

# SOCIETY FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES

## NEWSLETTER

VOL. XXXII, NO. 1 (71) SUMMER 2008



### UPCOMING CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### SBL (Society of Biblical Literature)

##### Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting is the largest gathering of biblical scholars in the world. Each meeting:

- showcases the latest in biblical research,
- fosters collegial contacts,
- advances research, and
- focuses on issues of the profession.

The world's largest exhibit of books and digital resources for biblical studies is on display at the congress. At this meeting, scholars benefit from sessions on religion, philosophy, ethics, and diverse religious traditions.

The 2008 Annual Meeting will be held in Boston from November 21-25 at the Hynes Convention Center on Boylston Street.

The International Meeting is held annually outside North America. It provides a unique forum for international scholars who are unable to attend the North American meeting. The meeting normally takes place between the end of June and the middle of August. The 2008 International Meeting will take place in Auckland, New Zealand from July 6 – 11, 2008.

#### 2008 AAASS National Convention

The 40th National Convention of the AAASS will be held at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, 1201 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from Thursday, November 20 through Sunday, November 23, 2008.

SAS Member Panel:

*Soviet Armenia and the Armenian Question: Homeland-Diaspora Relation, Repatriation, and Irredentism*

Session 10 (11/22/2008 3:45-5:45 p.m.)

Chair: **Richard Hovannisian**, UCLA

**Robert Krikorian**, George Washington University

"To Right a Wrong: Kars, Ardahan, and Soviet Irredentism, 1945-46"

**Sevan Youssefian**, UCLA

"The Postwar Migration of Armenians to Soviet Armenia: The Participation of Armenian American Networks in the Repatriation Campaign of 1946-48"

**Dikran Kaligian**, *Armenian Review*

"The Armenian American Community and the Postwar Resettlement of Displaced Persons"

Discussant: **Hovann Simonian**, USC

#### 2008 MESA Annual Meeting

The 42nd Annual Meeting of MESA will be held at the Wardman Park Marriot in Washington, D.C., from Saturday, November 22 through Tuesday, November 25, 2008.

SAS Member Panels:

*Armenians in the Arab World*

Chair: **Joseph A. Kéchichian**

**Bedross Der Matossian**, Columbia University

"Armenians in Mandatory Palestine (1918-1948)"

**Vahram Shemmajian**, California State University, Northridge

"Armenian-Arab Relations in Syria under Faisal, 1918-1920"

**Simon Payaslian**, Boston University

"The Armenian Community in Syria: Between Integration and Assimilation"

**Nicola Migliorino**, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco

"The Armenian Community and the State in Contemporary Syria: The Dossier of the Iraqi Refugees"

*Armenians in Lebanon*

Chair: **Joseph A. Kéchichian**

**Ohannes Geukjian**, Lebanese American University

"The Role of the Armenian Political Parties in Lebanese Politics in the Post-Taif Period: (1989-Present)"



**Ara Sanjian**, University of Michigan-Dearborn

"The Armenians of Lebanon since the Adoption of UN SC Res. 1559 (2004)"

**Tsolin Nalbantian**, Columbia University

"The Armenian Community's Presence/Non Presence in Lebanese Historiography during the Late 1940s-1960s"

*In Search of New Paradigms: Armenian Literature and Globalization*

Chair: **Rubina Perroomian**, Los Angeles

**Tamar Boyadjian**, UCLA

"Relocating Jerusalem: Reading Medieval Armenian Literature through Contemporary Literary Politics"

**Talar Chahinian**, UCLA

"The Paris Attempt: Menk and Armenian Literary Identity in the Diaspora"

**Myrna Douzjian**, UCLA

"A Postcolonial Armenia?"

**Lilit Keshishyan**, UCLA

"Writing Identity: Situating Armenian Language Texts in the Diaspora"

**Kari Neely**, Middle Tennessee State University

"Returning Home?: Middle Eastern Repatriations to Soviet Armenia in Literature"

Discussant: **Kevork Bardakjian**,  
University of Michigan- Ann Arbor

*Religion and Secularism in Ottoman Peoples' Constitutions and Law Making*

**Fariba Zarinebaf**, University of Virginia

"Alternative Modernities in Iran and the Ottoman Empire: From Ottomanism to Constitutionalism"

**Nobuyoshi Fujinami**, University of Tokyo

"The Patriarchal Crisis of 1910 and the Political Structure of Ottoman Greeks"

**Masayuki Ueno**, University of Tokyo

"Social Aspect of the Armenian Millet Constitution and Lay-Clerical Relations"

**Stefo Belisoy**, Istanbul Technical University

"Orthodoxy and Nation: Nationalization of Religious Community via Education"

**Hasmik Khalapyan**, Central European University, Hungary

"Religion and Secularism in the Making of Marriage Law among Ottoman Armenians, 1880-1914"

#### 2008 AATSEEL Annual Conference

The AATSEEL Annual Conference is a forum for the scholarly exchange of ideas in all areas of Slavic and East/Central European languages, literatures, linguistics, cultures, and pedagogy. In 2008, the Annual Conference will take place from December 27-30, 2008 at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco on the Embarcadero Waterfront in San Francisco, California.



## PAST CONFERENCES

### SOCIETY FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES MEETS IN MONTREAL

The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) held its annual meeting in the Palais des Congrès in Montreal in conjunction with the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) November 17-21, 2007. Now on the threshold of its 35th anniversary, the SAS, over the past year, has organized panels at meetings of MESA in Montreal, the American Historical Association (AHA) in Washington, D.C., and the Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) in Seattle. SAS participation at the MESA conference, which was attended by more than 1,000 scholars from around the world, was particularly strong, with two panels organized by the Society and several others that SAS members organized or in which they participated.

#### Sessions on Hrant Dink and Armenians in Canada

The highlight at the Montreal conference was a panel sponsored jointly by the SAS and the Turkish Studies Association (TSA) dedicated to the memory of slain Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. The session titled *On Hrant Dink and Turkish-Armenian Relations* was organized by the presidents of the two associations, Professors Richard Hovannisian of UCLA and Andras Riedlmayer of Harvard. The panel attracted an audience of more than 200 academics, including specialists in Turkish and Armenian studies as well as colleagues from other fields. After remarks by both organizers, Dr. Hrach Tchilingirian of Cambridge University spoke on "Hrant Dink before Hrant Dink: Armenians in Turkey." He was followed by Dr. Fatma Müge Göçek of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, who discussed "Hrant Dink and Turkish-Armenian Dialogue." The third panelist was Professor



Zekiyan of Ca' Foscari University in Venice, who assessed "Hrant Dink's Innovative Approach to Armenian-Turkish Relations: Its Context, Challenge and Prospects." The final presentation was by journalist Etyen Mahçupyan, who now edits Hrant Dink's newspaper *Agos*, with his reflections on "Agos and the Hrant Dink Foundation: Looking at the Future." The panel was filled with deep emotion and was received enthusiastically by the large, mixed audience.

The second SAS-sponsored panel, organized and chaired by Dr. Aida Boudjikanian of the University of Montreal, was on *Armenians in Canada: Productions and Transmission of Culture* and featured Ph.D. candidates studying in Canadian universities. Nellie Hogikyan of the University of Montreal assessed the "Armenianness in Atom Egoyan's Films;" Gabriella Djerrahian of McGill University made "Preliminary Comparisons on a Diasporic Movement: Hip Hop from Here to There;" and Viken Tufenkjian, also of the University of Montreal presented "A Haze of Petals: The Propagation of Cultural Patrimony by Canadian-Armenian Writers." Dr. Sima Aprahamian of Concordia University served as the discussant.

