat Cankara (Social Sciences University of Ankara), spoke about what the question of what is “Armeno-Turkish,” and the reasons it was so widespread in Ottoman Turkey. Armeno-Turkish is Turkish written in Armenian letters, and this is what Timourian used to pen

Dr. Mutaftian documented the connections between the Holy Land and the Armenians.

He mentioned that the first two queens of Jerusalem were Armenian and that one of the most famous queens of Jerusalem, Melisende, was Armenian and extensively praised in French historiography.

In his illustrated lecture,



Top row, left to right: Yaşar Tolga Cora and Vahé Tachjian. Middle row, left to right: Maggie Mangasarian-Goschen and Murat Cankara. Bottom row: Barlow Der Muğrdechian.

his memoir. Dr. Cankara stated that some Turks would learn the Armenian alphabet to read texts written in Armeno-Turkish, as the Armenian letters accurately represented the sounds of Turkish.

The Armenian alphabet was used to write in Turkish for many reasons, one being that educational institutions used Armeno-Turkish to reach the local population. It was also a good way to express oneself in the written language because if you didn’t know *Grabar* (Classical Armenian), then Armeno-Turkish was the best way to express yourself in a written language.

The next panelist was Dr. Vahé Tachjian who spoke about the post-genocide period in the Armenian diaspora. Dr. Tachjian is director and chief editor of the Berlin-based *Hushamadyan* website. He spoke about the challenges faced by Genocide survivors in writing and publishing Armenian memoirs. Armeno-Turkish memoirs began to appear in various Armenian diasporic communities and these authors attempted to revitalize their history. One reason why memoirs were not more frequently published at the time was because of the lack of financial means, as most of the diasporan Armenians were refugees. Another reason was due to the domestic climate in the post-Genocide period. At the time the Armenian reviews and newspapers were only publishing memoirs by intellectuals, revolutionaries, clerics, politicians and not those of the common people. The Armenian community elite was restructuring and reinventing the Armenian culture and identity in a way that the Turkish language and Armeno-Turkish were excluded. Even with all these obstacles, Timourian’s memoir still found the light of day.

The final speaker was Dr. Yaşar Tolga Cora, an associate

professor in the department of History at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. Dr. Cora spoke on certain nuances that are hidden as the text has been translated from Armeno-Turkish to Latin script and edited. When they first started working, it was during the pandemic and they sat through Zoom meetings and shared the screen, working on the text line by line. The manuscript was deciphered, transliterated, and finally translated by N. Ipek Hüner.

Dr. Cora spoke about how Timourian’s choice in diction and language gave the work a unique flavor. Timourian would write certain words only in Armenian, in contrast to Armeno-Turkish, and these words related mostly to religion. Sometimes Armenian words were used with the Turkish equivalence in parenthesis, and some words were only in English (mainly of monetary value). The way that words were spelled also gave the editors knowledge on his education level, as there were some errors in spelling. Dr. Cora said it was important to pay attention to what Timourian wrote because it reflects his identity as an Armenian. Although a Turkish speaker, Timourian belonged to the Armenian community which was above all, religiously defined.

Setrak Timourian also had a San Joaquin Valley connection, as he spent his last years farming in the Fresno area, and is now buried in Fresno’s Ararat cemetery.

In Front of the Eyes of the World: The Memoirs of Setrak Timourian is available for purchase through Abril Books, <http://www.abrilbooks.com/in-front-of-the-eyes-of-the-world.html> or from the NAASR Bookstore, https://naasr.org/products/in-front-of-the-eyes-of-the-world-the-memoirs-of-setrak-timourian?_pos=1&_sid=b7f3b35ee&_ss=r, or on Amazon.

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Three Fresno State Students Graduate in Fall 2023 with Minor in Armenian Studies



CHRISTINE PAMBUKYAN
NURSING
MINOR
IN ARMENIAN STUDIES

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?
Growing up, I was always interested in learning more about Armenia and Armenian culture. However, what really encouraged me to take an Armenian Studies course was my first trip to Armenia in 2018. I wanted to learn more about the beautiful historical monuments and art, learn how to read and write in Armenian, and be more informed about Armenian authors and historical figures. After taking Armenian Studies 20-Arts of Armenia and Armenian 1A-Armenian Language, I grew to love our Armenian courses and ended up minoring in Armenian studies.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?
I enjoyed every course I took to fulfill my Minor, but if I had to choose a favorite, it would be the Armenian Summer Study Trip 2023. Our group of eleven

students, led by Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian, had the trip of a lifetime. I enjoyed visiting the churches and monuments we learned about in our Armenian Studies courses and exploring Armenia together. I hope our group continues to stay close, as I will hold the memories we have made close to my heart.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?
I value our professors the most from my experience in the Armenian Studies Program. Prof. Der Mugrdchian and Prof. Hagop Ohanessian have taught me everything I know about Armenian history, art, literature, and language. I appreciate their efforts in keeping Armenian history, art, and language alive through their lectures and involvement in the community.

What are your plans after graduation?
I plan to work as a registered nurse on the Medical Surgical Oncology unit at Clovis Community Medical Center. After gaining some experience as a registered nurse, I hope to return to Fresno State to obtain my master's degree in nursing and become a family nurse practitioner. I also hope to help the Armenian community of Fresno through the medical field with my knowledge of Armenian culture and language that I have learned through the Armenian Studies Program and my life as an Armenian-American in Fresno.



