

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.

Shareen Anderson, Booklyn, New York and Johannesburg, South Africa, for the gift of her DVD, *Charents: In Search of My Armenian Poet* (Running time 98 minutes). This is a feature length documentary on the life and work of one of Armenia’s best-loved poets, Eghishe Charents, who was tragically killed in a Stalinist prison in 1937. This literary travelogue takes viewers on a journey from Armenia to the poet’s birthplace in Kars and includes interviews with experts about his work.

Jack Aslanian, M.D., Oakland, California, for his book, *Paruir Sevak- Selected Poems: Select Translations from Armenian* (Yerevan, Armenia: VMV Print, 2011). This book of poems, translated into English, coincides with what would have been the 87th birthday of Sevak (1924-1971), one of the foremost poets of Armenia.

Mrs. Harriet Boghosian, Fresno, California, for the gift of the books, *Armenia The Case For A Forgotten Genocide* by Dickran Boyajian; *The Armenian People From Ancient To Modern Times Volumes I and II*, edited by Richard Hovannisian; *The Armenian Community: The Historical Development Of A Social and Ideological Conflict* by Sarkis Atamian; *The Republic of Armenia Volume I: 1918-1919* by Richard Hovannisian; *The Eternal Struggle* by M. H. Knadjian; *Armenia, Her Culture, and Aspirations* by Arshag Mahdesian; *Armenian Atrocities The Murder of A Nation* by Arnold J. Toynbee; *Armenian-Americans* (The Center of Armenian Studies, 1976); and *The History of the Armenian People* by Jacques de Morgan (in English).

Jack Bousian, Hayward, California, for a gift of twelve mounted painting/photographs, about the Armenian Genocide. Each photo has an original quote from Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, with a backdrop of an original graphic composition by Bousian.

Mrs. Doris Cirill, Sacramento, California, for the gift of the books, *Armenian Made Easy Vols. 1, 2 & 3; Journal of Armenian Studies* Vol. II, No. 2 (1985/1986); and several Armenian language books.

Dr. Hayk Demoyan, Yerevan, Armenia, for the gift of the books, *The Ottoman Empire: A Troubled Legacy*, compiled by Vahakn Dadrian (Yerevan, 2010); *Azerbaijan: Vandalism As Usual* (Yerevan, Armenian: Tigran Mets Printing House, 2010), regarding the destruction of Armenian cultural monuments by Azerbaijan; *Western Media Coverage of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in 1988-1990*, by Hayk Demoyan (Yerevan, Armenia: Tigran Mets Printing House, 2010); *Documenti Dell’Archivio Storico Diplomatico Del Ministero Degli Affari Esteri D’Italia Sulla Questione Armena, Volumes 1 & 2, 1913-1923*, (Yerevan, Armenia: 2008) (In Armenian); *Haykakan Sporte yev Marmnakrt’ut’yune Osmanyan kaysrut’yunum* [Armenian Sport and Sports Education in the Ottoman Empire] by Hayk Demoyan (Yerevan: 2009) (In Armenian); *Adana 1915-Dedicated to the Victims of the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, DVD, music by Ara Gevorgian (2005); *Haykakan Lernashkharhi Bronzedaryan Sparazinut’yunn u Razmarveste* [The Armaments and Weaponry of the Bronze Age in Armenia] by Hayk Demoyan (Yerevan, 2009) (In Armenian).

Minister Hranush Hakobyan, Ministry of Diaspora, Yerevan, Armenia, for the gift of the *Armenian Diaspora Yearbook 2009* (Yerevan, 2009). The Yearbook provides information about the activities of various Diasporan communities and also the activities of the Armenian government in the Diaspora. (In Armenian).

Mary M. Kandalian-Aslanian, Oakland, California, for her book, *Alhambra: Shadows of Memory*, (Yerevan, Armenia: VMV-Print, 2010). Alhambra is a story of an Armenian woman, a Genocide survivor, in whose life Alhambra-in the city of Granada, Spain, plays a significant role. (In Armenian).

Fr. Karekin Kasparian, St. Gregory the Enlightener Armenian Church, White Plains, New York, for the gift of the book, *A History of the Armenian Holy Apostolic Orthodox Church in the United States (1888-1944)*, by the late Very Rev. Fr. Oshagan Vartabed Minassian (Monterey, California: Mayreni Publishing, 2010).

Rev. Vartkes Kassouni, Orange, California, for the gift of the book, *Historical Studies, Reminiscences & Memories* (Beirut, 2010), written by his father, Manuel S. Kassouni, and edited by Yervant Kassouny. (In Armenian).

Professor Ron Marchese, Duluth, Minnesota, for the gift of the new book, *Splendor & Pageantry-Textile Treasures From The Armenian Orthodox Churches of Istanbul*, by Dr. Ron Marchese, Dr. Marlene Breu, and the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul (Istanbul: Çitlembik Publishing, 2010). This 397 page, lavishly illustrated album/book is dedicated to the many Armenian artisans whose artistic craft was expressed in the making of religious objects. This meticulously researched book discusses religious objects from the 56 Armenian churches of Istanbul/Constantinople.

Sarkis Panossian, Fresno, for the gift of his book, *Letters*, which is a compilation of the author’s letters written over many years to artists, politicians, and other significant figures in the Armenian world (Fresno: 2009, 2010).

