



## NAASR Hires Talented New Executive Director

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research is pleased to announce that Silva Sedrakian will serve as its next Executive Director, starting on December 1, 2021. NAASR is one of the leading nonprofit Armenian Studies organizations in the world, founded in 1955.

Sedrakian is an accomplished non-profit manager, having worked for nearly 15 years at Ox-fam America, an international organization addressing urgent humanitarian needs and striving to end poverty and injustice. As NAASR's new Executive Director, she will manage the day-to-day operations. Sarah Ignatius, who is retiring as Executive Director, will serve as Executive Advisor during the transition and into 2022.

"Silva is an outstanding choice. We are eager to welcome her as Executive Director," said Yervant Chekijian, Chairman, NAASR Board of Directors. "She has an excellent combination of skills and experience well-suited to NAASR's next phase of expansion, collaboration, and growth, speaking several languages including Eastern Armenian, working for many years in various areas, including academia, non-profit, and corporate, and having an international background and receiving her undergraduate degree in Armenian Studies in France, and earning an MBA from Northeastern University. During our five-month search, we were impressed by the caliber of  
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## NAASR Virtual Gala Honors Vartan Gregorian

By Harry Kezelian

For the first time, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) held its gala virtually due to the ongoing pandemic and restrictions on gatherings in the country and in Massachusetts in particular.

The venerable institution, which since the 1950s has helped found many of the Armenian Studies chairs at universities around the US—starting with Harvard—was slated to celebrate the legacies of legendary public intellectual Vartan Gregorian and philanthropist Edward Avedisian this year. The theme of this year was "Building for Eternity," in reference to the construction of the organization's new headquarters, plans for the future, and the symbol of Armenian culture, the "eternity sign," a representation of which is in front of the building in the form of a Michael Aram creation.

Avedisian is the primary benefactor of the new NAASR headquarters. When it was suggested by NAASR Board Chair Yervant Chekijian that the building be named after him, Avedisian replied "Who am I? The building should be named for a scholar, like Vartan Gregorian."



Dr. Noubar Afeyan pays tribute to Vartan Gregorian



NAASR Board member & benefactor Edward Avedisian

Gregorian had accepted the honor, as well as the invitation to speak at this year's event, before his untimely passing.

The gala, like so many other events of the past year, was held "virtually"—that is, it was livestreamed as a Zoom meeting to a group of viewers who signed up beforehand. The program consisted of speeches, video footage of the new building, and montages of past NAASR events and of the lives of Avedisian and Gregorian. A fundraising pitch was given throughout the hour-long program, giving it the feel of a telethon.

Moderna CEO Noubar Afeyan paid tribute to Gregorian. Afeyan, who had worked with Gregorian on numerous Armenian causes, including the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative which they cofounded with Ruben Vardanyan—spoke glowingly of his longtime friend. Gregorian's unique makeup was the product of the multiplication—not merely the addition—of wisdom, compassion, curiosity, and devotion, Afeyan opined.

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Sarah Ignatius, second from right, with NAASR co-workers Laura Yardumian, Marc Mamigonian, Silva Sedrakian, and Ani Babaian

## Fond Farewell from Sarah Ignatius

It is hard to say farewell as NAASR's Executive Director. This has been the best job of my life. So, my primary message is one of profound thanks and gratitude. The challenges at times seemed daunting but the rewards immense and far more gratifying than I ever imagined when I accepted the position six years ago.

It has been my privilege and honor  
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## NAASR's Capital Campaign Tops \$7.4 Million

We are delighted to report, thanks to the generosity of all of you as well as our principal building donors Edward and Pamela Avedisian, that the capital campaign for NAASR's Vartan Gregorian building has raised over \$7.4 million, which will cover the entire cost of construction, once completely collect-

ed, and start an Eternity Endowment Fund to ensure our headquarters' longevity and safeguard its financial well-being for future generations. We can't wait to welcome you back when it is safe to reopen to the general public. The building is currently open by appointment.