### Other Armenian-Related Panels

An SAS-affiliated panel, made up of UCLA graduate students and supported by UCLA was titled *Death and Rebirth: Explorations of Transference in Armenian Literature from Medieval to Modern Times*. Organized by Tamar Boyadjian with Myrna Douzjian serving as discussant, the panel included Janelle M. Pulczynski who compared "Suicide as a Rite of Passage in Levon Shant's *Ancient Gods* and Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*;" Talar Chahinian on "Narrativizing the Genocide: A Case for Figurative Representation;" and Lilit Keshishyan on "Rewriting the Author: A Look at Aghassi Ayvazyan's Sayat Nova, Gogol, and Van Gogh."

SAS member Victoria Rowe of Chuo University in Japan organized the panel *Ottoman Women's Movements and Print Cultures*, chaired by Sedef Arat-Koç of Ryerson University, and with three of the papers focusing on Armenian topics. Sima Aprahamian of Concordia University examined "From Ottomanism to Turkish Nationalism and Beyond: A Brief History of Women's Movement in Turkey;" Hasmik Khalapyan of the Central European University in Budapest spoke on "The Double Edges of Writing for Ottoman Armenian Women from Late 19th to Early 20th Century;" and

Victoria Rowe presented "*Gardens of Silihdar and Shirts of Flame: The Writings of Zabel Yessayan and Halide Edib Adivar*." Anastasia Falierou of the French Institute for Anatolian Studies in Istanbul completed the panel with "Moral Modernism and the New Eve: Discourses on Woman in the Greek Orthodox Community (Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries)."

Other presentations with Armenian content included the following: Hakem Rustom of the London School of Economics, "Reflections on the Turkish-Armenian Migration to France," in the panel, *Christians of the Middle East: Interrogating Identities from Orientalism to the Diaspora*; SAS member Rachel Goshgarian of Harvard University, "Blending in and Separating out: Food and Feasts in 16th-Century Anatolian Armenian Texts," in the panel *Starting with Food: Culinary Approaches to Ottoman History*; Nefissa Naguib of the Universities of Bergen and Oslo, in a roundtable on *Majorities and Minorities in the Middle East and North Africa*, considered how Armenian identity is negotiated in Middle Eastern cities such as Cairo or Jerusalem, and the variations within Armenian community members regarding their conception of Armenianness.

SAS member Carel Bertram of San Francisco State University spoke on "Identity Detours on the Landscapes of Memory: Armenian Pilgrimages to their Anatolian Homes" in a panel she co-organized with Mohammed Salama on *The Wild Card of Memory, Challenging the Present: Palestinian and Armenian Historical Consciousness*. SAS member Bedross Der Matossian organized the panel *Ethnic Politics in the Post-Revolutionary Ottoman Empire (1908-1918)*. In his paper, "Political Discourse among the Ethnic Groups after the 1908 Revolution," he analyzed the political discourse among Armenians, Arabs, and Jews after the Young-Turk Revolution of 1908.

Because some scholars were involuntarily unable to travel to Canada, the panel *Turkish-Armenian Relations in the Late Ottoman Empire*, organized by Richard Antaramian and Fatma Müge Göçek, of the University of Michigan, had only two of the five members present. The assembled scholars were unable to listen to Antaramian's "Armenians and the Provincial Administration in the Vilayet of Ankara;" Ani Değirmencioğlu of Vienna University on "Revisiting 1908 and 1909: Reconsidering Historiography by Providing Masses with a Voice;" and Yektan Türkylmaz on "The Route from Conflict to Catastrophe: The Violent Collapse of Coexistence in Eastern Anatolia: November



1914-April 1915." Nonetheless, with Dr. Göçek serving as chair and discussant, Professor Hülya Adak of Sabancı University in Istanbul made a penetrating analysis of the apologia of Talat Paşa in his memoirs (*Talat Paşa'nın Hatıraları*) in her paper "Spacing Nationalism: The Travels of Talat Pasha's Memoirs." Dr. Erol Köroğlu of Boğaziçi University spoke on "How to Differentiate between the National Movement and Nationalist Ideologies: A Hrochian Approach to the Late Ottoman Era Turkish Nationalism." Lerna Ekmekcioğlu of New York University also was unable to be present to speak on "Western Woman the Mediator: Constantinopolitan Armenians and Turks in the 1920s," in the panel *Refugees, Relief Workers, Expatriates, and Locals in Istanbul during and after World War I*.

This report on the participation of SAS and its members at the MESA conference would not be complete without the mention of the Society's members and Armenian scholars whose participation at the meeting was not related directly to Armenian studies. Thus, Kathryn Babayan of the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, chaired the panel *The Magic of Rituals and Rituals of Magic in the Persianate World*, in which she presented "Passing into Manhood in Safavi Craft Circles;" SAS member Nubar-Hovsepian of Chapman University in California chaired the panel *Living under Occupation, Palestine*; SAS member Paul Kaldjian of the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, chaired the panel *Film and Politics*; SAS member Aram Nigogosian participated in the roundtable *Internal Dynamics and Transformation in Contemporary Kurdistan*; and Lerna Yanik of Bilkent University analyzed "Popular Manifestations of Turkish Nationalism in Turkey's Best Seller List" in the panel *Rethinking Turkish Nationalism: Explaining Continuity and Change in Official and Popular Discourses*.

#### **Sixth Annual International Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies at UCLA**

The UCLA Armenian Graduate Students Association held its sixth annual, Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies at UCLA on Friday, February 15, 2008. This day-long event brought together graduate students from around the world to present their research and share ideas in an academic setting. It was an opportunity to raise many issues in Armenian Studies to an audience consisting of graduate students and faculty from numerous institutions in Southern California, scholars, and community members interested in the broad range of topics presented throughout the day.

This year, the organizing committee continued the fine tradition that began in 2003 with the launching of the first

ever international colloquium in Armenian Studies developed specifically for graduate students by graduate students. UCLA, a premier institution for the growing field of Armenology and a leader in interdisciplinary studies, is hosting this event to further foster the development of Armenian Studies, facilitate interaction between graduate students and faculty from various institutions, provide a medium for the exchange of ideas, and contribute to the professional and academic advancement of graduate students.

The organizing committee was led by Lilit Keshishyan, a graduate student in Comparative Literature. She was joined by a number of graduate students, as well as faculty advisor, Dr. Peter Cowe. Graduate students from across many disciplines were responsible for the individual aspects of developing the event. This ranged from financing to program scheduling, facilities and refreshments to travel and accommodations, as well as both academic and media public relations.

The conference was opened with remarks by Lilit Keshishyan and Dr. Peter Cowe. Studies from various fields were presented, including history, linguistics, literature, archeology, ethnology, anthropology and art history. Topics discussed ranged from modernist Armenian art to the analysis of classical Armenian architecture, identity construction in the Diaspora, ritual and cultural performance in the Diaspora, survivor memoirs in Turkey, and narratives of national histories. Presenters came from universities and countries all around the world, including UC Irvine, California State University Northridge, University of Wisconsin, Central European University (Hungary), Freie Universität Berlin, Sabancı University (Turkey) and multiple institutes within the Republic of Armenia. Dr. Richard Hovannisian gave closing remarks on the future of Armenian Studies, after describing the strides that have been made in Armenian scholarship worldwide since the 1960s.

The Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies is yet another step in the development of the rich tradition of Armenian Studies at UCLA. Organized by graduate students, for graduate students, it provides an opportunity for students to actively and significantly contribute to the academic environment on campus.