California State University, Fresno
Armenian Studies Program
Fall 2011 Schedule of Courses

Course	Units	Time	Day	Instructor
• Arm 1A Elementary Armenian (Class #72051)	4	10:30A-11:35A	MWF	B Der Mugrdechian
• Hum 11 Hum Baroque/Modern (Class #72565)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	S La Porta
General Education-Arts & Humanities, Area C1				
• ArmS 20 Arts of Armenia (Class #73049)	3	9:30A-10:45A	TuTh	B Der Mugrdechian
Social Studies, Area D3				
• ArmS 10 Intro Armenian Studies (Class #72052)	3	10:00A-10:50A	MWF	S La Porta
Upper Division Armenian Studies Courses				
• ArmS 108B Arm History I (Class #72053)	3	11:00A-12:15P	TuTh	S La Porta
General Education-Arts & Humanities, Area IC				
• Arm 148 Masterp. of Arm Culture (Class #73181)	3	9:00A-9:50A	MWF	B Der Mugrdechian
• Arm 148 Masterp. of Arm Culture (Class #73119)	3	11:00A-11:50A	MWF	S La Porta
• ArmS 120T Armenian Church (Class #75743)	1	5:00P-7:50P 9:00A-5:00P	Fri Sat	B Der Mugrdechian

Class meets Friday, September 23 and Saturday, September 24, 2011

For more information call the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669 or visit our offices in the Peters Business Building, Room 384. Get a Minor in Armenian Studies. Check on requirements for the Minor in Armenian Studies in the 2010-2011 catalog: <http://www.csufresno.edu/catoffice/current/armstudhd.html>

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

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Armenians of Jerusalem: A Photographic Journey by Matthew Karanian

RUZAN ORKUSYAN
STAFF WRITER

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words and Matthew Karanian’s presentation “The Armenians of Jerusalem: A Photographic Journey” certainly proved this. He gave a magnificent photographic tour of the Armenian quarter of the walled Old City of Jerusalem as well as some of the other quarters within Jerusalem. Each photo captured the spirit, culture, beauty, and charm of the city.

A standing-room only audience attended the March 30th lecture sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program. Some were able to visually visit the Old City for the first time through the photographs, while for some, who had once lived in Jerusalem, it brought back sweet memories of the past as they revisited familiar sights.

Karanian, a Pasadena lawyer, has spent most of the last 15 years working and living in



Matthew Karanian

Photo: Erica Magarian

Armenia. He has promoted travel to Armenia by publishing travel guidebooks such as *Armenia and Karabagh: The Stone Garden Guide*. This was a result of a gradual increase in Karanian’s cultural self-awareness and a desire to encourage others to likewise develop it. However, it became increasingly evident to him that the Armenian nation was

so much more than the Republic of Armenia; it included all the Armenian Diaspora communities across the globe.

Karanian’s lecture focused on one of the oldest Armenian communities outside of Armenia, the 2,000 year old Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem. He took his first trip to Jerusalem ten months ago and lived among the Armenians

– working, interviewing, and photographing. Throughout his journey he uncovered the rich cultural legacy of the Armenian Quarter. That knowledge, as well as the breathtaking photos, was shared with an audience that was mesmerized by the beauty and history of the Quarter.

He took the audience step-by-step, street-by-street through the alleys of old Jerusalem, through the different quarters of the walled city and the magnificent sites associated with the life of Jesus. Karanian emphasized the scope and power of the Armenian Apostolic Church, which administers at least a part of every major Christian Holy Site in the region, including but not limited to Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ, the Holy Sepulchre where Jesus was crucified and was resurrected, and the Tomb of the Virgin Mary. He commented that the role played by the Armenian Church, a small national church, is astonishing.

Karanian highlighted the rich

and prominent Armenian culture through examples of Armenian architecture, early Armenian writing in mosaics, and authentic Armenian ceramics shops. In the end he remarked that after his first journey to the Old City he felt more Armenian. He was proud of what the Armenians had and specifically the ability of the Armenian Church to rival the Greek and Catholic Churches in its dignity and wealth.

This snapshot of Jerusalem, the Armenian Quarter as well as other quarters, provided the illusion of having traveled there and back. Everyone was fascinated by the history and the stories that Karanian told which accompanied each equally captivating photograph. After the lecture, many of the older audience members shared their own experiences and memories, while the youth were inspired to someday take their own journey to the culturally and spiritually rich Armenian Quarter.

Mouraviev Reveals Secrets of Armenian Alphabet



Prof. La Porta, left, with Serge Mouraviev.

ARMEN ARIKIAN
STAFF WRITER

Photo: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

earlier alphabet known as the Danielian letters, is quite similar to the later formed *yerkatagir* alphabet. Mouraviev displayed many charts comparing the Danielian and Armenian alphabets. He pointed out many similarities in the shapes and sounds of the letters, using elaborate charts to support his theory.

The order of the Danielian and Armenian alphabets are nearly identical with a few minor differences. Mouraviev theorizes that Mashtots modified the now extinct Danielian alphabet to form the Armenian alphabet.

Mouraviev identified two main elements shared by the Danielian and Armenian alphabets. The primary distinction involves a U shape similar to the one in the Latin alphabet. This element is often seen in the present-day Armenian alphabet in capital letters such as ‘ayp’, ‘she’ and ‘men.’ The secondary distinctions are the horizontal lines that are used in many Armenian letters. According to Mouraviev, Mashtots used five basic Danielian letters to form 20 Armenian letters. Mashtots altered nineteen of the twenty letters. He kept seven primary distinctions, six secondary with modifications of basic elements,

and one unchanged Danielian letter. Mouraviev explained that Mashtots took the original shapes of the Danielian characters and made slight adjustments to them. Mashtots altered primary elements by adding or removing certain lines or curves of the Danielian characters. In the secondary elements, Mashtots replaces horizontal lines of the Danielian characters, with vertical lines, to form new Armenian letters.

The first twenty letters of the *yerkatagir* alphabet were old Danielian, and later four were newer Danielian. Thirty-six letters form the modern-day alphabet, which meant that Mashtots needed twelve more letters to complete the alphabet. He created the remaining letters by shifting existing Armenian letters by a specific amount of degrees to form letters to represent different Armenian sounds.

Mashtots’ formation of the 36 letters of the Armenian *yerkatagir* alphabet has sparked debate as some believe that Mashtots’ letters were completely new. The similarities between the Danielian and Armenian alphabets could be coincidental, but according to Mouraviev, the chances of that many similarities being accidental are very unlikely. He also suggested the reason the

All of Mouraviev’s theories and charts are included in his book, *Erkataguir: Les Trois Secrets De Mesrop Machtots* (in French).