## A Busy 2021: 52 Weeks, 52 Programs

In 2021, NAASR organized, hosted, or co-sponsored some 52 programs—lectures, panels, conferences, seminars, screenings. As one looks at the expanse of programs over the past year, one sees not just a lot of programs but more importantly a rather astonishing range of subjects.

Art and architecture—both their history and analysis as well as their current, sometimes endangered condition; language and literature—from medieval Armenian texts to current day memoirs exploring questions of identity; the deep past of Armenia as told by the archeological record and the current state of Armenia's politics and struggles; the Armenian genocide—both the historical record and the philosophical and ethical ramifications of the genocide and its denial; the role of women and feminist thought, both historically and in today's world; cinema, performing arts, and photography.

In brief, while quantity is important and impressive, the trademark of NAASR's work has been and will continue to be its quality, its breadth, and depth, and the high level of collaboration and cooperation that exists between NAASR and a long list of partners in the academic world and the Armenian community which is the result of years of establishing and sustaining relationships.

While we eagerly await the day when in-person events become a regular occurrence again, we also greatly appreciate the many kind messages we have received from members and friends around the world expressing their thanks for the variety of programs and the fact that they can attend events that in the past would have been in-person only.

Links to virtually every 2021 program can be found on our website at <https://naasr.org/blogs/events-1>.

## *Fond Farewell from Sarah Ignatius*

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to have been part of this transformative period. I am deeply grateful to NAASR for giving me this amazing opportunity. My grandfather, Hovsep Ignatius, who had donated to NAASR in the very early years, would be very proud. I have to admit, though, that he would have been very proud of all of his family, no matter what we did.

NAASR is in extremely capable hands with our talented new Executive Director Silva Sedrakian, who is already off to a great start, as of December 1. Her skills and experience will help NAASR serve its global mission, and I am sure you will enjoy working with her. I will stay on as Executive Advisor into 2022 to ease the transition.

NAASR is perfectly positioned for the future with unlimited possibilities for programming, scholar support, research, and collaborations throughout the U.S., Armenia and worldwide, while retaining our academic excellence due to the myriad talents of our full-time staff:

- Director of Academic Affairs Marc Mamigonian, who serves as a researcher and scholar in his own right, moderator and presenter at NAASR programs, and trusted colleague and collaborator worldwide;
- Library Curator Ani Babaian, whose multi-lingual fluency, conservation skills, and hard work have led to the tremendous growth in the depth, breadth, and prominence of our rare book Mardigian Library, which now totals over 31,800 catalogued items.
- Program and Administrative Associate Laura Yardumian, whose tech-savvy skills, careful work, and supportive member outreach have created our welcoming online bookstore with over 1,000 titles, as well as our informative website and social media postings.

Constructing our spectacular new headquarters has been a central focus. I feel inspired each time I walk past the monumental Eternity Sculpture out front, created by Michael Aram, and look up at our soaring building, remembering the aging one it replaced. Opening our beautifully hand-carved front door and entering the Garden Atrium brings an uplifting feeling of light and warmth, thanks to our extraordinary architects, designers, and engineers at SMMA.

I will be forever grateful that we were able to open our new headquarters on schedule on November 1, 2019, and that Vartan Gregorian could be there in person to celebrate with the hundreds who gathered on that cold and windy day before events unfolded in 2020 in ways no one could have predicted. We feel his presence every day in the building that bears his name as his smiling image greets us with his remarkable message that a library stands for hope, literacy, self-improvement, freedom of speech, and freedom of thought.

I am grateful for the dedication and generosity of our Board of Directors and Executive Committee and want to recognize the outstanding leadership, vision, and hard work of our Chairman Yervant Chekijian during this time of rapid growth to bring us to where we are today.

I am also thankful for all of our loyal Leadership Circle members, donors, supporters, and members through the decades and all of our very generous building donors with Edward and Pamela Avedisian as principal benefactors. Their exceptional altruism and belief in NAASR have made this magnificent building a reality as a living legacy of Armenian culture and heritage for future generations.

