

HYE SHARZHOOM

Armenian Action

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37th Year

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Ethnic Supplement to The Collegian

Arzruni Brings to Life Works of Komitas at Fresno State Concert



Şahan Arzruni during his October 25 performance.

KATRINA BISSETT
STAFF WRITER

Accomplished pianist and scholar Şahan Arzruni brought his love for the music of Komitas to a Fresno State audience on Sunday, October 25, 2015. A special event in the Philip Lorenz Memorial Keyboard Concert Series, the performance, titled “Komitas: A Portrait of the Musician as a Young Priest,” was a cultural treasure and was cosponsored by the Armenian Studies Program and the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation.

Arzruni has had a career that has taken him to many countries, gaining international recognition

for his talents. As a musician, Arzruni has taken particular inspiration from Komitas, an iconic figure in the tradition of Armenian music. Arzruni referred to Komitas as the “first minimalist” and the “fountainhead” of modern Armenian music. “His music is so deep,” Arzruni said, “that I’ve been playing it for 50 years and each time I discover something new.”

Arzruni’s research on Komitas is fueled by a deep desire to understand and recognize the history of Armenian music. He claims that one “must understand Komitas perfectly, as much as

SEE [ARZRUNI PAGE 2](#)

Melkonian Discusses Changes in Global Armenian Art Exhibitions



Left to right: Dr. Sergio La Porta, Prof. Hagop Ohanessian, Tadeh Issakhanian, Neery Melkonian, Lucie Ekezyan, and Aramayis Orkusyan.

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

ARAMAYIS ORKUSYAN
EDITOR

“2015 was a year of groundbreaking undertakings of curatorial Armenian

art and marked a paradigm shift in the way contemporary Armenian art is conceptualized and exhibited globally,” stated

SEE [MELKONIAN PAGE 7](#)

Society for Armenian Studies Holds 41st Annual Meeting and International Conference in Denver

STAFF REPORT

To mark the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) held an international conference, “The Impact of the Armenian Genocide,” on Saturday, November 21, 2015, in Denver, Colorado.

The SAS is the international association of Armenian Studies scholars and teachers and held its 41st Annual Meeting on the same day in Denver. The Conference and Meeting were held in conjunction with the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting, which brings hundreds of scholars in a variety of disciplines together to present papers and to participate in panels.

The SAS organized conference on “The Impact of the Armenian Genocide” began at 10:00AM with opening remarks by SAS President Barlow Der Mugrdechian, who welcomed the participants and also local Denver Armenians.

SAS Vice-President Bedross Der Matossian chaired the first

Elbrecht Bequest of More Than \$97,000 to ASP



Anne Elizabeth Elbrecht

“The Cut” Premieres at Fresno Film Festival

KATRINA BISSETT
STAFF WRITER

“All the stars were against Armenia to survive,” stated screenwriter Mardik Martin. But Armenians did survive, and they are now telling their story. Armenian-themed films are beginning to gain popularity, and Fresno has now hosted the screening of two such films this year.

A special screening of *The Cut*, an independent film centered on the life of a survivor of the Armenian Genocide, was featured

SEE [“THE CUT” PAGE 6](#)



Left to right: Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian, Dr. Sossie Kasbarian, Dr. Bedross Der Matossian, Dr. Lerna Ekmekcioglu, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Dr. Talar Chahinian, and Dr. Ramela Abbamontian participating in the SAS sponsored “Impact of the Armenian Genocide” Conference.

panel on “The Impact on Society,” where three participants presented papers: Lerna Ekmekcioglu (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), “When History Became Destiny: Armenians in Post-Genocide Turkey”; Sossie Kasbarian (University of Lancaster, United Kingdom),

“The Politics of Memory and Activism: The Armenian Diaspora Facing 2015”; and Hratch Tchilingirian (University of Oxford), “Armenians in Turkey: The Impact of post-Genocide Isolation and (dis)Integration.”

SEE [SAS PAGE 3](#)

STAFF REPORT

Armenian Studies Program Coordinator Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian announced a gift of more than \$97,000 from the estate of the late Anne Elizabeth Elbrecht of Davis, California, that will establish the Elbrecht Endowment in Armenian Studies.

Anne Elizabeth Elbrecht passed away on September 24, 2014. After completing a degree in library science at UC Berkeley, she joined the Peace Corps and

worked in Ghana, West Africa. When she returned home at the end of her two-year volunteer time, she took a library job at the State Law Library, where she met the love of her life, Richard Elbrecht.

A 1987 vacation to Turkey was the beginning of a twenty-year odyssey that took Richard and Anne Elbrecht on what became a passion – photographing and documenting Armenian churches

SEE [ELBRECHT PAGE 7](#)



“The Cut” screenwriter Mardik Martin, right, with Dr. Mary Husain. Martin was in Fresno for the screening of “The Cut.”

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.

Dr. Carlos Antaramian, El Colegio de Michoacan, A. C., Mexico, for a copy of *Revista de Historia Internacional, Armenia Una Historia* (coordinated by Carlos Antaramian) (ISTOR, 2015), No. 62, 223pp., in Spanish. The *Journal* contains a collection of articles related to the Armenian Genocide and Armenian History. Also included in the donation was a DVD, *Los Armenios en la Merced*, a collection of interviews with Armenian Genocide survivors (2012), running time 52 minutes.

Maral Boyadjian, Granada Hills, for the gift of her new book *As The Poppies Bloomed* (Salor Press, 2015), 278pp., in English. This is a fictional story based on real events from the Armenian Genocide. It is a story of love, loss, and hope—of two young Armenians who face seemingly insurmountable odds while the land of the sultans breaks apart and World War I rushes toward them along with the greatest massacre the world had ever known.

Haig & Elza Didizian, London, England, for a copy of *Geanke i Haghordut‘yan end Astutso* (Life in Communion with God), number 17 in the Karekin I Theological and Armenological Series (2015), 500pp., in Armenian.

Mousa Ler Association, Fresno, CA, for the gift of the *Mousa Ler 30th Anniversary Remembrance Album*, 2015, 66pp., in Armenian and English. The Fresno *Mousa Ler Association* was founded in 1985, and annually commemorates “The Forty Days of Mousa Ler” in September.

Vonnie Franks, Fresno, for donating several Armenian books and records.

Vartkes Tevelekyan, Moscow, Russia, for his book *Жизнь начинается снова* (Life Begins Again) (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Slovo, 2015), 470pp., in Russian.