Mouraviev described and displayed the earliest visual example of Mashtots’ alphabet, which was a monument dedicated to the unknown soldiers in Jerusalem. The monument was built by Bishop Jacob and the Catholicos between the fifth and sixth centuries. The Armenian inscription on the monument devoted to the memorial of the unknown soldiers reads “For the salvation of all Armenians, whose names only the Lord knows.” The effort and thought devoted to

Armenians on the Internet

Virtual Museum
of Komitas

ARMEN ARIKIAN-STAFF WRITER

Virtual Museum Of Komitas

<http://www.komitas.am>

Main Categories:

Biography, Work, Komitas-musicologist, Students, Poetry, Letters, Komitas and Genocide, Komitas’ illness, Gallery, Writers about Komitas, Researchers of Komitas, Arrangements of works, Komitas in the modern Armenia, Bibliography, Discography, Komitas Quartet, Links, About the project, Feedback.

Summary:

Soghomon Soghomonian, later known as the nineteenth century composer Komitas, remains a vital figure in Armenian folk music. The late Komitas is most remembered as a revolutionary music teacher and the founder of Armenian classical music. Many Armenians may be unaware that the Armenian songs they chant and sing during the Divine Liturgy, such as “Der Voghormia,” are composed by Komitas. All the struggles and accomplishments of Komitas’ life are organized and displayed on the Virtual Museum of Komitas online and can be viewed in English, Armenian, and Russian. Komitas had a tragic life, and many wonder about the causes of his death. The Virtual Museum’s website has a section devoted to the findings of the extensive research on his illness which may change perspectives on his tragic end.

The Virtual Museum holds the answers to many mysteries to Komitas but also shares some of the pleasant memories of the classicist. Komitas was a *vardapet*, a singer, a musicologist, and a poet. Komitas had a profound influence on Armenian Church music as he devoted years of his life to studying Armenian *sharakans*, organizing choirs, and forming Armenian folk orchestras. Komitas’ songs, poems, and philosophical ideas are also on the website. For those interested in studying Komitas’ life of tragedies and masterpieces, the Virtual Museum is a valuable source. The website also gives access to download many classical music compositions created by Komitas. The Virtual Museum of Komitas serves its purpose in displaying one of Armenia’s most influential and praised musicians, Komitas Vardapet, from the start of his life, to the end. The Virtual Museum gives the opportunity for Komitas to be respected and honored for his contribution to Armenian folk music.

the original *yerkatagir* alphabet nearly sixteen centuries ago made the modern written Armenian language a reality. Mashtots’ creation of the Armenian alphabet has been thoroughly examined by not only Mouraviev, but also many other scholars. Whether or not the Mashtots alphabet

was based off another alphabet or completely original, years of effort were dedicated to forming a written language for the Armenian people that still exists today. The Armenian culture is one of the few to have an alphabet whose even oldest inscriptions can be read to the present-day.

Congratulations to May 2011 ASP Graduating Students and Minors

Tamar Der Kevorkian

Major: Business Administration

Minor: Armenian Studies

What on-campus Armenian activities were you involved in?

I've been involved in ASO since I came to Fresno State in Fall 2006. I've gone to ASO meetings, fundraisers, guest lectures and commemorative Genocide events.

How did your involvement with the Armenian Studies Program affect your college experience?

I was able to be a part of a very unique college experience that Fresno State offers—being able to minor in Armenian Studies. My mom jokes and tells me that I know better Armenian than she does, even though she grew up in a Lebanese Armenian community and attended Armenian school her whole life. I've learned about everything from the Armenian language to architectural styles in Armenian churches and Armenian history. I met new Armenian friends and was able to connect and meet Armenian students in the same program as me and it gave me a sense of feeling at home with my group of Armenian friends.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

My favorite Armenian Studies event would definitely be the Armenian Film Festivals. I've gone every year since they started and love the wide array of films put on by Armenian directors. They have all been so creative in their own ways and show such great Armenian talent!

What did you enjoy most about your experience at Fresno State?

I've learned and grown so much as a person in my five years at Fresno State. I've become independent and am ready for the business world.

What are your plans after graduation?

I want to move to the Los Angeles area and find a Human Resources job at a corporation. I love the fast paced city life there that Fresno just doesn't have.



What are your plans after graduation?

I would like to find a job and a few years later, start a business of my own.

Nayiri Moundjian

Major: Business Administration

Minor: Armenian Studies

What on-campus Armenian activities were you involved in?

Throughout my years at Fresno State I was involved in the Armenian Genocide commemoration, as well as various ASO activities such as bowling night, basketball night, and so on.

How did your involvement with the Armenian Studies Program affect your college experience?

Being a part of the Armenian Studies Program got me to be more involved in my community and I have met wonderful people through the Program. I have gained much knowledge because of it and from it.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

By far my favorite event would have to be the annual April 24, Armenian Genocide commemoration that takes place in the Free Speech area. Through it I believe more and more people gained knowledge of the Genocide, though they may not have known about it before. Also my favorite Armenian classes were the Masterpieces of Armenian Culture and the various language courses.

What did you enjoy most about your experience at Fresno State?

I love our campus. It feels like home to me. I'm going to miss walking at speeds that people shouldn't walk to get from one class to the other that is across campus, just so I wouldn't be late.

What are your plans after graduation?

I plan to continue my education after graduation.



Kyle Gaede

Major: Anthropology

Minor: Armenian Studies

What on-campus Armenian activities were you involved in?

I have attended the Armenian Genocide commemorations, the Armenian Film Festivals, and the Armenian Studies lectures.

How did your involvement with the Armenian Studies Program affect your college experience?

It has given me the opportunity broaden my horizons and experience things which I don't believe are common to most State colleges.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

I have enjoyed every class I have taken in the Armenian Studies Program, however I think that going to Armenia in May with Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian and 13 other Fresno State students will probably be my favorite event.

What did you enjoy most about your experience at Fresno State?

Being able to focus on classes which I enjoyed involving both my major, Anthropology, and my minor, Armenian Studies.

What are your plans after graduation?

Immediately after returning from Armenia, I will be employed as an Archaeologist with the U.S. Forest Service.