I am proud to have served such an inspiring organization with its long history and integrity to its mission as one of the foremost organizations in the world advancing Armenian Studies. Recent scholar grants underscore the dynamism in the field today and the essential focus on Artsakh. Thank you for the privilege of working for NAASR. I couldn't have found a better calling. And I hope we will always remain in touch. At 70, I am now looking forward to some creative writing and hard-hitting tennis!





# NAASR Virtual Gala Honors Vartan Gregorian

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“Vartan redefined the meaning of extraordinary,” he stated, and like a sports hero who redefines the game once in a generation, Gregorian redefined what it means to be a humanist, humanitarian, teacher, and leader. Afeyan also shared one of Gregorian’s favorite quotes, from Bertolt Brecht: “Cursed is the land that needs heroes.” Certainly, this quote unfortunately applies to Armenia and the Armenians now and through most of history.

Chekijian spoke about Avedisian, a classically trained symphony clarinetist, who made his fortune in investments and gives back to the Armenian community through his service on the boards of NAASR, the American University of Armenia, and the Armenian Missionary Association of America.



Prof. Sebouh Aslanian of UCLA

Chekijian shared his own long history with NAASR starting when he first arrived in the United States from Jerusalem in the 1950s and attended the victory banquet celebrating the establishment of the Armenian Studies chair at Harvard.

As Chekijian described it, Avedisian pushed him and the rest of the board to be more ambitious with the plans for NAASR’s new center. Avedisian had a vision for a world-class institution as the headquarters of NAASR and he has a similar vision for Armenia—to invest in the education of the next generation. For this reason, he has founded a K-12 school named for his parents in the Malatia-Sebastia district of Yerevan, as well be-



Chairman Yervant Chekijian

coming a major donor to the American University of Armenia where one of the main buildings is named for his late brother.

A slideshow of Avedisian’s life was accompanied by a recording of him playing clarinet in a classical piece composed by Rouben Gregorian for clarinet and string orchestra. The affable Avedisian then appeared on the screen, standing in a casual pose next to an image of Vartan Gregorian inside the new NAASR building. He spoke warmly from the heart and his enthusiasm for Armenian causes and NAASR was evident.

Avedisian mentioned that he wanted NAASR to be a home and center for all Armenians, to study, do research, hold meetings, and even relax in the presence of the accumulated knowledge of history. He encouraged an open-door policy to welcome the Armenian community and for the center to truly be a part of the community.

Avedisian also discussed his memories of the late Vartan Gregorian and offered some insights into what made the great man “tick.” One point he emphasized was Gregorian’s motto of “my

word is my bond,” pointing out that Gregorian turned down the presidency of Columbia University because he had promised Brown University—in word, not in a contract—that he would stay at the helm there until he raised \$1 billion for the school’s endowment.

NAASR Executive Director Sarah Ignatius and Academic Director Marc Mamigonian had opened the program with a video tour of the new NAASR premises. Ignatius spoke about how her grandfather, Hovsep Ignatius, a native of Kharpert, donated to the first NAASR campaign. Mamigonian discussed the various ways in which NAASR helps the Armenian Studies community with grants and other programs. He pointed out that while there are an impressive 30,000 books (on Armenian topics) in NAASR’s library, to put it in context, 60,000 books have been published on the American Civil War alone. By that reckoning there is still much work to do in the various fields of Armenian Studies.

Various scholars also spoke, thanking NAASR for their support and funding of their work and that of other scholars in the field. They included Dr. Lisa Gulesserian of Harvard, Dr. Hourii Berberian of the University of California-Irvine, Dr. Sebouh Aslanian of UCLA, PhD student Carla Kekejian of the University of Utah, and Tufts graduate Olivia Hintlian. Dr. Theo Maarten van Lint, Armenian Chair at Oxford University, gave a particularly touching message, describing NAASR as a “decisive force for good” in the academic community and in the world.