EDDY THURBER
POLITICAL SCIENCE
MINOR
IN ARMENIAN STUDIES

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?
My grandparents did not teach my parents Armenian, hoping that they would fit into an English-speaking society and succeed. It worked and I grew up knowing my family's history but wanting to learn our mother tongue. I decided to take Armenian Studies courses to learn Armenian history, to learn the Armenian language, and to take advantage of the Armenian Studies scholarships.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?
My favorite class was Armenian 1B, Elementary Armenian, where I learned to read and write Armenian and speak at a basic level. I had always wanted to learn Armenian but thought I may never be able to. I nearly teared up when I read a full page of Armenian script for the first time.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?

Through the Armenian Studies Program, I studied in Yerevan, Armenia at the American University of Armenia for a semester. The connections and education I received there will last me a lifetime and it was incredibly meaningful to spend time in Armenia and explore the city and countryside.

What are your plans after graduation?
I plan to get to work! I currently have two jobs: one is with an Armenian-owned construction company and one with an Armenian Church. I love my work and plan to continue in those fields moving forward.



JENNA MARKARIAN
BIOLOGY
MINOR
IN ARMENIAN STUDIES

What encouraged you to take an Armenian Studies course?
I decided to take an Armenian Studies course because I wanted to understand more about my culture and the history of my people. I realized the classes offered at Fresno State were great opportunities to learn.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?
One of my favorites was the Arts of Armenia class. I felt it had the perfect combination of history, culture, and deeper understanding of Armenian artistry that kept me engaged and interested. It was fun learning about church architecture that is still prevalent today.

What did you value most from your experiences in the Armenian Studies Program?
It is a great blessing to even have this opportunity at Fresno State. If it wasn't for the hardworking professors, administration, and students that are willing to learn, this Program wouldn't be as outstanding as it is. I enjoy the fact the Central Valley has an Armenian community that is seeking to better understand its culture. I also really enjoy the special lecturers who come onto campus and give talks on various Armenian-related subjects. It allows for students to be a part of the ongoing Armenian discussion in the professional world.

What are your plans after graduation?
I plan on applying to a professional school in the medical field, either to become a physician's assistant or to become a physician. I hope to remain in the Central Valley for most of my career so that I can stay close to the Armenian community. I was raised and educated here and would like to be able to give back to this community in some way.

COMPILED BY SARA BEBERIAN

Armenian Studies Program Library and Archive Grows with New Addition of Memoirs and Maps



Some of the Margossian family journals.

SOSSE BALOIAN YANEZ
SPECIAL TO HYE SHARZHOOM

The Armenian Studies Program has recently acquired some interesting unpublished works donated to the Armenian Studies Program Library and Archive.

One of the newest collections, "The Margossian Collection," was donated by Knarik Clara Margossian, daughter of Margos Der Margossian. The collection contains Margos Margossian's handwritten diaries and family history; two of his published books from the 1950s; a handwritten book of poetry he copied from H. T. Kayaian in Bursa, Turkey 1912; and a

handwritten book of poetry and thoughts about life written by Aram Amadunian, the husband of Arshalous, Margossian's older sister.

George Vahanian's memoir, donated by his daughter, Mary Vahanian Anselmo, was also recently catalogued. It is a 59-page, handwritten copy about Vahanian's life. He was born sometime between 1906 to 1908 in the small town of Hussenig. He was an Armenian Genocide survivor who emigrated to the United States in 1928 (according to his certificate of naturalization; see back of memoir). He writes, "this story sounds so unreal, so incredible that it seems fictional, that the truth is somewhat

magnified. Believe me it is true. No part of it is distorted or fabricated." (p. 35)

Another biography that was catalogued was *Darkness to Dawn* by Jack Kermoian. It is a 55-page work about Kermoian's parents, Simone and Azneve. In his preface, Kermoian writes, "... this is a narrative of the story of my parents, how they met, how they escaped, their tribulations and almost accidental flight to America."

Վարդ Մեսրոպյայ (The Life of Mesrop Mashtots) written by the historian Koriun, is a new book on the shelves of the ASP Library. Koriun lived between 380-approximately and 450 AD and was a student of Mesrop Mashtots, the creator of the Armenian alphabet. Koriun has chronicled much of Mashtots' life and work. *The Life of Mesrop Mashtots* was translated by Stepan H. Banian and published in 1951.

The ASP Archive also has two new map additions: one titled, Վանի Ապրիլեան Հերոսամարտը (The Heroic Battle of Van in April). The other is titled, Վան Բաղաք (The City of Van). Both maps have been scanned and are available to view online in the Armenian Studies Program Online Library Catalog at the following web link: <https://opac.libraryworld.com/opac/>

Melikians Host Fund-Raiser to Support ASP Scholarships



James and Connie Melikian
STAFF REPORT

Photo: ASP Archive

Fresno State alumnus James L. Melikian, hosted an annual September gathering of friends at his home in Southern California, in support of the James L. Melikian & L.A. Brothers Scholarship fund, which was established at Fresno State in 2019.

This year's gathering raised over \$5,000, which will be awarded to deserving students studying in the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State.