Taline Kasparian

Major: Health Science

Minor: Armenian Studies

What on-campus Armenian activities were you involved in?

I attended a few Armenian club meetings. I went to many lectures and participated in many activities.

How did your involvement with the Armenian Studies Program affect your college experience?

My involvement with the Armenian Studies Program was probably the highlight of my college years. I met wonderful peers and I learned so much about my own ethnicity. I understand my history and value the Armenian culture so much more now than I ever have.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

My favorite Armenian Studies class was Armenian 148 (Masterpieces of Armenian Culture). I loved the literature and the stories!

What did you enjoy most about your experience at Fresno State?

I met life long friends. I loved the social aspect at Fresno State.



Ani Simonyan

Major: History

Minor: Armenian Studies

What on-campus Armenian activities were you involved in?

On campus, I was involved in Armenian Studies activities with other students and also took Armenian classes. I attended Armenian events with speakers on Armenian music, art, and history. I attended the Armenian Genocide memorial services here, as well as being at the Armenian Club booth. Additionally, I attended the Armenian Film Festival and activities with the club such as bowling, attending games, picnic etc.

How did your involvement with the Armenian Studies Program affect your college experience?

My involvement in the Armenian Studies program has greatly enhanced my college experience, by giving the Armenian youth an opportunity to experience an education in Armenian history, art, literature, dance, etc. My college experience was culturally enjoyable, inspirational, educational, and unforgettable. I am so grateful we have such a Program to connect the Armenian youth to their heritage and roots and reminds us of who were living here in distant lands. It has been one of my best college experiences that will stick with me throughout my life.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

I enjoyed all of the classes because each of them offered a new and unique learning experience. My most memorable classes, which I really enjoyed were Armenian Studies 20-Arts of Armenia and Arm 108A/B-Armenian history. However, I also enjoyed the Armenians in Fresno/Diaspora class and Armenian language classes. My favorite activities would have to be attending the events involving visiting professors, authors, and academic scholars to Fresno State and their lectures and presentations on important Armenian aspects. This experience is very memorable because you meet those scholars and individuals who enrich our culture and identity.

What did you enjoy most about your experience at Fresno State?

I have really enjoyed many aspects of Fresno State including the campus, faculty members, the Armenian Studies Program, along with the inspirational individuals I encountered throughout my years here. The learning experience and my growth as a person has been unforgettable and this is what I will take from Fresno State.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduation I will pursue my teaching credential in the Credential Program at Fresno State. I will begin teaching and my goal is to eventually become a school administrator. I plan on traveling and my first destination is without a doubt to go to Armenia where I will fulfill that personal connection.

Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Director Dr. Hayk Demoyan

TAMAR KARKAZIAN
EDITOR

The Armenian Genocide holds a special place in our hearts—every April Armenians come together to commemorate the loss of 1.5 million Armenians. Something that many Armenians connect to remembrance of the Armenian Genocide is the Armenian Martyrs Monument at Tsitsernakaberd. So it was a great honor to have Dr. Hayk Demoyan, Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia visit Fresno State as a speaker in the Armenian Studies Spring Lecture Series.

During his talk on Monday, March 21st, he discussed the past, present, and future plans of the Museum – Institute.

Before Dr. Demoyan began his presentation, a video clip from “Stefani’s Armenia” was shown to the audience. Stefani is local news anchor Stefani Booroojian, who recently was invited to Armenia to report on the growing tourism industry. Her news clips, produced on the trip, were shown over a one-week period on the nightly KSEE24 broadcasts, and included one segment that had an interview with Dr. Demoyan.

The Genocide Museum-Institute consists of 3 main components: the Museum, Tsitsernakaberd (the memorial monument) and a commemorative forest. The Museum is dedicated and focused solely on the

Genocide; it’s the only museum of its kind in the world. It contains lots of visual materials, photos, testimonials, as well as other artifacts. Many of these artifacts were donated by Armenian families to preserve history. The Museum has obtained so many items and exhibits that it will be expanded in the near future. In 2014 a new extension will be build to include classrooms, conference rooms, a library, and greater space for more exhibits.

Dr. Demoyan explained how the Museum is working with Armenian communities in major cities around the world to arrange for traveling exhibits on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Genocide in 2015.

The Tsitsernakaberd monument is the most known of the three areas. Annually, about 150,000 people from around the world come to visit this majestic monument. On April 24th over a million visitors pay their respects at the Monument, which was built in 1967.

The lesser-known area of the institute is the Memorial Forest. This is an area filled with trees planted by guest who pay official visits to Armenia, such as presidents, clergy, and political figures.

After describing the history of the Museum-Institute, Dr. Demoyan moved on to the “present” aspect of the institute. He went on to describe the exhibits at the Museum as well



Dr. Hayk Demoyan

Photo: Erica Magarian

as events hosted throughout the year.

One such event is one that honors the unlikely or rather hidden heroes of the Armenian Genocide, such as Clara Barton

from the Red Cross. This new tradition began in 1996 and still continues today. In 2007, the Institute began a website which is now available in 4 languages. Not only is it updated daily with new

information but it is the excellent resource on the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Demoyan described plans for the Centennial Anniversary Commemoration of the Genocide. “There is no distinction. We cannot select and divide ourselves... [the Genocide] is the main topic that unites us and we must work for the future.” And that is just what the Museum – Institute plans on doing.

The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute is ready to support Armenians around the world with information and resources needed to get the word out about the Armenian Genocide. Their philosophy is one of a humanitarian approach versus a political approach. Their goal is to interrelate history so that others view it as a humanitarian issue, not an issue of politics.

Dr. La Porta on Dante and Armenian Poets

ANDREW ESGUERRA
STAFF WRITER

On Wednesday, April 7th, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State, explored connections between the works of famed nineteenth century Armenian poets Bedros Tourian, Daniel Varujan, and Eghishe Charents to the medieval Italian poet Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), the author of the *Divine Comedy*.

The three parts of the *Divine Comedy*—the *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*—depict Dante’s journey from Hell, to Purgatory, and eventually to Paradise. One of the remarkable aspects of the poem is that it represents a pioneering work in the Italian language; until that time serious literature was written in Latin.