Vaspouragan Society, Granada Hills, CA, for a copy of *Varak Periodical*, Vol. 62, 2015, dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. 288pp., in Armenian and English.



L. to R.: Lorenz Keyboard Concert Series director Andreas Werz, Şahan Arzruni, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

Photo: Hourig Attarian

ARZRUNI, FROM PAGE 1

possible, in order to understand the rest of Armenian music.” Komitas was revolutionary in that he transcribed the everyday chants and melodies of the common folk, and arranged them using the musical traditions of the Western world. To understand Komitas’ music is to get one step closer to understanding Armenian culture.

Komitas was a *Vardapet* (celibate priest) in the Armenian Church, who lived from 1869 to 1935. Over the course of his life he composed approximately 3,000 pieces of music, ranging from the sacred to the secular. Arzruni performed five pieces composed by Komitas: “Shoror of Mush,” “Song without Words,” “Seven Songs,” “Seven Armenian Dances,” and “Children’s Pieces,” chosen to highlight his stylistic evolution. Arzruni’s outstanding technique and passion came through each piece

beautifully, moving the audience with traditional Armenian folk music, the underlying drones striking a mysterious chord with the listener.

Arzruni was impressively well versed in the history of the music itself, providing photos and an enlightening lecture on the life of Komitas. Arzruni ensured that the audience would be well informed as well as entertained, alternating between performing a musical piece and explaining the history of Komitas’ life and the significance behind the music. His interesting stories added new depth to the music, increasing the audience’s enjoyment.

Overall, the concert was a great success, full of moving music, and enlightening historical accounts. The smooth blend of performer and educator told of a passionate, talented man, bringing a wonderful piece of history to Fresno.

California State University, Fresno
Armenian Studies Program

Spring 2016 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
General Education-Breadth, Humanities, Area C2				
• Arm 1B-Elementary Armenian (Class #32207)	4	10:00A-11:50A	MW	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Arts, Area C1				
• ArmS 20-Arts of Armenia (Class #33498)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
General Education-Breadth, Area D3				
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies (Class #33645)	3	12:00P-12:50P	MWF	H. Ohanessian
• ArmS 10-Intro Arm Studies (Class #33518)	3	2:00P-3:15P	MW	H. Ohanessian
General Education-Integration, Area IC				
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #33038)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B. Der Mugrdechian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #35972)	3	3:30P-4:45P	MW	H. Ohanessian
• Arm 148-Mastrpcs Arm Cult (Class #36069)	3	9:00A-9:50A	MWF	H. Ohanessian
Upper Division Armenian Studies Courses				
• ArmS 108B-Arm History II (Class #32206)	3	3:30P-4:45P	MW	S. La Porta
• ArmS 120T-Great Tragedy-Ideas (Class #36082)	3	4:00P-6:50P	Th	Kazan Visiting Prof

For more information call the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669.

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.

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

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Responses to Ottoman Revolution of 1908 Explored by Der Matossian



Left to right: Dr. Sergio La Porta, Dr. Bedross Der Matossian, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

Photo: Hourig Attarian

ARAMAYIS ORKUSYAN
EDITOR

The Young Turk Revolution was a critical point in the history of not only the Ottoman Empire, but also the history of the Armenians. This pivotal year was the topic of a lecture by Dr. Bedross Der Matossian titled “The Political Culture of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908: Space, Symbolism, and Language” presented on Friday, October 30.

The lecture was part of the Armenian Studies Program Fall 2015 Lecture Series, with the support of the Virginia-based Ararat Foundation, founded in 1985, which promotes Armenian culture and Christian faith, through lectures on Armenian subjects, seminars, literature distribution, and research.

“I was always interested in the history of the Ottoman Empire, specifically that of the Armenians, and eventually I developed an interest in ethnic relationships there between Armenians, Arabs, and Jews” stated Der Matossian, who was born in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. Der Matossian’s interests led him to pursue his undergraduate and master’s degrees in the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University, and subsequently a Ph.D. in Middle East History in the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies at Columbia University in 2008. Currently, he is an assistant professor of history at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

The Young Turk Revolution marked the restoration of the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 and the beginning of the abolition of the Ottoman authoritarian regime. Highlighting the significance of this period, Der Matossian stated “I see [the revolution] as a major turning point in not only the history of the Ottoman Empire, but also in modern Middle Eastern history. It was the last hope the Ottoman empire had to revive itself from the reign of Abdul Hamid II.”

All ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire expressed euphoria after the revolution. Der Matossian’s lecture concentrated

on demonstrating how the post-revolutionary feeling manifested itself in these different ethnic groups through celebration and festivities. Among the ethnic groups that participated in these activities, and the focus of Der Matossian’s talk, were the Armenians.

In response to the news of the new constitutional regime, Armenians in the provinces decorated their streets and houses, and masses gathered in Armenian churches and cemeteries in celebration of what was believed to be a change for the better. “For the Armenians, the Young Turk Revolution was very important,” stated Der Matossian. “Their hopes were very high, specifically the hopes of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. They thought that this would be a new page in the history of the Ottoman Empire, and that they were going to live in peace and serenity.”

This, however, turned out not to be the case. As Der Matossian argued in his lecture “the revolutionary festivities were contradictory to the idea of the revolution itself.” The revolution aimed to create an “Ottoman citizen” and a centralized government, yet the festivities celebrated the hope for administrative decentralization and freedom to maintain privileges and ethnic diversity.

Der Matossian’s lecture was based on a chapter of his book *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire*, in which he meticulously studied the Young Turk Revolution by reflecting the public opinion and reaction of the “non-dominant” ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire. Published by the prestigious Stanford University Press in 2014, Dr. Der Matossian’s book has received positive reviews from major scholars in the field.

Although other scholars study the Young Turk Revolution, “they have tended to view the Revolution from the center—meaning through the prism of the Young Turks,” commented Der Matossian. “Extensive research has been done from the dominant perspective, but very little has been done from the perspective of the non-dominant groups; and even when this research has been done, it tended to concentrate on

Ottoman Art and Literature Explored in Panel at SAS/Middle East Studies Association Conference

STAFF REPORT

Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) President Barlow Der Mugrdechian chaired the 41st Annual Meeting of the Society on Saturday, November 21, in Denver, Colorado.