#### **The Armenian Communities of the Northeastern Mediterranean**

The seventeenth in the UCLA series on Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces was held on the weekend



of February 29-March 1, 2008, focusing on the Armenian communities of the Northeastern Mediterranean, specifically Musa Dagħ, Kessab, and Dort-Yol (Chork-Marzban). Sponsored by the Armenian Educational Foundation (AEF) Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA, the event drew hundreds of people interested in broadening their understanding of these historical lands. "The area of Musa Dagħ to Kessab is rather unique in Armenian history as it lies on the fringes of the historical arena and has been isolated by the rest of the area that is demonstrated both in dialect and the provincial life that they live," said Professor Richard Hovannisian. The focus of last year's conference was the Armenian communities of the Indian Ocean. "This shows how Armenians are involved in international relations in the trade and culture arena. On the other hand, we have these semi-isolated areas which make it interesting to study these communities."

During the first night, held at the Western Diocese Armenian Church in Burbank, the sessions were held in Armenian, with speakers from Syria, France, and Armenia. The second day was on the UCLA campus with speakers from London, Paris, Yerevan, Aleppo, and various parts of the United States.

Community members whose ancestral heritage leads back to the regions of Musa Dagħ, Kessab, and Dort-Yol were especially interested in the conference. "They were gratified to see that on a scholarly level there was some investigation on their respective communities," Dr. Hovannisian said. "The general audience was able to learn something about the ethnography, sociology, and anthropology of these communities, whose dialect is very difficult and almost unintelligible to most Armenian standard speakers."

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### CALL FOR PAPERS

To be presented at the Sixth Annual  
GRADUATE STUDENT COLLOQUIUM IN  
ARMENIAN STUDIES  
Friday, February 20, 2009  
at the University of California, Los Angeles

We enthusiastically invite graduate students and recent post-docs (Ph.D., within the last two years) in fields associated with Armenian Studies (broadly defined)

to present their recent research. Work in progress is encouraged. We accept papers from a variety of disciplines and welcome comparative themes and interdisciplinary approaches. Panel submissions are also welcome.

Applicants must e-mail presentation abstracts of no more than 250 words and their curriculum vitae by October 5, 2008. Please attach the required documents in the form of a Word document. Please note that a 20-minute time limit for presentations will be strictly enforced (roughly 8-10 pages double-spaced). Invited participants will be required to submit a final version of their full presentation by January 10, 2009.

A reception will be held on the Thursday evening prior to the event to welcome the colloquium speakers. Students will have an opportunity to meet with faculty and students on campus, tour Armenian Studies resources, and visit Armenian Studies classes. The colloquium will conclude with a reception.

Priority of acceptance will be given to those who have not presented at the colloquium before. Limited travel grants will be available to assist those who would otherwise be unable to attend. Travel grant applications will be sent to all invited participants.

To submit abstracts or for more information contact the Armenian Graduate Students Association at UCLA Colloquium Committee at [colloquium.agsa@gsa.asucla.ucla.edu](mailto:colloquium.agsa@gsa.asucla.ucla.edu).

GSCiAS Organizing Committee

Armenian Graduate Students Association at UCLA

E-mail: [colloquium.agsa@gsa.asucla.ucla.edu](mailto:colloquium.agsa@gsa.asucla.ucla.edu)

## NEWS

### THE ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-ANN ARBOR

The Armenian Studies Program (ASP) at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, is the umbrella organization that houses two endowed chairs (in Modern Armenian History and in Armenian Language and Literature) and an array of extracurricular activities. A recent gift by the Manoogian Simone Foundation has made possible a two year expansion of the program to include five new fellowships (graduate student and post-doctoral), a



Visiting Scholar program in areas not usually taught by the regular faculty, international conferences, graduate studies workshops, the Summer Institute in Yerevan, an Outreach Program, and a full time administrator.

In addition to courses offered, during the current academic year the Program welcomed Professor Hans-Lukas-Kieser of Switzerland (Visiting Scholar), Dr. Joanne Laycock, UK, (Post-doctoral Fellow), the Workshop for Graduate Studies (April), the international conference on "Armenia and Its Neighbors: The Making of the Georgian Nation," eight public lectures and a round-table discussion. An even more extensive program is planned for the 2008-2009 academic year.

The ASP is governed by a Steering Committee composed of University faculty. The Executive Committee includes professors Kathryn Babayan, Kevork Bardakjian, Gerard Libaridian (director), and Ronald Suny. The Program works closely with the Armenian Research Center at the Dearborn campus of the University and is developing plans to create closer links with related programs and organizations. Details on the ASP can be found on its website: <http://www.ii.umich.edu/ASP>.

## NEW MEMBERS

New SAS Members since September 2007

### Regular Members:

Allison Morrill Chatrchyan (Cornell University)

Nellie Hogikyan (University of Montreal)

Johnathan McCollum (University of Maryland, University College)

Karine Megerdumian (PhD University of Southern California)

Nefissa Naguib (University of Bergen)

Eric D. Weitz (Arsham and Charlotte Ohanessian Chair in Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota)

### Student Members:

Hazel Antaramian Hofman (California State University, Fresno)

Viken Tufenkjian (University of Montreal)

Masayuki Ueno (University of Tokyo)

## NEWS FROM MEMBERS

**Max M. Boudakian** (Pittsford, NY) published the "The Armenian Adventures of Frank Merriwell, All-American Boy," in the Summer 2006 issue of *Ararat Quarterly*. This is the second in a series of articles on the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s as reflected in British and American popular culture of that period.

**Aida Boudjikanian** (University of Montreal) published "Le rôle et la nature des réseaux dans l'insertion résidentielle et économique des Arméniens de Montréal," in Michel Bruneau, Ionniss Hassiotis, Martine Hovannessian, Claire Mouradian, eds., *Arméniens et Grecs en diaspora: Approches comparatives* (Athènes: l'École française d'Athènes, 2007), pp. 283-297; "Les Arméniens d'Europe au cours des siècles" in Myriame Morel-Deledalle, Claire Mouradian, Florence Pizzorni-Itié, eds., *Loin de l'Ararat: Les Petites Arménies d'Europe et de Méditerranée: Les Arméniens de Marseille*, (Marseille: Editions Hazan, 2007), pp. 16-29; "La Grande Diaspora arménienne (XIXe-XXe siècles)," in Gérard Dédeyan, ed., *Histoire du peuple arménien* (Toulouse: Privat, 2006), pp. 819-903; "Insertions économiques et résidentielle des Arméniens de Montréal: Comportements d'une communauté culturelle ou d'une communauté diasporique?" in *Espace Populations Sociétés* (2006-07), pp. 95-106. She also chaired and organized the panel *Armenians in Canada: Production and Transmission of Culture* at the MESA Annual Meeting, Montreal, November 2007.

**Nelida Boulgourdjian-Toufeksian** (University of Buenos Aires) recently defended her dissertation titled "*Le réseau associatif arménien à Buenos Aires et Paris. Entre tradition et intégration (1900-1950)*" at the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS) in Paris. She participated in the conference *Migration and Diasporas of 20th and 21st Centuries* in the Asian and African Studies section of the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature, University of Buenos Aires, and in November 2007 gave a lecture, "The Armenian Diaspora: 'Antidote' Against National Identity Dilution?" She also took part in the panel organized by the Dirección General de la Mujer of the Government of Buenos Aires, dedicated to Armenian women and on April 22, 2008 lectured on "The Armenian Genocide and Women Survivors."

**George Bournoutian** (Iona College) presented a lecture on *Tigranes II and Rome* at Armenian centers, Ararat Home and Abril Bookstore, and in Philadelphia, Boca Raton, New York City, Hartford, Toronto, and Boston. His review of Michael Axworthy's *The Sword of Persia*:



*Nader Shah from Turkish Tribal Warrior to Conquering Tyrant* was published in the *American Historical Review*, no. 2 (2008).