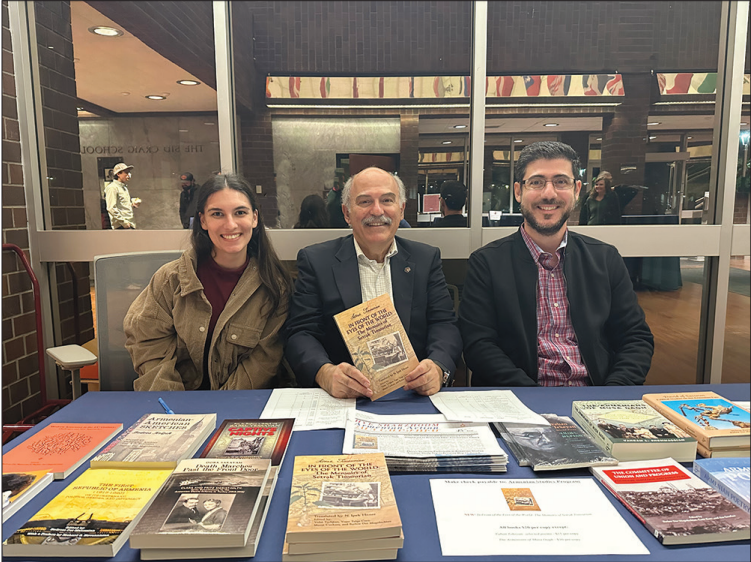
James Melikian established his company, "The Popcorn Man," in 1977. "The Popcorn Man" provides school districts in California and other states with healthy, nutritious items for the

National School Breakfast and Lunch Program, the Child Care Program, as well as the After School Snack Program.

In 2014 Melikian was a recipient of the Fresno State "Top Dog" award, recognizing outstanding alumni and he has been an active supporter of both the Armenian Studies Program and the Department of Media, Communications, and Journalism at Fresno State. He is also an Alumni Association Life Member and a Bulldog Foundation supporter.

Melikian graduated from Fresno State in 1969 with a degree in Mass Communication and Journalism, and was President of the campus Hye Society organization.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian on Early Manuscript Painting Tradition



Left to right: Sosse Baloian Yanez, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, and Prof. Hagop Ohanessian. Photo: Natalie Agazarian

CAREEN DERKALOUSDIAN
STAFF WRITER

“Manuscripts are the living works of the Armenian people,” said Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

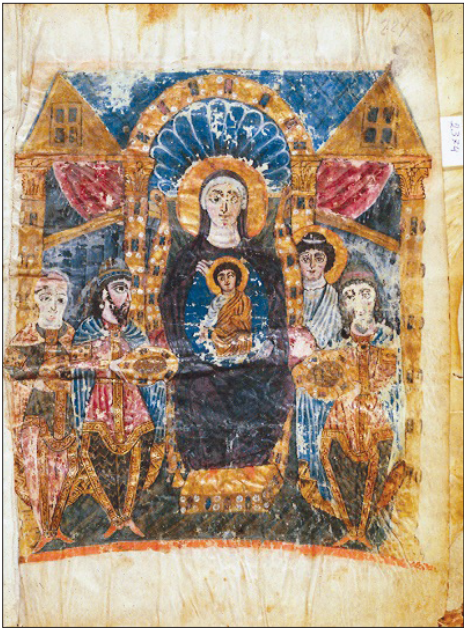
On Thursday, November 9, 2023, Prof. Der Mugrdechian, Berberian Coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, gave a presentation on “Armenian Manuscript Painting: The Early Tradition.” Prof. Der Mugrdechian has taught courses in Armenian art and architecture at Fresno State for more than thirty-eight years. He is a former President of the Society for Armenian Studies and the General Editor of the Armenian Series at Fresno State. His presentation was part of the The Grace and Paul Shahinian Armenian Christian Art Series, sponsored by Mr. Dean Shahinian.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian began his lecture by discussing the creation of the Armenian alphabet in 406 A.D. by St. Mesrop Mashtots. He noted that one of the reasons for the creation of the alphabet was to promote and instill Christianity within the Armenian people. The majority of Armenian illustrated manuscripts are Gospels, with text from the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These Gospel manuscripts are often called “illuminated,” a term which symbolizes how Jesus Christ brought light into the world; in the same way, the painting or illumination of manuscripts brings the light of Christianity to the Armenian people.

It is estimated that there are more than 30,000 Armenian manuscripts in existence today, of which over 10,000 are illustrated. The largest collection of Armenian manuscripts in the world is held in the Mesrop Mashtots Matenadaran in Yerevan, Armenia, where over 12,000 manuscripts are held in vaults under specific temperature and humidity conditions. The “Mayr Tsutsak” [Mother Catalog] on the Matenadaran website provides detailed information on many of the manuscripts held in

the Library. The second largest Armenian manuscript collection is located at the St. James Armenian Monastery in Jerusalem, where over 4,000 manuscripts are held. Other notable manuscript collections are located in Venice, Italy; Vienna, Austria; and the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias, Lebanon.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian highlighted the unique structure and order of Armenian manuscripts, beginning with the Eusebian Letter and Canon Tables and concluding with the colophon, or memorial note. The Eusebian Letter is essentially an explanation of how to use



“Adoration of the Magi,” 6th c., Etchmiadzin Gospel.

the following canon tables, which are an index that helps one find similar passages in the Gospels. Following the canon table are a series of Narrative Miniatures that depict significant events from the Bible. These are followed by images from the Life of Christ Cycle, the Portraits of the Evangelists, and the Gospel text itself. A memorial note by the manuscript’s scribe called the Colophon signifies the end of the manuscript.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian spoke about three early Armenian manuscripts that each follow this unique structure: the Etchmiadzin Gospel, the Queen Mlke Gospel, and the Translator’s Gospels. The Etchmiadzin Gospel, dating back to 989 A.D., was executed at the monastery of Noravank in the Siunik province. Its ivory binding depicts a central motif of Mother Mary holding the infant Jesus, with events from Mary’s

Three Generations of Hagopian Family Featured in “Echoes of Kef Time” Film Premiere on Oct. 27

NATALIE AGAZARIAN
EDITOR

“‘Echoes of Kef Time’ is a celebration, not just of Armenian culture but the Armenian spirit. It’s a story about intergenerational struggle for legacy, despite the odds of fading into obscurity,” said director Avo John Kambourian.