The Annual Meeting is an opportunity for members to discuss the major challenges of the Society and to hear a variety of reports. Der Mugrdechian reported on the activities of the Society during 2015, and presented plans for the upcoming year.

The Middle East Studies Association (MESA) was holding its annual conference the same weekend, and the SAS sponsored a panel as part of the MESA conference at 2:00PM on Sunday, November 22, entitled “Towards an Understanding of Identity: Ottoman Armenian Art, Literature, and Music,” organized and chaired by Der Mugrdechian, with the participation of Jirair Christianian (Independent scholar, Denver), “Orphaned Armenian Objects in Istanbul: The Patriarchate Museum Collection”; Nora Cherishian Lessersohn (Harvard), “Armenian Self and Ottoman Society: Christopher Oscanyan’s Oriental and Turkish Museum in London (1853-54)”; and Ron Marchese (University of Minnesota, Duluth), “Sociological Implications in Armenian Religious Art in the Late Ottoman Period: Data from the Armenian Churches of Constantinople during the



Left to right: Dr. Ron Marchese, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Nora Cherishian Lessersohn, and Jirair Christianian, following the panel.

Photo: ASP Archive

Second Armenian Renaissance-post 1700.”

In his presentation Christianian discussed some of the significant art objects held in the Patriarchate Museum located at the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople. Armenians from diverse areas in the former Ottoman Empire produced these works of art, which represent the heritage of the entire Armenian people.

In her paper, Lessersohn explored the question of identity, and how the boundaries of identity were fluid in the 19th century Ottoman Empire. She explored the life and work of Christopher Oscanyan, a multi-talented and adventurous Armenian, who traveled and mingled freely in European courts as well as in the Ottoman Empire. His “Turkish Museum” established in London

was a means of understanding Oscanyan’s self-perception as an Armenian and as an Ottoman citizen.

Marchese presented an analysis of Armenian religious art, through the prism of those who created that art, especially that produced in Constantinople. His lecture explored how Armenian patrons played a key role in the production of Armenian art, especially in the later eighteenth through mid-nineteenth century. He also discussed the sociological implications of the art, and how they represented the pious work of generations of artisans.

Many other SAS scholars participated in individual panels during the MESA conference and Armenian Studies was well represented at the conference.

SAS Special Conference “Impact of the Genocide” Marks the 100th Anniversary of the Genocide



Photo: ASP Archive

Left to right: Dr. Ramela Abbamontian, Dr. Talar Chahinian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, and Dr. Sergio La Porta.

SAS, FROM PAGE 1

In the second panel on “The Impact on Culture,” chaired by SAS Treasurer Sergio La Porta, the participants were: Talar Chahinian (California State

University, Long Beach), “Post-1915 Dispersion Literature and the Figure of the Failed Witness”; Barlow Der Mugrdechian (California State University, Fresno), “The Theme of

Genocide in Armenian-American Literature”; and Ramela Abbamontian (Los Angeles Pierce College), “The Diasporic Witness: Reconstruction of Testimony by Contemporary Los Angeles Artists.”

The SAS is administered by an Executive Council: President, Barlow Der Mugrdechian; Vice-President, Bedross Der Matossian (University of Nebraska-Lincoln); Secretary, Lilit Keshishyan (UCLA); Treasurer, Sergio La Porta (California State University, Fresno); and advisors Tamar Boyadjian (Michigan State University); and Marc Mamigonian (NAASR).

The SAS is headquartered at the Armenian Studies Program at California State University, Fresno and its website is at societyforarmenianstudies.com. The SAS can be reached by email at barlowd@csufresno.edu.

one ethnic group.”

Der Matossian brings novelty to the field by bringing to life the multiple voices of different ethnic groups (Armenian, Arabs, Jews, and Turks) and analyzing the revolution from the perspective of each of these groups.

Dr. Der Matossian is now studying the Adana Massacres of 1909, which will be the topic of his next book.

Visit the Armenian Studies Program Online Library.

Books and documents in the Armenian Studies Program office.

<http://opac.libraryworld.com/opac/home.php>

Kurt Discusses Example of Two “Righteous Turks”



Photo: Hourig Attarian

Left to right: Tatevik Hovhannisyan, Raffi Apkarian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Marine Vardanyan, Lucie Ekezyan, Benjamin Tanielian, Ümit Kurt, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Aramays Orkusyan, and Michael Rettig.

MICHAEL RETTIG
STAFF WRITER

One important narrative of the Armenian Genocide that has been neglected is the story of the righteous Turks who risked their lives to save Armenians. It reminds us that animosity towards Armenians was not universal among Turks in the Ottoman Empire and that there were those who would defy the law to protect Armenians. This narrative is not only important for the Armenians to remember, but for the Turks as well. It is the story of these righteous Turks, who the Turks of today must hold as the standard bearers of humanity in a dark time in their history.

Ümit Kurt, a doctoral candidate at Clark University and Kazan Visiting Scholar at Fresno State, has been documenting the stories of righteous Turks with his supervisor, Dr. Taner Akçam. On Friday, November 6, Kurt presented his findings in a lecture, “Righteous Turks: Two Turkish Officials Who Saved the Lives of Armenians.” This lecture was part of the Armenian Studies Program’s Fall Lecture Series with the support of the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

Kurt opened his lecture by stating that there were many Turks and Kurds who saved Armenians. “Despite the order of the Committee of Union and Progress party, which stipulated

that anyone who protects and hides Armenians will be executed, these Muslims continued to hide and protect Armenians by challenging this official order.” For his presentation, Kurt chose to focus on two state officials, Cemil Kunneh and Ahmed Necmettin Bey, who used their positions to protect Armenians.

Cemil Kunneh, who Kurt referred to as a “Kurdish Schindler,” was a lieutenant in the Ottoman Marine army and was assigned to direct the Birecik shipyard, where boats were made to ferry Ottoman soldiers across the Euphrates River. During the Genocide, Kunneh recruited Aintab’s Protestant Armenians to work in the shipyard.

“In doing so, Kunneh managed to save Aintab Armenians from perishing in Der Zor. Kunneh constructed tents for the Armenian workers and their families as well as providing them with clothes, food, and medicine,” stated Kurt, who then told the story of Hagop Mouradian who was one of the Armenians that Kunneh saved from deportation.

Mouradian was a well-educated Armenian who became a photographer and opened his own studio. While Mouradian was on the deportation route to Der Zor, he was hired by Kunneh in Birecik, thus sparing his life.