**Myrna Douzjian** (UCLA) presented a paper "Decentering the Universal: The Role of National Literatures in Reading World Literature as a World" at the 2007 American Comparative Literature Association Conference, Puebla, Mexico. In September 2007, she co-organized a symposium sponsored by the UCLA Department of Comparative Literature on "Comparative Pedagogies: Reflections on a Neglected Art." She also participated in the panel on "Teaching Close Reading in Theory and Practice." In October 2007, she gave a presentation on "Active Learning Techniques" for Armenian high school teachers during the annual teacher training program (staff development) organized by the Board of Regents of the Prelacy Armenian Schools. Douzjian chaired a panel on *Death and Rebirth: Explorations of Transference in Armenian Literature from Medieval to Modern Times* at the 2007 MESA Annual Meeting in Montreal. In February 2008, she lectured on "Armenian-American Literature: Language, Symbols and Themes" for an undergraduate seminar on Armenian Studies at USC.

**Richard Hovannisian** (UCLA) has edited and contributed to *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007); and, with Simon Payaslian, *Armenian Cilicia* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2007). *Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniia Respubliki Armeniia*, consisting of sixteen chapters in Russian translation of his 4-volume *The Republic of Armenia*, was released in Yerevan in January 2008. He has also written the Armenian chapter in Lane Montgomery's *Never Again, Again, Again ... Genocide*. Hovannisian chaired SAS-sponsored panels at conferences of the Middle East Studies Association, the American Historical Association, and the Central Eurasian Studies Association. In March 2008, he served as Distinguished Visiting Professor, Florida Atlantic University, and in April as Kaloosdian/Mugar Visiting Fellow at Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts. In recent months he has given public lectures at Chapman University, CSU Northridge, USC, New School University in New York, Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero in Buenos Aires, CSU Long Beach, CSU Sonoma, Florida Atlantic University, Clark University, and UCLA, and has given community lectures in Montreal, Toronto, Buenos Aires, Frankfurt, Cologne, Geneva, and throughout the United States. In the spring of 2008, he organized the 17th in the UCLA AEF Chair series on Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces, focusing on Musa Dagb, Kessab, and Dort Yol. In May, he

served as the keynote speaker at Temple Isaiah in Lexington, Massachusetts, in a joint commemoration of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, and traveled to Armenia for conferences and events marking the 90th anniversary of the first Republic of Armenia.

**Matthew A. Jendian** (California State University, Fresno) was the recipient of the "2007 Social Action Award," presented by Temple Beth Israel to a member of the Fresno community in recognition of significant service in alleviating major social problems. His review of Denise Aghanian's *The Armenian Diaspora: Cohesion and Fracture* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2007) was published in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31(3). He received a \$17,500 grant from Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund and Campus Compact (one of five selected of the thirty-five universities that submitted applications nationwide) for the American Humanities Philanthropy Project in which participating students receive oversight of a donor-advised fund to be used for future grant recommendations within their communities.

**Joseph A. Kéchichian** (JSAS editor, Los Angeles) is editing volume 17 of the *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, scheduled for publication in October 2008. He recently published *Power and Succession in Arab Monarchies* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008), which includes a theoretical chapter on "Islam and Monarchy" that examines the impact of the Ottoman Empire on Arab monarchies. Kéchichian wrote the following entries in the *Biographical Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa*, (Detroit: Thomson-Gale, 2008): "Rafiq Hariri," pp. 344-348; "Hassan II," pp. 351-358; "Hussein bin Talal," pp. 375-381; "Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jabir Al Sabah," pp. 73-78 [all in volume 1]; "Jamal Khashoggi," pp. 432-434; and "Hasan Nasrallah," pp. 568-573; and "Abdullah bin Abd Al-Aziz Al-Sa'ud," pp. 709-714 [in volume 2]. His essay "Armenia and the Gulf States: Foreign Policy Fundamentals and Choices," will appear in *Russian and CIS Relations with the Gulf Region: Current Trends in Political and Economic Dynamics*, edited by Marat Terterov (Dubai: Gulf Research Center, 2008).

**Lilit Keshishyan** (UCLA) presented "Rewriting the Author: A Look at Aghassi Ayvazyan's Sayat Nova, Gogol, and Van Gogh" at the 2007 MESA Annual Meeting in Montreal, and "Time and History in Sergei Paradjanov's *The Color of Pomegranates*" at the 2007 American Comparative Literature Association Annual Conference in Puebla, Mexico. She was the Project Director for the 2008 Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies at UCLA.



**Dickran Kouymjian** (California State University, Fresno) compiled *L'Années de l'Arménie* (2006-07), consisting of twenty-six Exhibition Catalogues, which include among others, Maxime Yevadian, *Enluminures symboliques d'Arménie: Dentelles de pierre, d'étoffe, de parchemin et de métal*, Musée de Montélimar, Lyon, 2006; *Les douze capitales d'Arménie*, Centre des monuments nationaux, La Conciergerie, 15 décembre 2006 – 22 avril 2007, photographies de Zaven Sargssian, texte par Mourad Hasratian et Claude Mutaflan, Paris, 2006; *Sarkis, inclinaison*. Jean-Marie Perdrix, Patrick Neu, artistes invités par Sarkis, Musée Bourdelle, 26 janvier – 3 juin 2007, Paris - Musées, 2007. He also published *Tout sur l'Arménie*, special number of *France-Arménie* (2006); *Arménie(s) texts et images*, no. 1 (Paris, 2007), 208 pages of articles and photos; "Les Tresors d'Armenie: des sites antiques aux createurs d'aujourd'hui," *Connaissance des Arts*, no. 646 (février 2007); "Armeniens en pays arabes," *Qantara*, Institut du monde arabe (April 2007); "Arménie," *Le monde de la Bible*, hors série (printemps 2007); "Arménie," *Les dossiers d'archéologie*, no 321 (mai-juin 2007); "Les Boyadjian: Photographes arméniens à la cour du Négus," *Connaissance des arts*, hors series, no 327 (2007); "Peintures en Arménie, 1830-1930," *Connaissance des arts*, hors series, no 330 (2007).

**Ann Lousin** (The John Marshall Law School, Chicago) participated in the fall 2007 meeting of the Armenian Bar Association in Yerevan, Armenia. She met with leaders of the Bar Association of the Republic of Armenia and spent time with the Law Faculty of the American University of Armenia. At the invitation of its dean, Dr. Thomas J. Samuelian, she was guest professor in the comparative law class. One topic was "Holocaust Denial Statutes and Their Implication for the Armenian Genocide," and the other was "National Security Issues in an Age of Terrorism." She also worked with the new moot court program at AUA, helping the first team from Armenia to be accepted for the International Environmental Law Competition in November 2007.

**Sylva Natalie Manoogian** (UCLA) did a public visual presentation on the history, culture, and life of Armenia, at the Glendale Public Library, as part of the Friends of the Library's "Authors, Artists & Friends" series, "In the Spirit of Ararat" (August 2007). The same presentation was given in Spanish, at the University of Valencia, Spain, for librarians and information science students, October 2007

**Sylvie L. Merian** (New York) has been awarded the 2008-09 Katharine F. Pantzer Jr. Fellowship in Descriptive Bibliography, a short-term visiting fellowship from Harvard University's Houghton Library, for her project "A Codicological Study of Armenian Manuscripts." She

has also published the following articles: "Newly-Identified Armenian Silver Plaques from Kayseri in the Fitzwilliam Museum," *Manuscripta* 51.2 (2007) and "The Characteristics of Armenian Medieval Bindings" in *Care and Conservation of Manuscripts 10 Proceedings of the Tenth International Seminar held at the University of Copenhagen 19-20 October 2006* (April 2008).