The intricacies of a melody can harbor language, folk dances, traditional instruments, community, and most importantly unity between people of a cultural group. Despite the tragedies of the Genocide of 1915, Armenians have proven resilient in conserving their customs.

“Knowing the unspeakable horrors of the Armenian Genocide weren’t recognized by most of the western world also galvanized my interest in storytelling, and for giving a voice to the voiceless,” stated Kambourian.

In a world riddled with attempts at ethnic cleansing, it is the role of the diaspora and the people who have emigrated from their homeland to seek ways to preserve their culture – music being a key element in its continuity and vitality.

Kambourian, a graduate of the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts, recognized the importance of preserving ancient traditions in a modern world, and wanted to delve into the revival of traditional Armenian music as a theme for his final class project. The short film documentary “Echoes of Kef Time” was thus born, following the story of three generations of a musical Fresno-Armenian family, the Hagopians and Richard Hagopian’s quest to pass on the music to his grandchildren, Phillip and Andrew.

Organized and sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program, the Fresno premiere screening of “Echoes of Kef Time” was welcomed at Fresno State with a full house on Friday, October 27. Present at the screening were Kef Time and Kef Time Legacy band members Richard Hagopian, Richard’s son Armen Hagopian, and grandchildren Phillip and Andrew. The large audience demonstrated the heartwarming support of the Fresno Armenian community in preserving their Armenian roots in American society.

“Echoes of Kef Time,” produced by Bryce Ferendo and Robin Wang, is according to Kambourian, a “a celebration, not just of Armenian culture but the

life surrounding the central image. Prof. Der Mugrdechian noted the classicizing style of the manuscript, a style that was based on models of Byzantine manuscripts. Upon examination of the Eusebian Letter of the Etchmiadzin Gospel, one can see that Armenian manuscripts utilize vibrant colors. The text of the Eusebian Letter is framed by an arch adorned with pomegranate trees and birds, representing eternal life and virtues, respectively. An interesting aspect of this



Left to right: Richard Hagopian, Andrew Hagopian, Phillip Hagopian, and director Avo John Kambourian.

Armenian spirit.” Kambourian, who was born and raised in the Armenian community of Los Angeles, observed that as new generations of Armenian-Americans began to embrace popular American culture, a fading interest in the Kefs forced Richard Hagopian to hold a final event in the 90s and the tradition has laid dormant for years.

“The film focuses on the music brought to this country by our ancestors, now referred to as ‘Kef’ music, but also incorporates the story of the Fresno Armenian community over the last 100 years,” said Kef Time Legacy band member Phillip Hagopian.

The documentary follows the rise to prominence of the original “Kef Time Band,” founded in 1968. The band consisted of Richard Hagopian, Hachig Kazarian, Buddy Sarkissian, Manny Petro, and Jack Chalikian. Major events were hosted all over the country: Detroit, Fresno, Hartford, and Cape Cod. An integration of archival films and photos from Richard Hagopian’s library showcased the abundance of popularity the Kef Time Band had, even breaking the record for the longest standing show on the Las Vegas Strip.

“The film is truly a testament to the strength of all of our ancestors who came to this country with nearly nothing and who were able to build new Armenian communities, such as the one in Fresno,” said Phillip Hagopian.

However, the “Kef Time” events gradually diminished after some years due to changes in generational interest. The last “Kef Time” Fresno was held in 1986.

The documentary not only introduced the emergence of Armenian traditional music in

Fresno through the original Kef Time band, but it also followed its robust revival in 2022 by Richard’s grandsons, Phillip and Andrew. Both of his grandsons received “formal training” from their grandfather, and strong support from their “musically gifted” family.

Together, the young brothers hosted a “Kef Time Legacy” event in Fresno in January 2022, consisting of a new generation of Armenian-American musicians: Phillip Hagopian on the *oud* and vocals, Michael Kamalian on clarinet, Andrew Hagopian on drums, Mal Barsamian on bass, and Jim Karagozian on *kanun*. The proceeds of the now annual event benefit the Fresno State Armenian Studies Program.

“It’s our music, it’s our life,” stated Richard Hagopian, “We should pay homage to the people who imparted the importance of our music.”

The “Kef Time” Legacy band has expanded to playing in both Fresno and Montebello since its revival in 2022. The success of the events is evident with high attendance and quick sellouts, demonstrating a growing desire of cultural unity by the Armenian community especially in the new generation of Armenian-Americans.

The “Kef Time” Legacy band is a testament to “maintaining the music of our forefathers,” remarked Armen Hagopian.

Richard Hagopian, in observing his grandchildren and his musical legacy, proudly stated that “I’ll still be here... musically.”

A new generation, coupled with the motivation to instill the traditions of Armenian culture in modern society, provides for the continuation of a diasporan culture for generations to come.

pels, demonstrated that the “Final Four” of the paintings from manuscript actually date back to the late 6th century, much earlier than the manuscript’s original date of creation, and prior to the Arab advance into Armenia.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian also discussed the Queen Mlke Gospel, a prized possession of King Gagik Artsruni’s wife, Mlke, who ruled in the 10th century. This manuscript is older than the

Mousa Ler Monument Ground-Breaking at Ararat Cemetery



The Monument under construction. Photo: Careen Derkalousdian
CAREEN DERKALOUSDIAN
STAFF WRITER

On Saturday, April 29, 2023, the Armenian community of Fresno gathered at the Massis Ararat Cemetery to witness the groundbreaking of the Mousa Ler [mountain] monument. The event was planned by the Mousa Ler Association of Fresno and consisted of several guest speakers and a religious service. A reception took place after the groundbreaking at First Armenian Presbyterian Church.