After the British occupation of Istanbul and the war trials that followed in 1919, Armenians

who were saved by Kunneh drafted a joint letter of thanks for his efforts to save their people. “This letter was probably written by Armenians to protect Kunneh from being put on trial by the Allied Powers,” said Kurt.

Kurt’s second example of a “righteous Turk,” was Ahmed Necmettin Bey, a conscientious Turk who was opposed to the CUP from the beginning. He was the district governor of Aintab until he was moved to Salamia, where he became the *Kaimakan*.

His story is particularly interesting because his opposition to the CUP in 1908 incited an Armenian and Muslim mob to beat him.

Even after the beating, according to Kurt, Necmettin Bey did not follow the extermination policy of the CUP party against Armenians and did not condemn all Armenians. Krikor Bogharian, an Armenian who was saved by Necmettin Bey, described him as “favorable towards Armenians” in his diary.

Necmettin Bey saved Armenians in a similar fashion to that of Cemil Kunneh. He hired Armenian artisans and their families who were to be deported from Aintab and brought them to Salamia. “He tried to save Armenians from deportation by hiring them in his construction projects,” said Kurt.

“If we would like to judge history justly, we should not forget his deeds and his virtuous acts. We shall give him his due,” said Genocide survivor Bogharian. Necmettin Bey was eventually dismissed and relocated due to his activities.

“In Ahmed Necmettin Bey, we encounter a conscientious Turk who disobeyed the orders of Talaat Pasha and used the authority of his position in order to save Armenians rather than annihilate them,” asserted Kurt.

It is important for the stories of conscientious Turks such as Cemil Kunneh and Ahmed Necmettin Bey to be studied and remembered. They are examples of individuals who were able to hold onto their humanity in a time of genocide and brutality.

Dr. La Porta Actively Publishing

STAFF REPORT

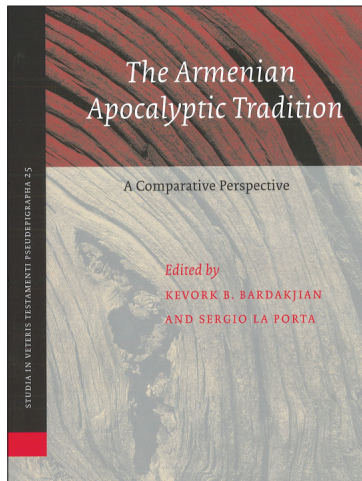
At the end of 2014, Dr. Sergio La Porta published a collection of essays on *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition*. Co-edited with Prof. Kevork Bardakjian of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, the volume, published in the *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha* series of Brill publishers, contains some 30 articles by a diverse body of scholars from the United States, Armenia, Canada, Israel, and Europe. The articles cover apocalyptic visions and texts from Armenia’s pre-Christian past to the fifteenth century in a comparative context.

The volume breaks new and significant ground in the understanding of eschatological expectations and apocalyptic

fears in Armenian literature.

The volume contains two contributions by Dr. La Porta himself: one on the vision of St. Gregory the Illuminator; the second, on a counsel by the monastic teacher Vardan Aygeke’i completed in 1212 that addresses the birth of the Antichrist and the end of the world.

Among Dr. La Porta’s publications this past year was an article on intellectual exchange and competition between Armenian apostolic monastic institutions and Latin missionaries in the fourteenth centuries. It examined the missionary efforts of Franciscan and Dominican friars and suggested that Latin teachings appealed to Armenians because of their Aristotelian focus. Engagement with these teachings and the conversion of Armenian



The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition

monks to Latin Christianity, led to both a harsh reaction on the part of Armenian apostolic monastic institutions, as well as a reform of monastic education. On the one hand, an independent inquisition of Armenian monasteries was spearheaded by the monastic

Students Enjoy Armenian Course



Students taking the Armenian 1A- Elementary Armenian course from Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian. Photo: ASP Archive

LUCIE EKEZYAN
STAFF WRITER

Fresno State offers many cultural classes and among these are courses offered by the Armenian Studies Program, which explore Armenian history, the art inspired by it, and the language that defined it. Since its inception in the 1960’s, more than a thousand students from diverse backgrounds have learned elementary Armenian language skills: speaking, writing, and reading.

For the past thirty-one years, the language courses have been taught by Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, who himself took Armenian language classes at Fresno State. He remembers how the language classes he took influenced him.

“I had always had a desire to improve my Armenian language skills as a way to communicate with my grandparents, who were Genocide survivors,” said Der Mugrdechian. “But I discovered so much more about Armenian culture and history, and began to understand the central role that the Armenian language had in the development of the Armenian people.”

Some twenty students entered the Armenian 1A course in August to begin a sixteen-week experience with the language. They came from backgrounds reflecting Fresno State’s own diversity. They also came with diverse expectations and motivations.

Armenian 1A serves as one of several introductory courses to a Minor in Armenian Studies, and students often have their first exposure to the Armenian culture by taking the language course. Armenian 1A also fulfills the Area C2 Breadth requirement in the area of Humanities, thus students earn units satisfying both General Education and the requirements for a Minor in Armenian Studies.

While all the students who enrolled have the desire to learn the language, the paths that led them to the class are unique

Amber Galvan, who is new to the culture and eager to learn, has enrolled in both Armenian 1A and Armenian Studies 10 this semester. “I took the Armenian course to learn how to speak a new language. I really like the letters since they’re so different, and I like passing by the Genocide Monument and actually understanding the Armenian words on it and realizing that I am one of the few students that knows what they mean,” said Galvan.

A number of students found that of the required courses in Area C2, Armenian 1A was the most interesting. “Most people take Spanish or French, but I wanted to take something different. It’s an interesting class. I hope to understand and communicate in Armenian,” said junior Glenda Davis.

Others wanted to learn their second or third language. Among them is senior Victoria Tinoco, who stated, “It’s exciting! We’re moving very fast and we were speaking Armenian the very first day. I hope to be able to communicate with other beginners or native speakers.”

Sophomore Jesus Lopez is learning his third language and is “glad to be in the class.” He enjoys learning about the culture and also learning to speak and write Armenian.

Even students with Armenian backgrounds had different reasons for enrolling in the course. “I want to be able to take part in simple conversations in Armenian at church and with family,” said sophomore Marina Chardukian.

Senior Bagrad Oganyan is taking the course to “strengthen [his] reading and writing skills and to be able to read [his] Bible in Armenian.”