Dr. Nazareth Darakjian representing the Armenian Missionary Association of America, and AUA president Dr. Karin Markides, both spoke about Avedisian and thanked him for his many contributions to their respective organizations.

The gala was concluded by final messages from Chekijian, Ignatius, and Mamigonian.

(*Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, June 24, 2021)

## NAASR Hires Talented New Executive Director

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the candidates and are delighted Silva will be joining NAASR as the new Executive Director.”

“NAASR will benefit immensely from Silva’s expertise in nonprofit management, her experience in building international partnerships, and her fluency in multiple languages to help NAASR serve its global mission,” said Judith Saryan, First Vice Chair, NAASR Board of Directors. “We were also impressed with her strong commitment and enthusiasm for NAASR’s mission, her dedication to Armenian Studies, as well as her leadership style rooted in respect, humility, hard work, integ-

riety, and humor. She has a rare combination of skills that will serve the organization extremely well, and we look forward to working with her.”

“I am honored and thrilled that the Board has put their trust in me,” said Sedrakian. “I am impressed by the talented and dedicated Board and staff and am eager to work with them and the many NAASR members and supporters around the world,” she said.

At Oxfam America, Sedrakian specialized in program planning, monitoring and evaluation, led strategic planning processes, developed grant proposals, defined new partnership strategies with local and global organizations, and improved organizational practices and metrics aligned with Board strategy. She is also an adjunct faculty at the School for International Training in Brattleboro, VT, teaching

monitoring, evaluation, and learning concepts and practices for sustainable development programs.

She received her Bachelor of Arts in Middle Eastern Civilization, Classical Arabic, Armenian & Japanese Studies at the National Institute of Oriental Languages in France. She earned a Master of Business Administration from Northeastern University.

She also has a certificate in Impact Investing from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies and a Certificate in Community Management from the World Bank.

Sedrakian speaks English, French, Armenian, and Farsi and has some knowledge of Arabic and Japanese. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Armenian Heritage Park and is a member of the Armenian Relief Society.

# NAASR and Gulbenkian Foundation Continue to Explore Contemporary Issues

2021 marked the fifth year of the renowned NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues. Ten programs covering a wide range of subjects were held as part of the series, continuing its vital function as a forum for serious discussions of current affairs in the Armenian world. Recordings of all programs are available on YouTube.

**February 21:** “Armenia in 3D: Democracy, Security, and Sovereignty in an Uncertain World,” panel with the co-editors of and two contributors to *Armenia’s Velvet Revolution: Authoritarian Decline and Civil Resistance in a Multipolar World* (I.B. Tauris, 2020), Laurence Broers, Anna Ohanyan, Kristin Cavoukian, Richard Giragosian, moderated by Marc Mamigonian. Co-sponsored by NAASR/Gulbenkian Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues and Society for Armenian Studies.

**March 24:** Panel, “‘Getting the Truth Out’: Academia, Activism, and the War on Armenia(ns),” with Bryan Ardouny, Christina Maranci, Henry Theriault, Aram Hamparian. Moderated by Marc Mamigonian. Sponsored by NAASR / Gulbenkian Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues.

**March 27:** Tatul Hakobyan, “Valley of Death: A 44-Day Catastrophe,” co-sponsored by AGBU Ararat, Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (Ramgavar), Armenian Network of America—Greater NY, Justice Armenia, Knights of Vartan-Bakradouny Lodge, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues, St. Leon Armenian Church.



FUNDAÇÃO CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN

**June 22:** Panel, “Back to the Ballot Box: The June Elections in Armenia and the Stakes for Statehood,” with Nerses Kopalyan, Harout Manougian, and Anna Ohanyan, moderated by Marc A. Mamigonian. Sponsored by NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues.