Dr. La Porta noted shared resonances between the Armenian poets and Dante. Although Dante was writing centuries earlier, Dr. La Porta pointed out that Armenian culture experienced a renaissance (*zart’onk’*, awakening, in Armenian) during the course of the nineteenth century. One aspect of that renaissance was the emergence of Modern Armenian as a literary language. In Dante’s laying of the foundation of the modern Italian language, Dr. La Porta suggested, Armenian writers saw a kindred enterprise to their own undertaking. Another aspect of the Armenian renaissance was the number of translations from classical and contemporary European literature first into classical Armenian and then into modern Armenian. Dr. La Porta described the numerous attempts of Armenian translators to render the *Divine Comedy* from the nineteenth century to the present. Particularly important in this regard were the efforts of the Mkhit’arist fathers in Venice.

Dr. La Porta then speculated on how three modern Armenian poets were informed by Dante’s *Inferno*. He first discussed Bedros Tourian’s “Murmurs.” Tourian (1851-72) invigorated modern Armenian with his poetry, although he died at the young age of 21. While it is uncertain



Photo: Erica Magarian

Dr. La Porta, center, after the lecture, with ASO members.

that Tourian read Dante, it is possible that he read some of the early translation of parts of the *Inferno*. Dr. La Porta suggested that Tourian’s image of himself as a dry leaf in autumn about to fall was inspired by Dante’s use of leaves falling in autumn to describe souls rushing to the boatman Charon to cross into the underworld.

The next poet Dr. La Porta discussed was Daniel Varujan (1884-1915). He indicated similarities between Varujan’s poem, “The Light,” and Dante’s *Inferno*, particularly Canto 1. He stressed that Varujan did not simply mimic Dante, but transformed Dante’s pilgrimage into a personal journey to find poetic inspiration.

Finally, Dr. La Porta looked at the famous Eastern Armenian poet, Eghishe Charents (1897-1937). He remarked that Dante clearly featured in Charents’s imagination throughout his life and we can almost trace the modern poet’s reading of Dante from youth through the end of his life. One of the earliest of Charents’s works is entitled “Dantean Legend,” written in 1915-16. It was written during his time as a volunteer soldier fighting against the Turkish army after the destruction of the region of Van at the outset of the Armenian Genocide. The poem is not only about the death and destruction of war, but also about the loss of innocence, of youth, and the gradual loss of life and its

meaning. Although allusions to the *Inferno* abound in the text, Dr. La Porta underscored that it was how Charents’s text differs from Dante’s that makes the Armenian poem so powerful. He especially noted that Charents does not descend into Hell, but that Hell manifests itself on earth.

Dr. La Porta then turned to Charents’s poem, “Vision of Death”, composed when Charents was 36, and which adopts a more formalistic resemblance to the *Inferno*. The poet travels into the underworld, guided by Dante himself, and meets with various Armenian ideologues. According to Dr. La Porta, Charents’s journey into hell is into the past, and into the vain glorifications of the nation; his paradise is defined by communism, “the steed that is heading into the future”.

Dr. La Porta finally looked at a posthumously published poem of Charents in which he describes waking up in his study and looking at a portrait of Dante and Petrarch in paradise. The poem was likely written in the final year of Charents’s life before he was arrested by the Stalinist authorities and after he had already been isolated and betrayed by many of his fellow artists and compatriots. According to Dr. La Porta, in this poem Dante’s meaning for Charents has once again transformed; “he—along with Petrarch, that other father of the Italian language—represents the one who can write his way into heaven.”

GRADUATING SENIORS, FROM PAGE 4



Harut Mesrobian
Major: Civil Engineering

What on-campus Armenian activities were you involved in?

I was most involved in the Armenian Students Organization. Most importantly, the character exhibited by members of the organization and the environment of the activities was phenomenal. Because of such camaraderie I always enjoyed being active within the organization.

How did your involvement with the Armenian Studies Program affect your college experience?

The Armenian Studies Program not only solidified my connection with the Armenian community in Fresno, it also enhanced my awareness of our rich Armenian heritage. Along with these, involvement in the Program has inspired me to contribute and be involved more in Armenian cultural organizations and activities. It is something that not all institutions offer, I am grateful for having had the chance to do so.

What was your favorite Armenian Studies class, activity, or event?

Every aspect of the Armenian Studies Program was remarkable. From the amazing activities organized by the Armenian Students Organization, the guest speakers and their captivating lectures, and the fascinating courses in Armenian language, literature, and history. It is such a privilege to have taken part in the features offered by the Armenian Studies Program.

What did you enjoy most about your experience at Fresno State?

The experience I have enjoyed most has been the pleasure of meeting so many new people. Be it colleagues in my line of study or individuals from other areas, establishing a sense of fellowship with new people is such a fulfilling sentiment. It is because of these occasions my study at Fresno State has been so much more worthwhile.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduation, I plan to attend California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, in Fall 2011, where I will study and obtain a Master of Science degree in Civil Engineering.



Left to Right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Fresno State President Dr. John Welty, and Dr. Sergio La Porta.

Photo: Joseph Vasquez

ASP BANQUET, FROM PAGE 1

each made brief introductory remarks.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Fresno State Dr. William Covino spoke about the state of the University, and articulated a vision for the University's future.

"California State University will become nationally recognized for education that transforms students and improves the quality of life in the region and beyond," Dr. Covino said. "We will power the new California through the 21st century."

Dr. Covino commented on Dr. Welty's advocacy and dedication for the Armenian Studies program, a commitment that has been important for the Fresno community and the university.

"This program [the Armenian Studies Program] is a golden thread in the fabric of the university," Dr. Covino said.

A photomontage honoring Dr. Welty and his tenure at Fresno State prepared by the Armenian Studies Program was then presented. Among the memorable photos were images of Dr. Welty over the years with special guests of the Armenian Studies Program, which showed Dr. Welty's commitment to the Armenian community. Included among the special memories was an extraordinary visit from His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians in 2005 and Dr. Welty's visit to Fresno States' sister-university Yerevan State University in 2004.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian then introduced Dr. Welty, who is now completing his twentieth year as President of Fresno State.