For Prof. Der Mugrdechian, the opportunity to teach Armenian to a diverse classroom is a challenge that he has enjoyed for many years, and he enjoys imparting the Armenian culture to those who would like to learn the Armenian language.

leaders of the region of Siwnik’ in which those who had accepted Latin Christian doctrines were brutally treated and even executed.

On the other hand, Latin teachings, methods of organization, and structure of

curricula were adapted to the Armenian intellectual tradition. The result was a revitalization of biblical and theological speculation in these monastic schools. The article was published in volume 21 of the journal, *Medieval Encounters*.

Marchese Reflects on Meaning of Armenian Art from the Armenian Churches of Istanbul



Photo: Barlow Der Magdechian

Back row, left to right: Michael Rettig, Anoush Hakopyan, Ani Ekezyan, Benjamin Tanielian, and Tadeh Issakhanian. Front: Dr. Ron Marchese and Lucie Ekezyan.

MICHAEL RETTIG
STAFF WRITER

One of the most vibrant aspects of Armenian culture is art. Whether it is illuminated manuscripts, domed cathedrals, or *khatchkars* (stone-crosses), Armenians have passed down a rich artistic heritage. This art gives one a glimpse into the society that created it.

On Wednesday, October 14, Dr. Ron Marchese presented his research on art from the Armenian Churches of Istanbul in his lecture “Treasures of Faith: Reflections on Armenian Society and Culture.” This presentation was part of the Fall Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and was supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

Dr. Marchese has recently published a new book “Treasures of Faith: Sacred Relics and Artifacts from the Armenian Orthodox Churches of Istanbul,” coauthored by Dr. Marlene Breu. It is the second volume in a series based on a study of the art held by the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople and in Armenian Churches in Istanbul. Dr.

Marchese, who is a Professor of History and Archeology Emeritus at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, approached the art as an archeological site, delving into the context of the objects. He described the value of the art in understanding those who commissioned it.

Dr. Marchese presented artifacts, including church tapestries, liturgical garments, and dove-shaped vessels used for carrying Holy Muron, or Oil. The artifacts, which were all commissioned by laymen rather than aristocrats, demonstrated the religiosity of the donors. Ordinary church members would commission these artifacts as individuals or communities, in order to glorify God. “Each item was considered a statement of faith. Contributions made by one’s own hand instilled within the maker a sense of their own fulfillment and involvement in the spiritual life of the community,” said Dr. Marchese.

Art, as a symbol of one’s faith, inspired the artists to pay particular attention to the smallest of details. “You do not offer mediocre work to God,

even if it cannot be seen,” said Dr. Marchese, who demonstrated this by showing detailed icons that were smaller than one’s index finger. It did not matter to the artist that these details would not be seen from the pews as long as he was “honest to the Biblical tradition.”

Dr. Marchese described art in this period as not only a means of giving glory to God, but as a means to educate churchgoers.

“The art has a primary function to depict the historiography of Christianity, which is often difficult to portray. How do you depict that which is not depictable? How do you illustrate the grace of God coming down upon the Mother of God? The artisan has to find a way to do this or they are not being honest to the Biblical tradition,” stated Dr. Marchese.

To achieve this level of expertise, Armenian artists from Istanbul would often travel to Europe, particularly France, for their education. They would bring knowledge and innovation back, which differentiated the more modern art of Constantinople from more conservative art. The Armenians of Istanbul were no longer following the Byzantine tradition and were able to forge their own unique “Constantinople Style.”

Because artifacts were commissioned for religious functions, they never included the personal inscriptions of the artist or donor. “This was a sign of humility,” said Dr. Marchese. “Artists understood that it was not important to include their names.”

By discussing these artifacts from Armenian churches, Dr. Marchese gave the audience a glimpse into the devout lives of those who created them, as well as a broader understanding of the society in which they lived.

Restaurant Review- “Ark Mediterranean Grill”

ELENA SARMAZIAN
STAFF WRITER

As soon as you step inside “Ark Mediterranean Grill,” a new restaurant that opened up in Northeast Fresno this August, you immediately get a sense that it is not your typical Armenian restaurant. “Ark Mediterranean Grill” has a sleek, modern touch to the design, which differs from the classic cultural environment of many Armenian restaurants.

The restaurant’s name is a reference to Noah’s Ark whose traditional resting place, Mount Ararat, is the national symbol of Armenia. The name brings a touch of history to the otherwise modern restaurant.

Since moving to the United States over 20 years ago, the Ekezyan family has owned and operated several businesses. Recently, they decided to embark on a new business venture.

“Food has always brought our family together and every other day is a barbecue day at our house, so a restaurant where we do just that seemed like a great



Photo: Aramayis Orkanyan

The recently opened “Ark Mediterranean Grill.”

way to start something new,” said owner Kristina Ekezyan.

The Ekezyan family does an outstanding job of offering Armenian and Mediterranean cuisine, as well as offering amazing customer service.

Distinguishing themselves from other restaurants, Ekezyan stated, “Our passion for the food is what guarantees our success because we’re not a chain or fast food restaurant. We won’t serve

what we ourselves won’t eat.”

“Our restaurant has a fresh take on food and we make absolutely everything from scratch,” explained Ekezyan.

However, the restaurant still offers the traditional *kebob* plates with chicken, beef, and an all time favorite *Lulu Kebob*, as well as other classic dishes such as *Falafel*, *Shawarma*, *Gyros*, *Tabouleh*, *Fattoush*, and of course, *Baklava*.

ASO Spotlight-Chardukian Project Focuses on Honoring Veterans



Photo: ASP Archive

Marina Chardukian placing American flags on the graves of Veterans at Ararat Armenian Cemetery in Fresno.

TADEH ISSAKHANIAN
STAFF WRITER

The Armenian Students Organization has many exemplary members who make an impact in the local community. Among them are sisters Lauren and Marina Chardukian. Lauren, a senior majoring in Biology and minoring in Armenian Studies, will be graduating this Spring, while Marina, a sophomore, is majoring in Communicative Disorders and Speech Pathology.

In between classes and ASO events, Lauren and Marina spend their time working at the Ararat Armenian Cemetery located in southwest Fresno. Their involvement at the cemetery began as a project Marina created in order to earn the “Gold Award,” the highest honor awarded in Girl Scouts. The project, titled “Honoring Our Veterans in the Ararat Cemetery,” was, according to Chardukian, to “identify the graves of our Veterans, so they can be honored and easily recognized at this cemetery.” Marina sent out 1,500 letters to families connected with the cemetery asking for donations and information on Veterans. As a result of Marina’s work, letters containing information and donations flooded the cemetery, which resulted in the placement of the permanent metal flag emblems on 200 cornerstones.