The monument is being constructed in honor of the eighteen martyrs who gave their lives in the 1915 defense of Mousa Ler from the Ottoman Turks during the Armenian Genocide. The battle at Mousa Ler was a significant effort of resistance as 600 Armenian fighters and 4,000 civilians were able to fend off 19,000 Turkish troops. The leaders of the resistance were Movses Derkalousdian, Reverend Dikran Antreassian, Yesayi Yakhubian, Nerses Kazandjian, and Yesayi Aprahamian. Although small in numbers, the villagers of Mousa Ler successfully resisted the Ottoman Turks for 53 days. They were eventually rescued in 1915 by the French navy and delivered to safety at Port Said in Egypt.

In 1918, the province came under French control, and the Armenian villagers returned to the Mousa Ler region. However, in 1939, the province was given to the Republic of Turkey, and most of the villagers fled to Anjar, Lebanon. Anjar is a small town that is today divided into six districts commemorating each of the villages of Mousa Ler.

The groundbreaking event began with opening remarks by Nshan Derkalousdian, Chairman of the Mousa Ler Association, who highlighted the significance of the monument and expressed his gratitude to the individuals who made its construction a reality. He then invited the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Armenia, Berj Apkarian, who shared his pride in the unity and hard work of the Armenian community. The chairman of the Ararat Armenian Cemetery

Association, Dr. Mark Topoozian, also expressed his appreciation. “Mousa Ler became a symbol of the Armenian will to survive, and this monument will definitely attest to this.”

Before the groundbreaking, a religious service was held, with the participation of Senior Pastor Nerses Balabanian, Very Rev. Father Ashod Khachadourian, and Rev. Father Yesai Bedros. A highlight of the service was the reading of a passage from Chapter 8 of the book of Romans: “What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Fr. Khachadourian then blessed the foundation of the monument. The clergy and members of the Mousa Ler Association gathered to bury the remains of one of the martyrs under the foundation before saying a prayer.

“It’s been a dream of all of ours for years and years, and it’s finally coming true,” said Ara Karkazian, treasurer of the Mousa Ler Association. He shared with the audience that his father was one of the men who built the original monument in Mousa Ler and that his dream is finally being realized. He expressed how Armenians build wherever they go and improve their surroundings.

The monument is located at the Massis Ararat Cemetery near the monument dedicated to Soghomon Tehlirian. A model of the structure and plans were created by architect Garbis Kataroian and structural engineer George Kiledjian. The structure is an exact replica of the monument built in Mousa Ler in 1932. Half of the structure represents an altar with two crosses and the other half depicts a ship representing the French fleet that rescued the villagers and delivered them to safety in Egypt.

Building this monument is not only a legacy to future generations, but it also represents the victory of Armenians over repression and their unwavering perseverance. The monument is a testament to the fact that Armenians build wherever they go and that God always delivers the Armenians from the hands of their enemies.

DER MATOSSIAN, FROM PAGE 1

the physical to the psychological plane.”

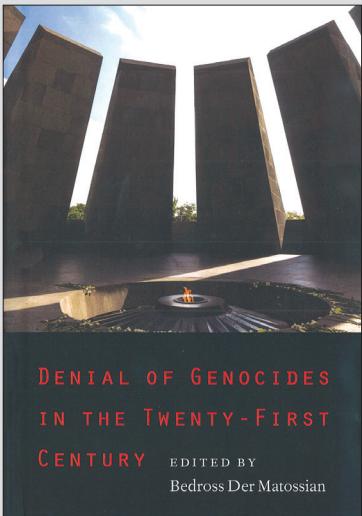
On Friday, September 29, 2023, Dr. Der Matossian, professor of Modern Middle East History at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, discussed the ways in which denial has evolved and developed new strategies in the twenty-first century. In his presentation, he explained the premise of his new book *Denial of Genocides in the Twenty-First Century* (University of Nebraska Press).

Edited by Dr. Der Matossian, this book is a compilation of articles by scholars who discuss a variety of recent genocides and the ways in which they are denied. Of the ten chapters, three are dedicated to the Armenian Genocide. Der Matossian pointed out that multiple chapters were needed to cover this atrocity against the Armenians as the denial of the Armenian Genocide takes the most sophisticated form.

The book begins with a quote from January 27, 2021, in which the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day and condemned racism, hate crimes, and terrorism. Der Matossian stated that if someone had no knowledge of the history of Turkey, they would view Erdoğan as a progressive leader concerned with human rights. The reality, however, is just the opposite. Der Matossian cites Erdoğan’s speech as “a classic case of denial where the state pretends to be promoting justice and awareness about other genocides, but in fact, denies the Genocide itself.”

Der Matossian next presented Gregory Stanton’s ten stages of genocide. The process begins with classification and ends with stage ten: denial. Der Matossian argued that denial is not only the last stage, but should also be considered the first. He cited a statement from Dr. Talin Suciyan, a contributing scholar to the book. “The decision to deny a genocide is embedded in the decision to carry it out. In other words, the decision to commit a genocide stems from the unshaken trust of the perpetrators that there will be no unwanted consequences from their committing and denying of the genocide.”

With the advancement of technology in the twenty-first century, genocide deniers are able to reach a wider audience through social media and to spread their propagandist agendas. Dr. Der Matossian argued that genocide denial has become an art, adapting and evolving with new strategies to augment



established modes of denial. He suggested that the most effective strategy is the intentional creation of misinformation on social networking platforms, which makes it extremely difficult for scholars to combat the rapid spread of propaganda.