Dr. Welty was welcomed with a warm round of applause from the audience and then gave the keynote address.

"The opportunity that I had to learn more about the Armenian culture and to work with so many members of the Armenian community, that has been one of the very special highlights of my years at Fresno State," Dr. Welty said. "You have made a major contribution to our intellectual life, you also have made a major contribution to demonstrating that education is important."

Dr. Welty's address ended with a passionate call for a reinvestment in the education of our community, and of the state's universities. "We have to invest in education if we're going to have a community in which our children and our grandchildren will want to live."

On behalf of the Program, Prof. Der Mugrdechian and Prof. La Porta presented Dr. Welty a gift of a painting by noted local artist Varaz Samuelian.

Prof. Der Mugrdechian then introduced students who were recipients of Armenian Studies scholarships and also the executive officers of the ASO. Forty-seven students were called upon to come to the front of the Hall, with each receiving a letter of recognition from Senator Dianne Feinstein and special gift from the ASP, Garin K. Hovannisian's book *Family of Shadows*.

Guests enjoyed a very memorable evening as the Armenian Studies Program organized a beautiful celebration of another year of educational, academic and community-wide success.

Author Arax Fills Tatarian Chair at Fresno State

EVELYN DEMIRCHIAN

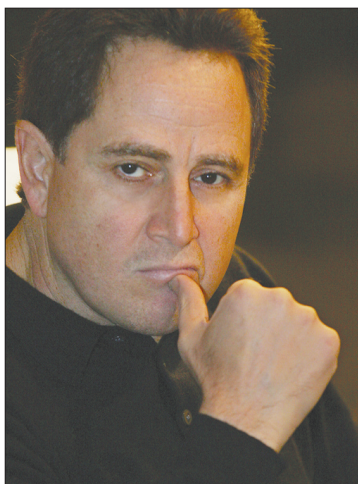
STAFF WRITER

Award winning author, journalist, and Fresno State alumnus Mark Arax returned this academic year to fill a position named after his former mentor, the Roger Tatarian Chair in the Department of Mass Communications and Journalism. Arax, who also graduated from Columbia University, forged a name for himself as a top investigative reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, before leaving the newspaper after editors tried to censor an article he wrote about the Armenian Genocide.

Arax has written three well-received books: *In My Father's Name*, a memoir where he returned to the Central Valley to investigate the 1972 murder of his father; *King of California*, which detailed the rise of cotton entrepreneur James G. Boswell; and most recently *West of the West*, a collection of short stories that reinterprets the portrait of modern California.

How does it feel coming back to Fresno State?

It's pretty rare in life when you can come full circle; when you start someplace and 30 years later you come back to that place. So, here's a man [Tatarian] who, except for my father and grandfather, shaped me the most...and sent me on this kind of journey. And then I come back and sit however temporarily in that Chair, it's one of those prodigal son come home kind of things. It feels right, it feels good.



Mark Arax

Photo: ASP Archive

What has been your involvement with the Armenian community?

When you're a writer, a journalist, you have to be an outsider. Even to your culture in some ways. Your loyalty is only to stay true to the story you're trying to tell. You can't be a propagandist. My training required me to do a juggle. I love my Armenian roots, they gave me so much of my sensibilities, but I had to put them aside. When you are a writer the Armenian experience can suffocate you, the Armenian narrative can suffocate you. A writer ultimately has to be exiled. Yet, with the books I've written, it's honoring my roots and finding so much of my storytelling having to do with Armenians that's been that connection.

What can you say about your latest book, *West of the West*?

I can't say that my writing is consciously Armenian or that it's consciously about Armenians. Yet

it is the Armenian spirit and the Armenian stories that you seek to tell. I'm telling the story of California, the journeys that make this place. All roads that lead to California are long roads.

Do you feel any regrets about the *LA Times* controversy?

I had so assiduously, so diligently, tried to keep a distance, and here I do this story and all of a sudden, I'm an Armenian. We haven't learned how to tell our story. We don't encourage our kids to become writers and filmmakers. We keep waiting for Atom Egoyan to do *Musa Dagh*, and why should he? We haven't been very effective at telling our story to the world, but we're getting better at it.

What social issues have been closest to your heart?

The plight of the Palestinians and the corruption of global government. The Ponzi scheme and California sprawl. I'm passionate about corruption issues.

How do you reflect on your time now coming back to Fresno State?

It's again that idea of coming full circle. I was a troublemaker back then and I'm still a troublemaker. I've returned to the scene of the crime.

Arax is currently teaching a writing course, freelancing for the New York Times, working as a full time policy researcher for the California State Senate, and working on his next book.

Eench Ga Chga?

How do you feel the Genocide affects Armenians?

TAMAR KARKAZIAN

EDITOR



Armen Melidonian

It is as if every Armenian is born into this position of feeling responsible to remember the Armenian Genocide and to ask one's self: "I am here and I exist; now what?" It's one thing to merely say "I must survive" and it's another thing to say "I must thrive." I'm sure that's what every Armenian who died in the Genocide would truly want.

Ann Arpy Sghomonian

The Genocide is a major part of the Armenian identity, though most people don't know it. Every one of us has suffered

from it and all future generations will suffer until it is recognized as a Genocide by the world. It should be recognized because it is such an empty hole in the history of the world. It was swept under a rug and hidden from even those nations that helped Armenia during and after the horrific acts of the Young Turks. Until this Genocide is recognized, many people will continue to be persecuted throughout the world. This is no longer only an Armenian issue, this is a global issue.



Vartush Mesropyan

The Turkish government tried to eliminate the Armenian identity but was unable to. We, as Armenians, are here to stay, and grow. A Genocide that tried to destroy a whole nation only hurt the hearts of its people but the people still stand strong and powerful and still fight to prove that the Genocide did happen.