While the initial project that brought the sisters to the cemetery has now ended, Lauren

and Marina were hired as part-time staff and continue to work on projects serving the community. They are currently working on building a database that will track the names and specific burial sites of all the deceased at the cemetery. The sisters hope their work will make it easier for families to locate their loved ones and to simultaneously keep an accurate record of all those who are buried.

Working at the cemetery has exposed Lauren and Marina to Fresno’s rich history and Armenian roots, which they did not know about prior to their involvement at the cemetery. “At the cemetery you see the graves of all the important people that lived in Fresno,” stated Lauren Chardukian. “We are the next generation and we have a responsibility, by living in this area, to maintain the history and traditions and to be involved in the community.”

The Chardukian sisters have a bright future ahead of them. Both are very committed to serving the community and hope to continue having a positive impact.



One of the permanent metal American flag emblems.

Hye Oozh - Saturdays 9:00 AM - Noon

90.7 FM-KFSR

Hye Oozh is 90.7 KFSR’s weekly program dedicated to contemporary and traditional Armenian music and culture.

Current Hye Oozh DJs:
Tatevik Ekezian • Vartush Mesropyan • Marine Vardanyan

The family provides a personal and delicate touch to each and every order and works hard to ensure that their customers become regulars.

In addition to of all the wonderful features the restaurant offers, they also offer to-go orders for customers who have a busy lifestyle, but would still

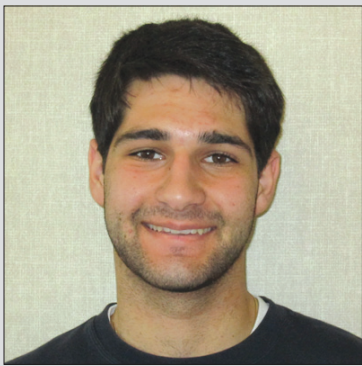
like a tasty home cooked meal. In addition, “Ark” provides catering service.

With their hot spot location in northeast Fresno, “Ark” is definitely a new restaurant to check out. The restaurant is located at 1528 E. Champlain Drive, in Fresno.

Eench Ga Chga

HAVERJ STANBULIAN • STAFF WRITER

What is your favorite Armenian tradition and why?



Sevag Sanikian
Freshman, Biology

My favorite tradition is related to the Armenian holiday of Vartavar [held in July]. I like the fun that people have during this holiday, when they throw water on each other. This tradition is my favorite especially because it gets so hot in Fresno during the summer.



Verginia Oganessian
Senior, Liberal Studies

One of my favorite traditions in the Armenian culture is associated with Vartavar. As a young girl, I remember gathering with my friends and family and having a cool, refreshing, fun filled day. Though, we have not continued the festivities in years, I am happy to have experienced a tradition that my parents brought back with them from Armenia.



Eduard Sulian
Senior, Biology

One of my favorite traditions is eating *Khash*, a traditional dish that Armenians usually eat in winter. It is especially consumed on the morning of New Years to celebrate the coming year with good health, good fortune, and happiness.



Stephen Vardapetian
Junior, Biology

My favorite tradition is the Armenian-style Easter egg fight, a competition in which one person holds their egg still, while another person uses their own egg to strike the opponent's egg and try to crack it without cracking their own egg. If your egg is cracked on both ends, you lose. The winner is deemed as that years "lucky person." This has been a tradition every Easter since I was young and something I look forward to now. It is fun and competitive tradition between my cousins and I.

Photos: Barlow Der Mugrdechian



Left to right: Vartush Mesropyan, Jefferson Beavers, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Marine Vardanyan, and Prof. Mary Husain at the Fresno premiere of "The Cut."

THE CUT, FROM PAGE 1

Photo: Keith Seaman Photography

in the Fresno Film Festival presented by Fresno Filmworks on Saturday, November 14, and was cosponsored by the Armenian Studies Program.

"It was very important having *The Cut* as part of the Fresno Film Festival because it was a way to bring the story of the Armenians to a larger audience. It was an opportunity for people to watch a film about the Genocide that also tells an emotional story that people can connect with," stated Professor Barlow Der Mugrdechian.

Jefferson Beavers, President of Fresno Filmworks, believes that the film is important not only to the Armenian community, but to the community as a whole, to acknowledge the tragic events that took place. It is part of the Fresno Filmworks' mission "to expose people to the stories that they're not going to see anywhere else."

Directed and written by Fatih Akin, with screenwriter Mardik Martin (known for his work in *Raging Bull* and *New York, New York*), the film provided a vivid retelling of the events of the Genocide, highlighting the horrors the Armenians were forced to face and the continuing struggle to regain lost hope in the wake of overwhelming violence.

The film stars Tahar Rahim as the mute Nazaret Manoogian, a father searching for his twin daughters after learning that they survived the Genocide. Akin and Martin withheld no punches on the subject of Armenian suffering, refusing to sugarcoat this black segment of history. In an audience Q & A after the showing, Martin stated, "We tried to tell the truth, and that's all it is."

In *The Cut*, Manoogian is taken from his hometown of Mardin in 1915. This is just

the beginning of what would come to be called the Armenian Genocide. Manoogian survives a mass killing in the desert and eventually learns that his children survived as well. He embarks on an arduous trans-continental journey to find his daughters, defying all obstacles. Rahim gave a moving performance as Manoogian, managing to emote clearly and soulfully without the medium of speech. He used his entire body to illustrate Manoogian's inner turmoil, from utter despair to the scorching rage of a man abandoned by God in the face of suffering. His portrayal of a man overcoming such a difficult handicap is genuinely touching, and it was evident that the audience felt so.

The settings for the film varied drastically, from the Middle Eastern desert to the North American prairies. The desolation and loneliness of the land mirrored the events of the film, lending it authenticity.

Composer Alexander Hacke's original film score was truly outstanding. Following a theme of simplicity, the soundtrack forced the viewer to focus solely on the emptiness of Manoogian's experiences. The main themes that were used throughout the film use modern instrumentation but pay homage to traditional Armenian music, with haunting melody lines and underlying drones. The modern edge of the soundtrack drew the audience in.