Der Matossian also noted that denialist literature has adopted an outward appearance of legitimacy, falsely giving the impression of evidence-based research. Another common strategy of self-proclaimed historians and scholars is to deny genocide by expressing skepticism about the purported genocide and representing it as something debatable through the use of highly deceptive academic language, arguing as if there are two sides to such an atrocity.

After discussing the common strategies of genocide denial, Dr. Der Matossian provided an overview of the book, with three chapters dedicated to discussing the denial of the Armenian Genocide.

This denial is the most sophisticated of its time; the whole Turkish state including the foreign ministry, ambassadors, student associations, and cultural organizations are involved in denying the Armenian Genocide through various means. These include sending letters of protest to universities, sending intimidating messages to scholars, and spending millions of dollars to lobby the United States Congress and President to not recognize the horrific crime against humanity.

Dr. Der Matossian highlighted the fact that genocide perpetrators reap psychological benefits from their genocide denial when faced with the survivors of the target victim people. One benefit is that their continued denial further satisfies their desire to terrorize and mock the victim group. Another benefit stems from their use of denial as an emotional protective mechanism that seeks to ward off any sense of guilt, shame, and responsibility.

Common discourses of gen-

ocide denial include arguing that the act was “self-defense” or that the violence was mutual on both sides. Other common dialogues include the perpetrators reversing the roles and claiming that they are the real victims or that the genocide victims were not specified as a group under the United Nations Convention on Genocide. Dr. Der Matossian stated that the United Nations Convention is problematic as it has a very narrow definition of what constitutes a genocide, excluding indigenous people and genocide committed against political groups. In addition, proving intent of genocide is very difficult under the Convention.

Dr. Der Matossian concluded his talk by discussing the recent events in Artsakh. He described the nine-month blockade as genocide by attrition, with Azerbaijan creating the conditions to cause the death of Armenians in their own ancestral homeland. He then noted the spurious argument of coexistence made by President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan in April 2023, where he stated that Armenians would have complete freedom and democratic fundamentals under his rule, a statement which is an outright lie. Azerbaijan is unable to guarantee the human rights of their own citizens, let alone the rights of Armenians.

Dr. Der Matossian also pointed out that Azerbaijani soldiers were wearing badges displaying the image of Enver Pasha, one of the Ottoman Turkish leaders who orchestrated the 1915 Armenian Genocide, as their personal hero. The badge says, “Don’t run, Armenian, you will die of exhaustion anyway.”

Dr. Der Matossian noted that the propaganda campaign of denial regarding the heinous acts committed in Artsakh has already begun.

The propaganda seeks to spread the false notion that Armenians were offered to stay, but instead decided to leave their homes by their own free will. Moreover, with the international news media’s silence on the issue, they have proven to be complicit in the denial of the forceful displacement and ethnic cleansing of Armenians in the region.

Denial of Genocides in the Twenty-First Century demonstrates that denial occurs in all genocides and continues today. From the destroying of evidence to the manipulation of truth, genocide perpetrators continue to deny their crimes against humanity. Dr. Der Matossian puts it perfectly: “As long as there is denial, genocides continue.”

Queen Mlke manuscripts, the 10th c. Translator’s Gospel, housed in the Walters Gallery in Baltimore, Maryland, represents a different style, referred to as monastic or provincial, terms that highlight its simplistic look. This style of manuscript painting is the oldest Armenian native style and is unaffected by Byzantine or Syriac techniques.

Sarkis the Priest, the scribe of the Translator’s Gospel, uses simpler paint strokes than that of his predecessors.

Prof. Der Mgrdechian concluded his presentation by noting the significance of these early manuscript traditions. Not only do they reflect the diversity in Armenian art, but they set the foundation for the later 11th century Armenian miniature painting, a productive period for the creation of illuminated manuscripts.

ARMENIAN ART, FROM PAGE 5

Etchmiadzin Gospel and dates back to the mid 9th century. It also utilizes the classicizing style of the Byzantines and contains only one surviving painting, depicting the Ascension of Christ. It is elegantly illuminated and its Eusebian Letter and canon table are lavishly decorated with birds, plants, and Nilotic scenes.

In contrast with the classicizing Etchmiadzin and

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Kef Time Band at the recording studio. First row, left to right: Manny (Petro) Petrathelis and Jack Chalikian. Second row, left to right: Richard Hagopian, Buddy Sarkissian, Hachig Kazarian, and Russell Jarjour.

Photo: Hachig Kazarian Collection

KAZARIAN, FROM PAGE 1

the product of my 60 plus years of performing, my formal musical education, and my endeavor to learn as much as I possibly could about Western Armenian folk music. The motivating factor for producing this book was the lack of concrete information and the misunderstanding of this wonderful form of Armenian music.”

The author discusses such topics as: the Modal System used in Armenian folk and sacred music since the 8th century; traits and characteristic elements of Armenian music; the 19th century Armenian musical notation created by Hampartsoum Limonjian; and the two contrasting styles of Western Armenian music performed in the United States. *Western Armenian Music* also describes how the children of the first-generation Armenian immigrants started Armenian bands as an effort to keep Armenian culture alive in the United States. As a way to preserve the music of the first immigrants to the United States, this volume also includes over 100 Armenian dance songs with notations.

“Knowledge used to be transmitted via the *oral tradition*, which created many inconsistencies. However today, in order to perpetuate knowledge, scholars have written books and treatises so that information is accurately preserved,” stated Kazarian. “I have found that there is virtually no scholarly printed

material on Western Armenian folk music. Therefore, this book will be an invaluable resource for the study of that music.”