Photos: Barlow Der Mugrdechian

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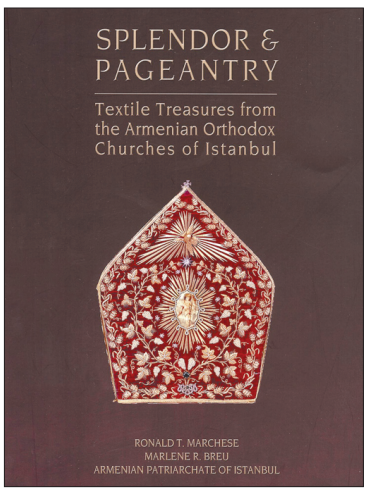
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BOOKS, FROM PAGE 2

Ara Sarafian, Gomidas Institute, London, England, for the DVD, *The Blue Book: Witnessing History*, (Ani Sounds Productions: 2009) (Running time 77 minutes). This is a documentary by Gagik Karaghuezian, tracing the work of archival historian Ara Sarafian, who began a campaign in 2005 to oppose the efforts of Turkish parliamentarians in London to deny the Armenian Genocide of 1915. His opposition took

him to Turkey, where he addressed Turkish historian and diplomats. Sarafian also visits and identifies the death valleys of Eastern Turkey, where so many Armenians were murdered.

Martin M. Tourigian, Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, for a gift of sixty-nine water-color pictures and an archival album, with letters he has sent to various organizations and leaders.

Armenian Studies Program
2010-2011 Scholarships and Grants

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Harry and Mary Topoozian Armenian Studies Merit Scholarship Fund

Norma and Bob Der Mugrdechian Armenian Studies Endowed Scholarship Fund

Ani Simonyan, Fresno, History

DER MUGRDECHIAN,
FROM PAGE 1

spoke on “Armenian-American Literature: The First Generation.” Both lectures were given in conjunction with the Kazan Visiting Professorship series

Most of us try to keep the memory alive of the great injustice done to the Armenian people between the years 1915 and 1923; however, survivors who had escaped to America often remained silent about what they had witnessed and suffered, at the most subtly hinting to it in their writings. It was not until the later generations of Armenian-Americans writers, the children and grandchildren of the survivors who had escaped to the United States, that the stories and the theme of genocide arose in Armenian-American literature. Unlike their parents who were born into an Armenian identity, the latter generations either felt the conflict between their new American identity and their Armenian heritage or tried to shed the Armenian identity to better acculturate into American society. Early in the twentieth century American society had pushed ethnic groups to blend into the dominant culture.

The 1960s presented the next major step for sharing the experience of the Genocide with the world. As ethnic pride grew concurrently with the social changes at the time, the third generation reasserted the memory of the Genocide. They took the family histories passed on to them and incorporated it as part of their own American identity.

“Every generation must interpret or reinterpret the past to gain a sense of identity,” explained Prof. Der Mugrdechian. Authors that he used to demonstrate

ARMENIAN SERIES, FROM PAGE 1

The Press earlier published three Armenian-related titles: William Saroyan’s *An Armenian Trilogy*, ed. Dickran Kouymjian (1986); *Warsaw Visitor and Tales from the Vienna Streets*, ed. Dickran Kouymjian (1990); and Berge Bulbulian’s *Fresno Armenians* (1990).

In 1998, thanks to a generous donation by Henry S. Khanzadian Kazan, the M. Victoria Karagozian Kazan and Henry S. Khanzadian Kazan Fund for Research, Publications, and Conferences in the Armenian Studies Program was established. After a discussion with Dean Samiian about establishing an Armenian Series at The Press, two titles have been published, with a third to released soon.

The first in the Armenian Series was William Saroyan’s, *Young Saroyan ‘Follow’ and Other Early Writings* edited by William B. Secrest Jr., with an introduction and analysis by Dickran Kouymjian. The second work is *The Artist and His Mother* by Pete Najarian. Der Mugrdechian announced the next title in the Armenian Series will be *Armenian Poetry of Our Time*, translated by Diana Der Hovanessian. This much anticipated book contains the poetic work of 117 poets,

“Don Juan Avia” Comedy in Fresno



Cast of the “Don Juan Avia”comedy.

The comedic play “Don Juan Avia” played at Fresno State on March 27th, as part of its American and Canadian tour, organized by Levon Travel of Glendale. An audience of over three hundred thoroughly enjoyed the show.

this were Peter Balakian, Peter Najarian, Micheline Aharonian Marcom, Nancy Kricorian and David Kherdian. In their works the Genocide serves as a collective symbol for empowerment and a way to reconnect with an Armenian identity. Their openness about the catastrophe and ability to express it serves as the bridge to future generations (and other interested people) to learn and communicate about the Genocide as well.

Other motifs are also shared between this iteration of Armenian-American writers. Peter Balakian, known for his book *Black Dog of Fate*, uses them: a grandmother, who shares the history of Armenia and the story of the Genocide and a starkly contrasting male figure, who is largely absent in his work. His grandmother represents Armenia, according to Prof. Der Mugrdechian. While in Balakian’s childhood he hears nothing about the Genocide, others have very

RUSSELL, FROM PAGE 1

Dr. Russell stated that although Medzarents did not die from the wound, due to his suffering, “... he was murdered.”

In his presentation Dr. Russell recited the poem “Sparks” in Armenian, while also distributing handouts of his English translations and analytical notes. In “Sparks,” each stanza expresses the intoxication, beauty, and marvel of an ecstasy using different senses. The first stanza uses the sense of sound, the second uses visual imagery, the third stanza uses the sense of smell, and the fourth stanza combines the different senses. The poem is about immortality and makes reference to the story of the pagan Armenian god Vahakn, as recorded by the classical historian Movses Khorenatsi. It is, as Russell describes, “the assembly of all the weaponry” of Armenian poetry over the years.

Dr. Russell read “The Song of Life” in Armenian and noted that its phonetic structure repeats the sound “rev,” such as in “arev,”

originally written in Armenian. They have been translated into English by the award-winning poet Der Hovanessian, who is considered the dean of Armenian-American poets and a well

open families that reveal the tragic family past. Peter Najarian grows up hearing of the Genocide frequently, yet he still draws upon the need to solidify the connection with his heritage by exploring the Genocide, the one symbol that connects almost all Armenian families.