**Simon Payaslian** (Boston University) moved from Clark University, where he was holder of the Kaloosdian/Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies and Modern Armenian History (2002-07), to Boston University, where he currently holds the Charles and Elisabeth Kenosian Chair in Modern Armenian History and Literature. His publications include, *The History of Armenia: From the Origins to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); "Hovannes Shiraz, Paruyr Sevak, and the Memory of the Armenian Genocide," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 16 (2007), pp. 89-112; and a book chapter titled "Anatomy of Post-Genocide Reconciliation," in Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies* (Rutgers: Transaction Publishers, 2007), pp. 409-428. In addition, Payaslian published two articles on women, Diaspora, and genocide in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 43-54, 364-371. He also gave a public lecture sponsored by the Zoryan Institute in Toronto and a lecture at a program titled *Teaching about Genocide in the 20th and 21st Centuries: A Conference for Teachers*, sponsored by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and PIER (Program in International Educational Resources) at Yale University.

**Rubina Peroomian** (Los Angeles) published "Historical Memory: Threading the Contemporary Literature of Armenia," in Richard Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian Genocide, Cultural and Ethical Legacies* (Rutgers: Transaction Publishers, 2007), pp. 97-119; "The Tears and Laughter of Cilician Armenia: Literary Representations of Destruction and Revival, 1909-1918," in Richard G. Hovannisian and Simon Payaslian, eds., *Armenian Cilicia* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2008), pp. 391-417. Her book, *And Those Who Continued Living in Turkey after 1915: The Metamorphosis of the Post-Genocide Armenian Identity as Reflected in Artistic Literature*, was published in April 2008 in Armenia. In October 2007, she conducted a workshop for Armenian high school teachers during the annual teacher-training program (staff development) organized by the Board of Regents of the Prelacy Armenian Schools. In November, as an appointed member of CSET (California Subject Examination for Teachers) Armenian Committee (for developing tests) by the National



Evaluation Systems (since September 2006), she met with other appointees in Sacramento to evaluate and finalize the tests that will be administered to California Public School teachers seeking an Armenian Subject credentials.

**Lorne Shirinian** (Royal Military College of Canada) published his play, *Exile in the Cradle*, in the anthology, *The Theatre of Genocide: Four Plays About Mass Murder in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia and Armenia*, edited and with an introduction by Robert Skloot (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

**Hratch Tchilingirian** (University of Cambridge) published "In Search of Relevance: Church and Religion in Armenia since Independence," in Bayram Balci and Raoul Motika, eds., *Religion et Politique dans le Caucase Post-Sovietique* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2007); "Modern 'Believers' in an Ancient Church," chapter in Michel Bruneau et al., eds., *Arméniens et Grecs en diaspora: Approaches comparative* (Athènes: l'École française d'Athènes, 2007); "Hrant Dink and Armenians in Turkey," in *Turkey: Writers, Politics and Free Speech, Open Democracy Quarterly*, vol. 1:2, 2007; "Revisiting Political Ideology and Strategy," *Massis Weekly* (November 10, 2007. Recent conference participation and lectures include: "Hrant Dink and Armenian-Turkish Relations," MESA Annual Meeting, Montreal, November 18, 2007; "The Black Sea Region Dimension to European Security and New Possibilities of Conflict Regulation," XVII Economic Forum, Krynica Zdrój, Poland, September 5-7, 2007; "Nagorno Karabakh Conflict: Prospects for Peace," International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London, September 24, 2007; "Global Risks, Regional Opportunities: Geopolitics and Economic Development in Central Eurasia," September 21-22, 2007; "From Failed Soviet Autonomies to Unrecognized Post-Soviet 'States': Reassessment of Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in the Caucasus," Institute of Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus Studies, University of St. Andrews, October 9, 2007

**Gabriele Winkler** (University of Tübingen, Germany) published "Nochmals die 'Dritte Stunde' und die 'Heiligen Mys-terien' in syrischen und armenischen Quellen," *Orientalia Chr. Periodica* 73 (2007), pp. 207-222; "On the Formation of the Armenian Anaphoras: A Completely Revised and Updated Overview," *Studi sull'Ori-en-te Cristiano* 11/2 (2007), pp. 97-130; "Armenia's Liturgy at the Crossroads of Neighbouring Churches," (Talk given at the Louvre, Paris, in connection with the Exhibition "Armenia Sacra," March 26, 2007), *Orientalia Chr. Periodica* (in press [dedicated to Nina Garsoian]). She is preparing *Die armenische Liturgie des Sahak: Edition des Cod. Arm. 17 von Lyon, Übersetzung und Vergleich mit der armenischen Basilius-Anaphora (Anaphorae Orientales 3, Anaphorae Armeniacae 3 (Rome, 2008/09).*

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### New Publications by SAS Members

*A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*  
by Taner Akçam

Description: Beginning in 1915, under the cover of a world war, some one million Armenians were killed through starvation, forced marches, and mass acts of slaughter. Although Armenians and the judgment of history have long held the Ottoman powers responsible for genocide, modern Turkey has rejected any such claim. Now, in a pioneering work of excavation, Turkish historian Taner Akçam has made unprecedented use of Ottoman and other sources—military and court records, parliamentary minutes, letters, and eyewitness reports—to produce a scrupulous account of Ottoman culpability. Tracing the causes of the mass destruction, Akçam reconstructs its planning and implementation by the departments of state, the military, and the ruling political parties, and he probes the multiple failures to bring the perpetrators to justice.

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*The Travel Accounts of Simeon of Poland*  
Translated by George A. Bournoutian

Description: European travelers have left numerous accounts on the various provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century. Simeon's Travel Accounts differs from all of these. His travels not only span an uninterrupted period of twelve years, but his accounts are also the most detailed on both the places he visited and the people he met. The book reads like a travel guide to the Armenian, Coptic, Syrian, Jewish and Muslim communities in the European, Anatolian, and Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, his information on the Armenians of Poland is extremely valuable, while his background and religion provide him with a very different perspective on his long stay in Rome and Venice. His information on the devastation caused by the Jelalis throughout the Armenian communities in Anatolia is a major source for scholars. Simeon has left a meticulous description of the cities he visited, including Constantinople, Alexandria, Cairo, Jerusalem, Mush, Diarbekir, Kharpert, Tokat, Kayseri, Malatya, Sebastia, Izmir, Angora, Damascus, Aleppo, and Lvov. He provides



practical information such as distances between towns, types of terrain, tolls, and detailed descriptions of Armenian and non-Armenian holy sites. He describes the people, places, and buildings, as well as local customs and traditions. Simeon's Travel Accounts is certainly an important source on the history and geography of the Ottoman Empire in the early seventeenth century.

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*Iranian Immigrants in Los Angeles*

by Claudia Der-Martirosian

Description: The volume depicts the experiences of first generation Iranian immigrants living in Los Angeles. The study was conducted at UCLA—systematically interviewing 700 Iranian heads of households. The book focuses on the economic integration of Iranian immigrants and examines the role of social networks. The four largest Iranian ethno-religious groups are included in the analysis—Muslim, Bahai, Jewish, and Armenian Iranians.

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*Between Paris and Fresno: Armenian Studies in Honor of Dickran Kouyoumjian*

Edited by Barlow Der Mugrdchian

Description: This volume is a collection of scholarly articles in honor of Dr. Dickran Kouymjian, whose productive career as scholar, teacher, and prolific public speaker, covers more than fifty years, and reflects his interests in the wider field of Armenian Studies. Kouymjian's interests have ranged from the study of Armenian history and art, to the study of William Saroyan and genocide studies. Forty-six individuals have contributed articles on a variety of topics reflecting the scholarly interests of Dr. Kouymjian. Together, these articles will be a lasting legacy for a man whose contributions have incredibly enriched the field of Armenian Studies. The Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fund provided a generous subvention, which made publication of this Festschrift possible.