Author Hachig Kazarian was born in Detroit, Michigan to immigrant parents of the Armenian Genocide. He is a retired secondary instrumental music educator with 46 years of teaching experience, which includes a suburban Detroit school system and the Clark County schools in Las Vegas, Nevada. He received his professional credentials from the Juilliard School of Music, where he earned a B.S. and M.A. degree in clarinet performance. He also attended Eastern Michigan University, where he received an M.A. degree in Music Literature/ Ethnomusicology.

Kazarian has performed Western Armenian music for many Armenian churches, societies and patriotic organizations throughout the United States. He has been a leading role model for many young Armenian-American clarinetists for decades and performs as he was taught by an Armenian immigrant musician.

Western Armenian Music: From Asia Minor to the United States, in both hardcover and paperback, is available for purchase from: Abril Bookstore, <http://www.abrilbooks.com/in-front-of-the-eyes-of-the-world.html> or the NAASR Bookstore, https://naasr.org/products/western-armenian-music-from-asia-minor-to-the-united-states?_pos=1&_sid=0126b36b5&_ss=r.

Vol. 20 in Armenian Series Published - *Death Marches Past the Front Door* - Sigrist-Hilty Memoir

SAKAYAN, FROM PAGE 1

their everyday life in their little house on the remote hillside. A visit to Aleppo and the Katma concentration camps makes them realize that what they were seeing in Keller on a daily basis was nothing less than premeditated death marches, i.e., the Armenian Genocide. Things become worse when the skilled Armenian workers – actively involved in the Baghdad railway construction – are also forced to join those death marches.

Clara records the atrocities, first in her journal, later in a memoir or a special eyewitness account. Fritz in his turn, writes two stories and a letter on the subject.

Dora Sakayan has deciphered the Swiss archive documents written mostly in Gothic handwriting and has meticulously processed them and embedded them in the historic events of the time. Moreover, based on a 1970 memoir by Haig Aramian, Sakayan recounts the adventurous story of how in June 1916 the Sigrist-Hilty couple helped their Armenian storehouse manager Aramian escape certain death.

Dora Sakayan’s book consists of three parts, each one dedicated to the life and writings of one of the three individuals: Clara Hilty, Fritz Sigrist, and Haig Aramian. An organic interplay of primary and secondary texts relates to the reader a coherent real-life story – one of extreme human suffering and pain, but also of Christian charity, compassion, and selflessness.

Dora Sakayan graduated with a Doctorate in German philology at the Moscow Lomonosov State University. She then taught German at Yerevan State University (YSU), where she



Photo: ASP Archive

Fritz and Clara Sigrist-Hilty.

also headed the Department of Foreign Languages.

Dr. Sakayan later moved to Canada and continued her pedagogical career as a Professor of German Studies at McGill University in Montreal. Her training in various areas of applied linguistics allowed her to gradually venture from German Studies to Armenology and to become the first scholar to introduce Armenian Studies in a Canadian University. She has written, edited, and translated more than 30 books in both areas of her expertise, German and Armenian Studies. She has also authored a series of scholarly articles.

Sakayan is a major contributor to the study of the Armenian Genocide. In 1992, she came across the journal of her maternal grandfather, Dr. Garabed Hatcherian, which is an eyewitness account of the 1922 Smyrna

disaster. Recognizing the historic significance of this writing, Sakayan undertook its translation, annotation, publication, and worldwide dissemination in nine languages. <https://www.dorasakayan.com/>

Copies of *Death Marches Past the Front Door* are available for purchase from: Abril Bookstore, <http://www.abrilbooks.com/books/death-marches-past-the-front-door.html> or the NAASR bookstore, https://naasr.org/products/death-marches-past-the-front-door?_pos=1&_sid=08b61d183&_ss=r or on Amazon.

Books in the Armenian Series can be found at the following website: <https://cah.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies/resources/armenianseries/index.html>.

For bulk orders please contact the Armenian Studies Program, at 559.278.2669 or by email at barlowd@csufresno.edu.

ARMENIA, FROM PAGE 1

13, 2023. Student participants on the study program trip also had the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian explained that the Armenian Studies Program first began leading groups of Fresno State students to Armenia in the summer in 1988. Over the course of thirty-five years, there have been one hundred and seven participants in trips that took place in 1988, 1990, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2019, and 2023. This past summer, eleven students participated in the May 23-June 8 trip: Caleb Arizmendez, Jonathan Chardukian, Careen Derkalousdian, Christa Eritzian, Ariana Garabedian, Charles Garabedian, Michael Mazman, Christine Pambukyan, Carina Tokatian, and Dustin Vartanian.

“There is no other Armenian Studies Program that organizes a trip like ours,” stated Prof. Der Mugrdechian, “Typically, our trip was planned for one day of travel outside the city by bus, and the next day would be spent in the city of Yerevan.” The trip provided students with a first-hand experience based on their



Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

Left to right: Charles Garabedian, Careen Derkalousdian, Carina Tokatian, Julia Eritzian, Christine Pambukyan, Christa Eritzian, Ariana Garabedian, Dustin Vartanian, Michael Mazman, Jonathan Chardukian, and Caleb Arizmendez in front of the Monastery of Haghartsin.

courses in the Armenian Studies Program, by immersing them in the environment, by going sight-seeing, and experiencing a balance between tourism and daily life in Armenia.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian gave an overview of the visits to various regions of Armenia, demonstrating the geographical diversity in Armenia. In each region, there were spectacular places to see, whether the Areni-1

caves, monasteries and churches, museums, wineries, or views of the mountains and scenery.