As each generation succeeded the last and had to transmit the experiences of the Armenian Genocide to their children, the Armenians opened up their story to the world. Through literature, the Armenians overcame the lingering shock that kept the direct witnesses to the great injustice mostly silent. As each new generation continually expresses the stories from the scarred generation, we resolve to never be silenced or let our voices be silenced about the injustice. We build a bridge for future generations and other cultures to understand what it means to be Armenian.

the Armenian word for sun. “The Dream of the Silk Worm” uses imagery familiar to Pengian, where silk was produced. These poems reflect about Medzarents’ upbringing. “Would, Would That I Were,” an excerpt from the poetry cycle “Ellayi, Ellayi,” is influenced by Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Bells,” expressing sound through repetition in the structure of each stanza.

Dr. Russell has been translating Armenian poetry for many years and pointed out that in translating the poems one develops a “pulse” and that the subconscious then catches up, developing a sense for the embedded style and rhetoric of the original Armenian text. He explains that as he translates the poetry, he reflects from two perspectives. One, as an Armenologist, considering what historical and cultural references the poet is making in the works, and second he is using his insight on poetry in the English language and considering comparisons to works of authors like Blake and Poe.

recognized poet in her own right. The poets themselves are from many different areas of the world where Armenians live, and represent a cross-section of older and younger poets.



TheAraxArmenianDancers. L.to R.:Michael Rettig, PhillipDer Mugrdechian, Vicken Abassian, and Lucas Der Mugrdechian.

APRIL 24, FROM PAGE 1

Guest speaker Fresno County Supervisor Debbie Poochigian gave a touching speech, recounting stories of her own grandmother and her husband’s grandmother, both survivors of the Genocide.

Vicken Abassian, Phillip Der Mugrdechian, Lucas Der Mugrdechian, and Michael Rettig of the Arax Dancers Armenian presented three traditional Armenian dances: “Loree,” “Vagharshapat,” and “Jojan.” The dancers attracted much attention from students who were impressed by the unique style and music of the dances, choreographed by Arax Dancer director Zar Der Mugrdechian.

The reading of William Saroyan’s piece “The Armenian and the Armenian” by middle school student Nareg Apkarian, high school student Shahan Ohanian, and college student Lilit Grigoryan, reinforced the idea of a united Armenia and unified Armenians.

The Commemoration concluded with Tatevik Hovhannissyan, Faten Kassabian, Ruzan Orkusyan, and Emma

Shaljyan singing an emotional rendition of “Cilicia,” while the audience members placed carnations on the replica of the Armenian Martyrs Monument.

It was an exciting and emotional event that Armenians

hour documentary examined what happened and why, in what has been called one of the greatest untold stories of the twentieth century. A candlelight vigil was held after the movie. Attendees were provided with candles, and then walked to the Free Speech area while listening solemnly to the enchanting melody of “Dele Yaman.”

At the Free Speech area a moment of silence was held for the 1.5 million victims of the Genocide. The year 1915 had been drawn in chalk on the concrete with votive candles lighting the numbers. ASO President Karkazian and Vice President Vartush Mesropyan gave some brief remarks. To conclude the vigil, everyone joined together in singing *Der Voghormia* [Lord Have Mercy]. It was a very emotional evening and everyone enjoyed the event.

These two events brought together Armenians of all ages and



The ASO night vigil took place in the Free Speech area.

and non-Armenians alike enjoyed. It was encouraging to see so many people attend the event and still many more students stop by on their way to class.

The events continued on Tuesday night, when the Armenian Students Organization featured a screening of the documentary “The Armenian Genocide” This one-

backgrounds. It was truly touching to see so many Armenians come together to mourn, but more importantly to remind the world that the Armenians stand strong.



L. to R.: Faten Kassabian, Emma Shaljyan, Tatevik Hovhannissyan, and Ruzan Orkusyan.



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ASO President Tamar Karkazian, right, with ASO Vice President Vartush Mesropyan at the Genocide Commemoration.

in their dedication and pride of culture. As a community, ASO reiterated that no matter how many

years pass, students will never forget the history of the Armenian people and the atrocities of 1915.

ASO Activities

TAMAR KARKAZIAN
EDITOR

The month of April is a solemn time for Armenians around the world, as they come together to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. This year ASO decided that the goal would be to not only remember the Armenian Genocide, but to also honor the 1.5 million Armenians who died.

Fifteen students served as members of the Genocide Commemoration Committee—they began meeting in late January to work on making April a success. One goal was to raise awareness on campus and a second goal was to do something to honor the victims and to show the world, especially the Turkish government, that Armenians are strong and will always help each other.

The ASO designed and sold t-shirts with a Genocide theme, which were very popular with students and the community.

ASO teamed up with the Central Valley Blood Center to raise awareness to accomplish their first goal. Fresno State students who donated blood were given a brochure about the Genocide. Andrew Esguerra, who headed these efforts said “We wanted to reach as many students

as possible but had fun doing it too.”

Another way to raise awareness was by hosting a series of events on campus to commemorate the Genocide. “I really liked the commemoration; it was short and sweet yet covered every aspect of the Genocide,” said Ani Grigoryan.

The activities continued on Tuesday. “We held the vigil to symbolize what we have struggled through and show that 1915 will never happen again,” said ASO Vice- President Vartush Mesropyan.

The series of activities ended on Wednesday, April 27th, with Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian’s lecture on “The Theme of Genocide in 20th Century Armenian- American Literature.”

ASO also hosted “Love in a Shoebox,” where people were asked to donate a shoebox full of goodies for Armenian orphans.

“We wanted to give back to our people and those who are less fortunate,” explained ASO treasurer Tatevik Hovhanissyan.

In the end, ASO was very happy to see their hard work pay off and to see the success of the events.

ASO didn’t want to just focus on the events of the past for the whole spring semester so they organized a scavenger hunt, on April 9th as well.

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