Overall, the film was a cinematic success. It had talented actors, stunning scenery, haunting music, and a beautiful story. It is fair to say that Akin's vision for an accurate retelling of history was realized. It is hoped that this film, and others like it, will lead to wider acknowledgment of the Genocide.



Nazaret Manoogian (Tahar Rahim) with his two daughters from the movie "The Cut."

SAVE THE DATE!

Fresno State's Madden Library presents
DISCOVERING KRISTIN SALERI
OPENING FEBRUARY 6, 2016 • 6:00 P.M. TO 8:00PM



A child prodigy of Armenian heritage and niece of Rupen Sevag, Kristin Saleri (1915-2006) was an internationally recognized artist with a long career in Istanbul. She overcame challenges of gender and ethnicity to secure her place as a member of the founding generation that created modern art in Turkey. Join us as we launch this historical retrospective highlighting some of Kristin Saleri's best work.

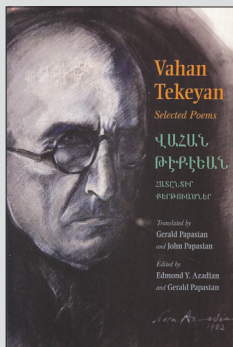
The exhibition will be on view in the Library's Leon S. Peter Ellipse and the Pete P. Peters Ellipse Balcony galleries until May 31. Opening reception invitation to follow.

Check library.fresnostate.edu for updates. For more information and sponsorship opportunities, Please contact Marcie Morrison at 559-278-7177.

Learn more about Kristin Saleri at kristinsaleri.com

The Armenian Series at Fresno State

General Editor: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian



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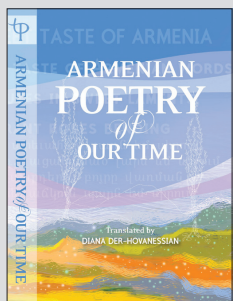
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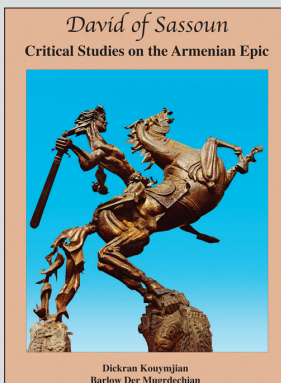
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MELKONIAN, FROM PAGE 1

Neery Melkonian, a New York-based independent researcher, writer, curator, and lecturer in modern and contemporary art. She discussed these shifts in her lecture, titled “What Comes After Undoing Denial: Reflections on Contemporary Art and Exhibition Practices in the Armenian Diaspora” on Friday, November 18.

Melkonian’s lecture was the concluding lecture in the Armenian Studies Program Fall 2015 Lecture Series, and was supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

The first of the exhibits discussed by Melkonian was *Life:100*, displayed in the Brand Library of Los Angeles. Highlighting the importance of this exhibit, Melkonian stated, “For the first time, we were able to see, under the same roof, the works of masters like Gorky, Parajanov, Garabedian, Saroyan, Saryan, Avetisyan, etc. exhibited with younger living artists that are based in Los Angeles.”

The combination of modern and master artists allowed *Life:100* to achieve its mission “to display the inspiring resilience, strength, creativity, and celebrate the contribution of artists of Armenian descent in re-establishing cultural identity and building creative spirit for the future.”

Re-establishing cultural identity through art was also a key feature of *Armenity* (Հայություն) the Armenian National Pavilion of the 56th Venice Biennial curated by Swiss-Armenian Adeline Cüberyan von Fürstenberg. *Armenity* was exhibited on the Mekhitarist Monastery island of San Lazzaro and won the 2015 Golden Lion Award for best pavilion. Making use of every square inch of the monastic complex, *Armenity* was intended as a space to created dialogue about the Armenian Genocide. The pavilion was groundbreaking, however, because it achieved this atmosphere without the use of works that depicted crisis or massacre.

“One of the things that



“Streetlights of Memory – A Stand by Memorial,” by sculptor Melik Ohanian, 2010–15, installation view outside the Armenian pavilion located at the Mekitarist Monastery on the island of San Lazzaro. The Armenian National Pavilion won the “Golden Lion Award” for being the best National Pavilion.

Photo: Courtesy of Armenty

changed is that no longer was art displayed where you feel hopelessness or powerlessness, anger or victimhood,” explained Melkonian. Instead, *Armenity* concentrated on rediscovering “Armenianness” and recharacterizing Armenian culture through works by Armenian artists of the diaspora.

The past year has also been groundbreaking for Armenia in the international art community in another respect. For the first time in 2015, the Turkish National Pavilion at the Venice Biennial was represented by Sarkis Zabunyan, known as Sarkis, a Turkish-Armenian artist.

Even more notably, 2015 saw the first time that Turkish artists addressed the Armenian Genocide at the 14th Turkish Biennial. Art has been able to transcend the “Taboo” of the Genocide in Turkey, and has become a medium creating dialogue about the events of 1915, where it previously was not allowed.

The last curatorial project discussed by Melkonian was *Blind Dates*, an ongoing project that is co-curated by Melkonian herself. Inspired by their “blind date,” Melkonian and Turkish co-curator Defne Ayas believed that “mediating similar encounters might encourage others to start undoing the complex knots that keep suspending ‘dialogue’ between estranged neighbors and

distanced cultures.”

The project is a platform that brings together both artists and non-artists of Armenian and Turkish descent to work on a research based collaboration that aims to understand the rupture of the Ottoman Empire.

Behind all the changes that have taken place, however, there is an even more important mechanism at work. “None of this would have been possible if we didn’t see a shift in art patronage,” stated Melkonian.

“Armenians started spending money on contemporary and modern art. They are recognizing the soft power of art—that art may help change minds and help convince powers that may be. That’s what changed this year.”

These changes were also evident in Fresno this year with the construction of the Armenian Genocide Monument on the Fresno State campus.

The goal of the Monument is to commemorate, educate, and inspire.

More than 20,000 students, faculty, and staff pass by the Monument daily.

The Monument transforms the catastrophe of the Armenian Genocide into an esthetic space where healing can take place.

The spirit of the Monument mirrors the changes taking place in the art world.