Students were given special tours of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, the Matenadaran Manuscript Library, Yerevan State University, the American University of Armenia, and the Mer Hoos – House of Hope Program.



After the October 13 presentation. Left to right: Carina Tokatian, Careen Derkalousdian, Jonathan Chardukian, Charles Garabedian, Ariana Garabedian, Christine Pambukyan, Caleb Arizmendez, Dustin Vartanian, Christa Eritzian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

ARMENIA, FROM PAGE 7

“The Armenia Summer Study Program is a means to providing a culminating experience for our students,” concluded Prof. Der Mugrdechian. “Each student was able to experience Armenia in an individual way and to gain new appreciation for Armenia.”

“The architecture of these churches was unbelievable. I was continuously thinking in my head, how could this structure be built over one thousand years ago? The vaulted ceilings and dome seemed to be so incredibly high up, even taller than the churches at home, yet the technology the builders had was minimal.”

Dustin Vartanian

“I gained a whole new understanding of language and cultural identity during the month I lived in Armenia. I did so many amazing things that I would have never done in my lifetime without this opportunity. I went to churches I have studied in class, I rode on a metro for the first time, I ate a lot of amazing authentic Armenian dishes with family members, and experienced a very

walkable city that was awake at different hours than I was used to.”

Caleb Arizmendez

“I still think about the trip often. It was such a unique and eye-opening experience that introduced me to a whole new world of traditions, despite being Armenian myself. I would have to say that the most significant impact on my visit would have to be the financial differences between Armenia and the United States. The reality of how people live in Armenia and other economically similar countries opened my eyes.”

Charles Garabedian

“Before going, I felt as if I would be different because even though it was Armenia, it was a new country. Yes, my Armenian wasn’t perfect and no, I couldn’t always communicate the ideas that I wanted to. But there were a couple of instances where I was pointed out for my eyes. After leaving, I felt as if I belonged and more.”

Ariana Garabedian

Photo: Natalie Agazarian

Leon S. Peters Foundation Continues Support for Armenian Studies Program with \$30,000 Grant

STAFF REPORT

Berberian Coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian announced that the Leon S. Peters Foundation has continued their generous support of the Armenian Studies Program with a grant of \$30,000 for 2024.

Their support for the Program over the past eleven years has reached over \$330,000.

This continues the tradition of the Peters Foundation in supporting the Armenian Studies

Program Annual Lecture Series, as well as a variety of other activities, including scholarships, outreach activities, an Armenia Summer Study Trip, and general support for the Program.

Leon S. Peters was respected as a businessman, civic leader, and philanthropist who lived and worked according to the highest ethical standards.

He cherished his community and considered its well-being his personal responsibility.

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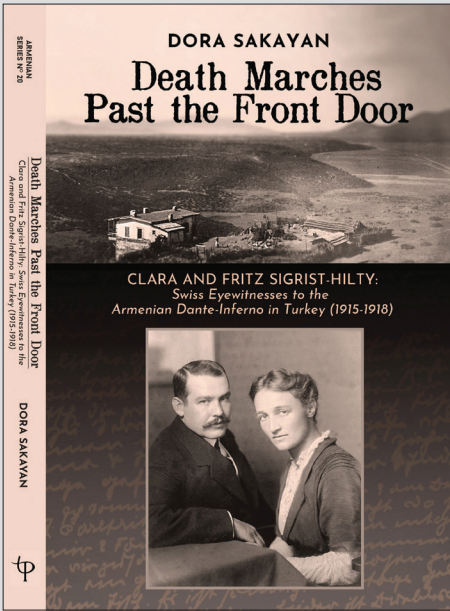
annually to a Central Valley business leader whose work exemplifies the values, ethics, and character of Leon S. Peters.

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.

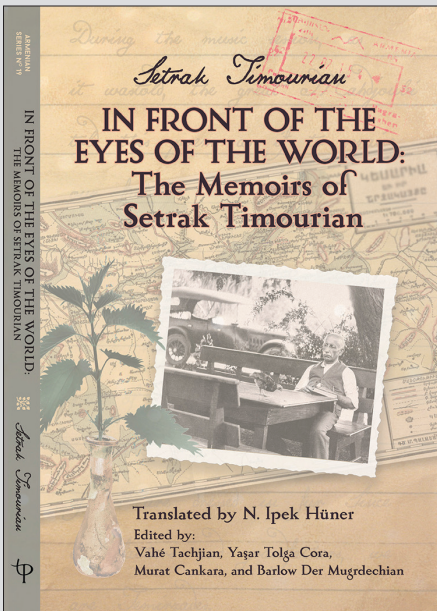
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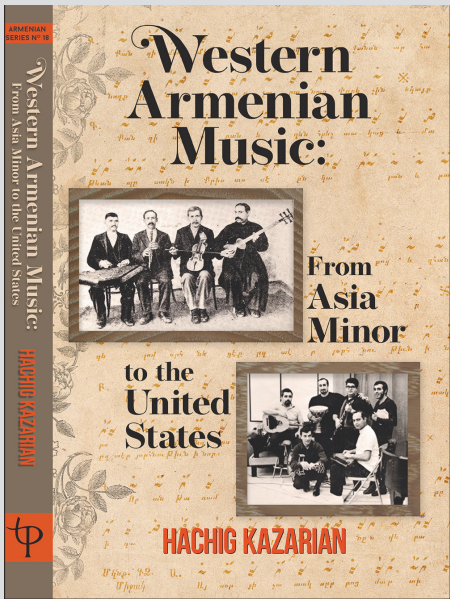
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