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*Cultural and Ethical Legacies: The Armenian Genocide*  
Edited by Richard Hovannisian

Description: The volume provides a fusion of the history, philosophy, literature, art, music, and educational aspects of the Armenian experience. It focuses on the cultural

and ethical legacies of the Armenian Genocide as expressed in the works of second- and third-generation survivors. It concludes with four essays concerning fundamental questions of historiography and politics that either make possible or can inhibit reconciliation and the righting of great wrongs.

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*Tigranes II and Rome: A New Interpretation Based on Primary Sources*

by Hakob Manandyan; Introduction by George A. Boumoutian

Description: Tigranes II (95-55 B.C.), known in Armenian historiography as Tigranes the Great, is the sole Armenian monarch who not only succeeded in unifying all the lands inhabited by the Armenians, but extended Armenian rule into Syria and northwestern Iran. In the first century B.C. he created an Armenian empire which lasted for some two decades, taking the title of "King of kings," which until then was only held by the kings of Parthia.

Armenians, not surprisingly, revere Tigranes. In their pride, some Armenians endow him with modern nationalistic traits and ignore the fact that Tigranes possessed a more Hellenistic and, occasionally, Persian, outlook, rather than that of a modern Armenian. Tigranes' greatness, as will be evident in this study, was in his attempt to forge an independent and powerful state and to break away from the constraints imposed upon Armenia by its geography. Together with Mithridates Eupator, the king of Pontus, he tried to free Asia Minor from Persian military and political threats in the east and those of Rome in the west.

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*The History of Armenia*

by Simon Payaslian

Description: There has been a great deal of interest in the history of Armenia since its renewed independence in the 1990s and the ongoing debate about the Genocide—an interest that informs the strong desire of a new generation of Armenian-Americans to learn more about their heritage and has led to greater solidarity in the community. This book integrates themes such as war, geopolitics, and great leaders with less familiar cultural themes and personal stories.



*And Those Who Continued Living in Turkey after 1915*  
by Rubina Peroomian

Description: In the atmosphere of the precariousness of minority rights in Turkey and the government's persistence in denying the existence of the Armenian issue as well as its continuing policy of pressure and selective approach to history, a prescribed national identity covering all ethnic groups in Republican Turkey was enforced and the Armenian collective suffering of the past was buried in silence.

With the recent political developments in the world, the wall of silence is breached. The events of 1915 and the plight of the Armenian survivors in Turkey, be they Christian, Islamized, or hidden, are espoused and fictionalized in literature produced in Turkey. Artistic expressions echo the continuing trauma in the life of these "rejects of the sword," a Turkish moniker for Armenians, having "undeservedly" escaped from death. The stories that Turkish writers unearth and the daring memoirs of Turkish citizens with an Armenian in their ancestry, as well as obscured references to these same stories and events in Turkish-Armenian literature, have unveiled the full picture of survival, with an everlasting memory of the lost ones, but also of forced conversions, of nurturing the "enemy" in the bosom, and of the dehumanization and sexual torture of men and women. A multifaceted image, an identity, of what is broadly generalized as Turkish-Armenian, thus emerges, a phenomenon that contradicts the long-researched and explored concept of the diasporan-Armenian post-Genocide ethnic identity. Nevertheless, the sociopolitical and religious impositions and the hegemony of Muslim identity have not been fully challenged yet. Outside pressures may influence the metamorphosis of Turkish state of mind, but the change should come from within the Turkish society. The change may be underway.

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*Nerses of Lambron: Commentary on the Revelation of Saint John*

by Robert W. Thomson

Description: Nerses of Lambron (1153-1198) is one of the most significant figures in Armenian literature and ecclesiastical history. As author of numerous biblical commentaries and translator of legal and other texts he is noted as a prolific scholar, and as Archbishop of Tarsus he played a major role in the religious life of Cilician Armenia. In 1179 he did a new translation of the *Book of Revelation*, not unknown earlier in Armenia but not yet integrated into the Armenian canon of scripture. In the same year he

adapted the *Greek Commentary on Revelation* by Andreas of Caesarea with appropriate additions and changes to reflect Armenian tradition. In this first translation of the Armenian text (based on the 1855 edition with a comparison of the copy made in 1284 by the noted Esayi Nc'ec'i), R.W. Thomson emphasizes the differences between Nerses' adaptation and the original Greek, and places this reworking in the context of the Armenian-Byzantine discussions on possible reunion of the churches. In the Introduction he studies the use of the *Book of Revelation* in Armenia prior to Nerses, reviews Nerses' career, and highlights the theological characteristics of the adaptation.

## MEMBER ARTICLE

Hrant Dink's Innovative Approach to Armenian-Turkish Relations: Its Context, Challenge, and Prospects \*

by Boghos Levon Zekian

Hrant Dink, subsequent to his tragic death, has become an emblematic figure for many reasons in the frame of Armenian-Turkish relations and beyond. He was indeed an emblematic figure before his death as well, but in different dimensions. Being assassinated because of his courageous struggle for a "just cause" crowned him with the aureole of a martyr—a nahatak. Following his death, the fascinating strength of the general consensus of the absolutely positive value of his figure was certainly due, to a large extent, to this quality of martyrdom; it was also the reason for which Hrant became an emblematic figure, even if the "just cause" for which he struggled and died has been interpreted in different, even contradictory ways.

Contrary to that post-mortem consensus, Hrant's figure was often, during his life-time, the object of not only harsh reactions but of expressed suspicions about who he was, his loyalty, his ethical behavior, and his mental honesty. As a "Bolsetsi," that is, a native of Constantinople/Istanbul, people assumed I was very close with Hrant Dink. I was accustomed to hear questions like: "Do you know Hrant?" "What kind of man is he?" "What aim, what cause is he serving?" even though I had a limited, personal experience with Hrant. He had indeed become an emblematic figure already in life, because of his principles and his personality traits, which seemed to be mysterious, apparently inexplicable, and even disconcerting. Such reservations occurred especially among Armenians. Their sentiments were rather indicative of the embarrassment felt by a large stratum of the Armenian public,



both in the Diaspora and in those circles of Armenia connected to and acquainted with diasporan events and personalities. The perplexities of Armenians about Hrant were not all the same. Most found his approach ambiguous, if not opportunistic; they wanted him to speak more often and unambiguously. This was the prevailing attitude of Armenians from Bolis (Istanbul) who were now living abroad. However, there were also Armenians, mostly living in Istanbul, who thought that Hrant spoke too much and too loudly. They wanted him to tone down his language.

My purpose at present is to try to understand the reasons for this Armenian embarrassment vis-à-vis the "Hrant phenomenon." This examination can lead us directly to the core of Hrant's position on Armenian-Turkish relations and to what was new and, for many Armenians, disconcerting about it. In fact, it is relatively much easier to understand what happened in the Armenian world after his death—I mean the emotional appraisal of pan-Armenian dimensions—and why it happened. It is also easy to understand the rivalry and hate for Hrant by the Turkish nationalists, in their various forms, as well as the great sympathy and sincere friendship he enjoyed among those Turks, intellectuals or common people, who were able somehow to surmount the taboos imposed by their State. A preliminary distinction should be made between Hrant's views and action plans, on the one hand, and the personal traits of his character, his "personal style," on the other. There is no doubt that the same views and action plans could be carried out with a great variety of personal styles. Hrant's style was only one of those possible and marked indeed with a very strong personal stamp.