Vol. 23 of the Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies Published

STAFF REPORT

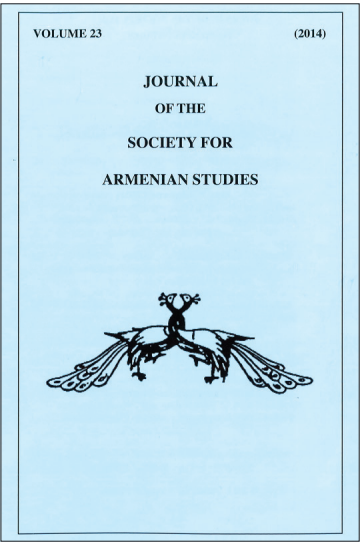
The Society for Armenian Studies announces the publication of Volume 23 of the *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* (JSAS), an international peer-reviewed *Journal*, edited by Dr. Sergio La Porta of California State University, Fresno.

JSAS Volume 23 includes four articles on Classical and Modern Armenian Studies; five communications; a review essay; and three book reviews.

Volume 23 opens with an article by Zaroui Pogossian on a colophon by the thirteenth-century monastic scholar, Vardan Arewelc’i, which provides testimony for an early Armenian impression of the Mongols and their rule. Bjørn Bandlien analyzes a much-ignored embassy to Norway sent from the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia in 1314. An account of the embassy is preserved in three Icelandic annals. The section on Modern Armenian Studies begins with a contribution by Houri Berberian that explores the status of Julfan women in mid-eighteenth-century Safavid Iran by examining the *Astrakhan Lawcode* compiled in the 1760s and some two-dozen letters, petitions, and wills housed in archives in Europe and Iran.

The final article is a study by Hazel Antaramian Hofman of the composition and treatment of figures in fifteen Near East Relief posters. Contextualizing the posters within the efforts of the Near East Relief to provide aid to the “starving Armenians,” she looks at how the artists created images that compelled the viewer to action and resonated with a contemporary American audience.

The communications contained in this volume bring to light new information on a broad array of topics. Robert Hewsen re-examines the Romano-Persian Treaty of Nisibis of 299; while Michael Stone, Doron Ben Ami, and Yana Tchekhanovets reveal a new Armenian inscription from the City of David in Jerusalem. Jasmine Dum Tragut discusses her latest research on Armenian manuscripts containing information on horse medicine;



JSAS Volume 23

and Michael Stone presents the text and an English translation of a poem by Yovhannēs Erznkac’i Pluz. In his communication, Ümit Kurt reflects upon the politics of denial in the Republic of Turkey. Finally, this volume includes a review essay by Christina Maranci on a recently published book in Armenian by Vardan Azatyan on how medieval Armenian art history was presented in German studies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The past year has been a busy one for the Society of Armenian Studies. SAS celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2014 and held an international “Workshop in Armenian Studies” in Yerevan on October 3-5, 2014, in cooperation with the Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gubenkian Foundation. The Society also convened a conference in Washington, D.C., called “Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th-20th Centuries, ” November 21-22, 2014.

Copies of JSAS may be ordered by contacting the SAS Secretariat at 559-278-2669 or by email at barlowd@csufresno.edu. Individual copies of the Journal are \$20 plus shipping. Back issues of JSAS are also available for ordering.

The Secretariat of the Society for Armenian Studies is located at the Armenian Studies Program, California State University, Fresno. The SAS website can be found at societyforarmenianstudies.com.

ELBRECHT, FROM PAGE 1

in the historic homeland of the Armenian people.

157 photographs from their collection are now part of the “Churches of Historic Armenia: A Legacy to the World,” page on the website of the Armenian Studies Program (fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies), where they are available to scholars and to the general public.

In an earlier interview, when asked why they had devoted so

much of their lives to this project, the Elbrechts explained: “The photographs give meaning to historical accounts, and promote a deeper understanding of the elusive and plaintive history of an extraordinary people and their relationships with the people around them.”

The Armenian Studies Program expresses its appreciation for the lasting legacy of the Elbrecht Endowment that will support various activities of the Program.

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Armenian Students Organization

Annual Christmas Party

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Featuring DJ Diko!



The Armenian Studies Program presents

“Iran’s Mission of Apology to Iran”

by Dr. George Bournoutian

Iona College, New York



Following the murder of Griboedov, the Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary of Russia and the massacre of the entire Russian Legation, save one, by an angry mob, on February 11, 1829, in Tehran, the government of Iran dispatched a mission with an official apology from the Shah to Tsar Nicholas I.

Dr. Bournoutian will discuss the ten-month activities of the mission, and its travels from Tabriz to Yerevan, Tiflis, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. Dr. Bournoutian will discuss the importance of these archival materials and also discuss how this period in history ultimately leads to the formation of the first Armenian Republic in 1918.

Thursday, January 28, 2016
7:30PM

University Business Center, Room 191,
A. Peters Auditorium, Fresno State

Free admission. Free parking with parking code.
With the support of the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

The Armenian Studies Program
and Hamazkayin Educational and Cultural Society

present

Best-selling author Chris Bohjalian

speaking on his new book
The Guest Room



Chris Bohjalian’s *The Guest Room* is a spellbinding tale of a party gone horribly wrong: two men lie dead in a suburban living room, two women are on the run from police, and a marriage is ripping apart at the seams.

Bohjalian brilliantly – and chillingly – shows how life can change in an instant.

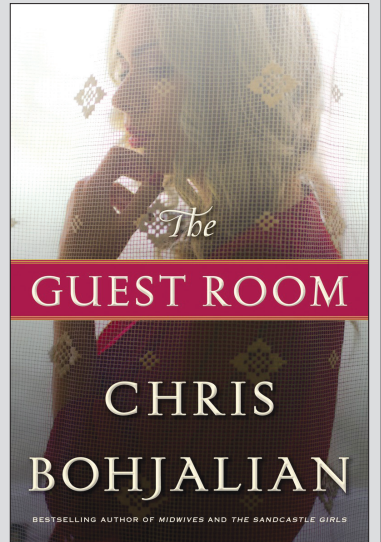
“*The Guest Room* pulses quick as a page-turner, but its concerns run deep into the moral consequences following an eruption of violence in ordinary lives.”

--Charles Frazier, National Book Award winning
author of *Cold Mountain*

Friday, January 8, 2016
7:00PM

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--*Library Journal*

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issues of the newspaper,
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Armenian Studies Program 28th Annual Banquet

Sunday, March 6, 2016

5:00pm Reception
6:00pm Dinner

Ft. Washington Country Club
Fresno, California

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