#### The Aim of Hrant's Thought and Action Plan and the Armenian Context

The first question I would like to pose is the following: What was the aim of Hrant's thought and action plan? I think it is difficult, if not impossible, to have any doubt about this. Hrant's aim was basically reconciliation: the reconciliation of Turks and Armenians. To some people this affirmation might seem so obvious as not to need further reflection. I also agree that the cause is more than obvious with regard to Hrant himself. But it is not so when the different sectors of Armenian public opinion and of what we can call the "feeling" of various Armenian groups is in question, and it is this difference that can offer us a first insight into the latent and patent reasons of the conflict of ideas between Hrant and his opponents. Anyone who is familiar with the Armenian milieu knows that there is a rather large stratum of Armenians who regard the Turks as native barbarians, people whose history produced

nothing but bloodshed, destined to remain uncivilized forever. If this is the archetype of the Turk, it will be nonsensical, even silly, to think of any possibility of reconciliation. What I am saying does not need a special demonstration. But if one needs any proof, let it be enough to quote here, in the frame of reactions to Hrant's death, the title of an article in the special issue dedicated to the 92nd anniversary of the Mets Yeghern, of one of the most influential Armenian dailies: "All Turks are Ogün Samast." This was a paraphrase, as explicitly explained by the author of the article, to the well-known slogan of tens of thousands of people at Hrant's funerals: "We Are All Hrant Dink." The parallel slogan "We Are All Armenians" was interpreted in one of the interviews broadcast on Channel One of Armenian TV (H1) on the very evening of the funerals: being a Turk was something so infamous that the best among Turks refuse to be Turks any more; they want to be Armenian.

At this point one has to face the question about the real impact of such convictions among Armenians, both at a personal level and a communal level. Because of such extreme stereotypes as the ones mentioned, it would be tempting to conclude that a good number of Armenians are racist, at least in their perception of Turks and Turkish identity; however, the temptation of such reasoning would be hasty and reckless. The question, however, is of basic importance, since its analysis helps us grasp, in its roots, the distance between Hrant and a significant part of the Armenian public opinion.

I am going to refer to three concepts or conceptual instruments in order to clarify the terms of my discussion.

A. The first instrument is what I would like to call the "paroxysm of absurdity."

We all know how keen and deep the debate was following the Shoah, inspired by such eminent thinkers and writers as Theodor Adorno or Primo Levi: if, after Auschwitz, was it ever possible to speak of God; was it ever possible to write poetry; was culture anything but dirt? Let us consider the question of God, a most radical and comprehensive question indeed in one's vision of the universe, of the being, in one's *Weltanschauung*; a question in which the dilemma between its two poles is relatively clearer and less subject to ambivalent interpretations. Now, the truth of this sentence can be judged by two kinds of people: either theist or atheist. For the former the sentence is obviously a paradox, showing the absurdity of what happened. For the latter it still remains a paradox, since an atheist does not need Auschwitz to be such. There can be yet a third hypothesis: a theist who has lost his faith in God subsequent to Auschwitz. In this case, the paradox has become a real factor, even if this third hypothesis represents a minor number of cases



compared with the prior two.

When we pass from the Shoah to the Mets Yeghern, the sentence, which has become more popular and more emblematic to define the Armenian attitude vis-à-vis the Catastrophe, is not something referring to what to believe, but rather how to behave. I refer, for instance, to the verses of Avetis Aharonian: "ayskan charik te moranan mer vordik, togh voghj ashkharh hayin karda nakhatink" [If our sons forget such great evil, let the entire world curse the Armenians]. Such a sentence occludes ipso facto any possibility of reconciliation.

However, we cannot help but ask whether this effectively was Aharonian's guideline of behavior in real life. The answer is no, and is given, in a most touching and convincing way, by Aharonian himself in one of his short stories: "Voghjakeze" (The Holocaust). Even if this story is not among the author's most popular stories, it is a masterpiece of its kind because of its strong sense of pathos, its keen analysis of the awful torment of forgiveness, its inward dynamics, showing how the disposition to forgive develops as well as the ethical and ontological, and even religious conditions that make it possible. The story bears the date of 1928. So it was written more than ten years after the Mets Yeghern, and also after the Treaty of Lausanne which, in a true sense, sealed the results of the Mets Yeghern. It refers to a period that followed the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s, which would remain the greatest tragedy in modern Armenian history, had they not been overwhelmed by the Mets Yeghern.

In Aharonian's "Voghjakeze," the three-year-old baby of Mahmud, a Turkish peasant, is dying. Nothing helps to heal the child, not even Muslim religious practices. Mahmud's wife has a dream where she is told that Ter Mesrop, the village's old priest, can heal her baby if he reads the Gospel on the baby's head. The priest is reluctant: the memory of the victims, the fear of appearing in a Muslim neighborhood at a moment of burning hate against Armenians, and the fear of revenge if the baby is not healed torment the priest's soul, alternating with waves of a strong sense of pity for a human case. Finally, the priest decides to go with Mahmud, because he understands that a victim is necessary to rescue his own people. Aharonian writes, "The life of this foreign and unknown child became for him the life of his own son, of his own people. The Gospel itself was not enough to appease the impossible and awful torment of his soul. Something else was needed" (p. 135). And the priest prays to the Lord to let him be the victim to save Mahmud's child, and hence to save his own people. But, he thinks, even this offer might not be enough for God to save the child. "My

Lord, my Lord... is not my life enough? Let your will be done... I have a unique son... my grandson, ... the others were lost in a storm of blood. Take, take, take my grandson and let this child live ... and let the terror pass away from the head of my people" (p. 138). In the end, Mahmud's child is cured and the priest's grandson also lives.

What conclusion can we draw from this? The story obviously deserves a thorough analysis for its rich content and manifold dimensions of psychological, anthropological, ethical, and religious nature. This is not, however, the appropriate place to delve deeper into such an analysis. What is of a peculiar interest is the gap between the paradoxical, almost sentimental, statement as a result of a passionate reaction, and the suggested behavior as the result of a deepening, tormented, even passionate, reflection.

This is what I call the "paroxysm of absurdity." In other words, what happened was so absurd that it generates a kind of intellectual reaction, formulated as a general principle; this lies on a ground where behavior is at issue, different from the aforementioned statement related to the Shoah, which in the first instance, touches beliefs. Behavior, so formulated, is expressed at the most paradoxical level of speech possible. However, since even a theist can affirm, as a paradox, that after Auschwitz it is not possible to speak of God, thus anyone can affirm, as a paradox, that such an awful misdeed cannot be forgotten. But there is no necessary link, neither on a logical nor ontological ground, of an effective consequence that such will also be one's concrete behavior in real life.

B. What I call "paroxysm of absurdity" describes a psychological status. As to the mental operation resulting from that status, it can be defined as a "conceptualization of the emotion." In fact, paroxysm is an emotional status, which by its nature is dynamic and transitory. To transform its content into a concept, and to formulate this concept in a sentence, as for instance the admonition by Aharonian, is to give to that temporal experience a perpetual, almost absolute value. Thus, parallel to the emotion, absolved by its temporal dimension, all its content and context are also detracted from history. In other words, we are before that phenomenon we often call today the "essentialist" approach to history.

It is a matter of fact that paroxysm and, in relation to it, the process of undue conceptualization have been growing among Armenians in these last decades. I was often asked by older non-Armenian ladies who were married to Armenians and who had personally known people who had survived the hell of the Genocide why these people were less obsessed by the idea of the "Turk" and its implications than younger people who are separated



from that devastating experience by two or three generations?

C. Different factors, of course, can explain this situation. One of those factors and, in my opinion, a very important one, is the search for Genocide recognition as it has been directed in the last few decades. Very often, there has been excessive concentration on this matter, giving to those efforts an overall priority with regard to other national/communal issues. Certainly an excessive concentration leads to some kind of "obsession," and obsession can easily degenerate into paroxysm. But with a big risk, this time, that paroxysm does not remain limited anymore to the sphere of a conceptual formulation of a peculiar type, defined in general by the "rhetoric" figure of the paradox, but can penetrate the whole area of concrete action.

There is, however, a more critical issue with the Armenians, and this is due, in my opinion, to the denialist policy of the Turkish government. I put emphasis on the State's denial. I do not doubt that without this policy, the ignorance or denial of the Armenian Genocide, even by a large stratum of Turkey's population, would not have the same psychological impact upon Armenians that it now has. To realize what this denial means, I will simply quote a thought expressed by Alain Finkelkraut in an interview not many years ago: "It is my impression that with such a non recognition, they want to make the Armenians crazy," and he goes on challenging his Jewish compatriots: "Just think what would be our mental status, if we Jews felt ourselves up today in the necessity to convince the Germans."

I think Finkelkraut has grasped what is going on: the Turkish government is fully aware of the shocking impact on the Armenians of its denialist policy and is using it and developing it further to disorient the Armenians, to let them expend a large part of their money and capacities for the purpose of recognition, paying less attention to other, and even more real, more urgent needs of their current community life, of their language and culture, and, finally, to raise in them a sense of frustration, added as a negative plus value to their already deep grief for their tragedy.

Meanwhile, during all these forty and more years of Armenian efforts for recognition, the destruction—either directly pursued or indirectly tolerated—of the Armenian monumental heritage in Turkey has continued. This has been, in my opinion, the harshest reply of the Turkish government to the Armenian efforts. Since it did not seem real that the Turkish state would show willingness to change its attitude in the near future, the classical question- "what to do?"- became more urgent than ever. Hrant enters the scene at this point.

### Hrant's Idea and Methodology: Or, How to Emerge from the Blind Ally

I shall try to sum up, as concisely as possible, the substance of Hrant's views on these very complicated and burning issues. I think that what ruled his vision and action can be reduced to two basic principles:

A. The main way to achieve recognition of the Genocide passes through the formation in Turkey of a large public opinion of free thought, able to influence the government's action. For this purpose, the most important thing to do is to contribute, in every possible way, to the affirmation of free thought and to the suppression of any law implying the concept of crime of opinion.

B. For true reconciliation, recognition of the Genocide must not be conceived of as merely a legal act with exclusive reference to the definition of the UN Convention. What happened to the Armenians is something that goes far beyond that definition. Hrant gave a very incisive explanation of this point in his speech as a discussant at the Genocide 2005 conference in Yerevan called "Ultimate Crime, Ultimate Challenge." He explained there that the most radical aspect of the Armenian tragedy was that of the uprooting of the Armenians from their millennial ancestral homeland. This uprooting by the Ittihad (Young Turk) government and the subsequent policies of the Turkish Republic has had a definitive, potentially a perpetual uprooting, also for the survivors and their progeny.

In the light of these two basic principles, one can easily understand the real meaning of the strong paradox of his reaction to the French law criminalizing the denial of the Armenian Genocide: "I shall go to France to say that there was no Armenian genocide, and will stay in Turkey to say that what happened was a genocide." This phrase raised a negative reaction among many Armenians who did not perceive its paradoxical figure, and, therefore, neither its real meaning. This falling short of understanding is not a surprise if we remind ourselves of the above-mentioned paroxysm of the Armenian psyche.

In the best of hypotheses, to those who did not grasp the core of Hrant's thought or, in any case, did not feel themselves at ease with his approaches, and especially with his use of the language, Hrant was regarded as one who had a "double language" or, at least, one who engaged in a linguistic gymnastics to express himself. The aforementioned sentence bearing emphasis on two different, even openly contradictory affirmations to be made separately in France and in Turkey, besides its paradoxical and obviously rhetorical character, can also be interpreted as an emblematic expression of a "double language," since its clarity goes beyond the limits of "linguistic gymnastics."



There is no doubt that some affirmations made by Hrant out of Turkey, or in private conversations, could seem, at least at a first glance, more or less in contradiction with those made in the country or elsewhere in different circumstances.

I think that, in similar cases, the necessary way to any balanced conclusion goes through a rigorous analysis applying the basic hermeneutical rules as, for instance, contextualization, literary genre, rhetorical figures, semantic charges and nuances, etc. With special regard to Hrant, a particular point to be made with emphasis, is, in my opinion, the problem of "language" in the sense of French *langage* or Italian *linguaggio*. The fact itself that this distinction between "language" and *langage* does not exist in many, even developed, languages must lead us to think that we are dealing with a remarkably refined insight into the phenomenon of human expression; hence, the necessity of an even greater attention and sensitivity for the subject of our discourse.

The problem of *langage* makes itself felt, and can assume dramatic figures, even in rather homogeneous cultural contexts as, for example, the West European context itself, since Italian sensitivity is not the same as the French, and French sensitivity is not that of the Germans, Spaniards or Brits. Let us just think, for instance, about the different way basic concepts such as "Volk/people" and "Nation/nation" are perceived in Germany and France. I would say even more: it is difficult, and often useless, to use the same *langage* speaking to Armenians in Aleppo and in Yerevan, to Armenians in Paris and in Los Angeles, without forgetting that *langage* is also an "art."

Hrant seems to me to have realized the importance of *langage* to such an extent, not indeed very frequent among Armenians. I do not say that he was a master in dealing with *langage*, but there can also be no doubt that handling *langage* is a rather difficult and sophisticated art. Probably, his passionate temperament, his bold character, his formation as a professional journalist, not indifferent to sensation, as well as the striking rhythms imposed both by his profession and by his personal mood, were factors that could move him, in some cases, perhaps to undue emphasis, to some lack of coherence, or to debates which could or should, however, be avoided or conducted differently. In any case, all things considered, I think that the basic points of Hrant's approach to the Armenian-Turkish issue mark a milestone in today's Turkish-Armenian relations, and I am deeply convinced that they represent the main way to emerge from the blind alley in which those relations have been confined. I referred up to this point to reservations about Hrant's public personality expressed by Armenians who considered his daring not enough or not clear enough. But, as I already mentioned, there were

also Armenians, mostly living in Istanbul, who would have liked that Hrant speak less. A prominent figure in the public and cultural life of the Armenian Bosis said to me recently: "We must live in this country never being at the center of attention. For some years we have frequently had minority threats, including life menaces, as we never had before. I am very concerned for our future."

I would like to add a short personal comment to these words, since an overall evaluation of Hrant's figure cannot ignore them. My opinion is that, however great our concern is for the present and future, we cannot leave aside or judge in a globally negative light Hrant's very incisive presence and action on the stage of Turkey's press and of its intellectual and cultural life as a whole. No Armenian had such an achievement in the Republican era, and few people belonging to other ethnic realities in Turkey, including the ethnic Turks, reached a similar achievement. Hrant belongs from now on to that liberal elite of the country who influenced its hard orientation towards democracy in a most positive way.

However, having said this, I would not like to hide the concern that I also share for the Armenian presence in Istanbul in the near future, until the country, as a whole, gives clear signals of a substantially achieved democracy of free thought on those very matters, which are still the subject of taboos. Up to such an achievement, any tragic, even disastrous, hypothesis, with regard especially to the Armenian community, cannot be excluded.

Regarding the Armenian heritage of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Constantinople/Istanbul is certainly the richest city in the world, more than Tbilisi, Alexandria, or New Julfa (as Yerevan is not even an option). It would be a great pity for the Armenians to be reduced to a few thousand people, following the fate of the Greek community. Hence a reconsideration, even if only tactical and momentary, of the Armenian population in the greater society of the country—in that it has recently developed more openly and politically, trying to give its presence a rather distinctly cultural dimension—is an urgent challenge of the moment. Let us hope that it may be but a short-term emergency.

\*An earlier version of the paper was presented at the special session on "Hrant Dink and Armenian-Turkish Relations," sponsored by the Society of Armenian Studies and the Turkish Studies Association, which took place on November 18, 2008, at the MESA Annual Meeting in Montreal, November 17-20.



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