**June 30:** Panel, “A Master Plan? Russo-Azeri Strategy for Armenian Pacification,” with Lilit Gevorgyan and Armen Kharazian, co-sponsored by Ararat-Eskijian Museum, Armenian Bar Association, Armenian Democratic Liberal Party/Ramgavars, Armenian Network of America-Greater NY, Daughters of Vartan-Sahaganoush Otyag, Justice Armenia, Knights of Vartan-Bakradouny Lodge, NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues, St. Leon Armenian Church.

**August 25:** Panel, “Crisis in Armenia’s Russia-Only Security Doctrine,” with Lilit Gevorgyan and Armen Kharazian, co-sponsored by Ararat-Eskijian Museum, Armenian Bar Association, Armenian Democratic Liberal Party/Ramgavars, Armenian Network of America-Greater NY, Daughters of Vartan-Sahaganoush Otyag, Justice Armenia, Knights of Vartan-Bakradouny Lodge, NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues, St. Leon Armenian Church.

**October 6:** Maria Armoudian, “Lawyers Beyond Borders: Advancing International Human Rights Through Local Laws and Courts,” co-sponsored by Columbia University Armenian Center, Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR), and NAASR / Gulbenkian Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues.

**November 4:** Artyom Tonoyan, “Black Garden Aflame: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in the Soviet and Russian Press.” Co-sponsored by NAASR/Gulbenkian Contemporary Topics Series and the Society for Armenian Studies.

**November 17:** Tatul Hakobyan, “Syunik Frontlines Update.” Presented by the NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues.

**December 2:** Panel, “Fractured Regions and Small States: The Impact of Shifting Geopolitics on Armenia,” with Gohar Iskandaryan, David Lewis, and Carter Malkasian, moderated by Anna Ohanyan. Sponsored by the NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues.

## NAASR Statement on Armenian Genocide Recognition by President Joseph Biden

We applaud President Biden’s willingness to speak the truth about the Armenian Genocide and to strike a blow against the denial of historical facts. This recognition is a long time in coming from a U.S. President. Historians, scholars, eye-witnesses and survivors, religious figures, and even the U.S. Congress have already recognized the Armenian Genocide as an established fact. By showing that the world is watching, U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide will help to advance human rights around the world and prevent future genocides. We especially hope it will help to stop attacks against the small Armenian community still living in Turkey, lead to the return of Armenian prisoners of war in captivity in Azerbaijan, and halt the destruction of Armenian churches in Artsakh in the aftermath of the war waged by Azerbaijan and Turkey against Armenia and Artsakh this past fall.

U.S. presidential recognition is not merely symbolic. Recognition by the president is of great importance because of the executive branch’s power in foreign relations. A clear statement from the president recognizing the Armenian Genocide, more even than Congressional resolutions, can shape U.S. policies as well as establish a tone that will have a far-reaching impact in the State Department and even in how history curricula are written in public schools, among the many other effects.

Today, on April 24, we honor the memory of those who suffered and died in the Genocide as well as those who survived. We also honor



those who have worked tirelessly for more than a century to document the Armenian Genocide, to prevent its erasure from history books, and for its proper recognition.

**Yervant Chekijian**

Chairman of the Board, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR)



## NAASR Welcomes Highly Distinguished New Board Members

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) welcomes four highly accomplished new members to its 27-person Board of Directors, after its 67th Assembly of Members on Saturday, November 7, 2021. The new Board members are poet, translator, and editor Dr. Susan Barba, of Cambridge, MA; lawyer, adjunct professor, and avid collector of Armenian social history Mark A. Momjian, of Philadelphia, PA; author, lecturer, and Library of Congress specialist Dr. Khatchig Mouradian, of Washington, D.C.; and scholar, author, and professor Dr. Anna Ohanyan, of Concord, MA.

“We are honored to welcome these talented and distinguished new members to the NAASR Board and will work together to move NAASR forward as we expand our national and international collaborations, programming, and scholar support for the benefit of Armenians throughout the world,” said Chairman of the Board Yervant Chekijian, of Watertown, MA. NAASR officers elected for 2021-22 are Chairman Yervant Chekijian; First Vice Chairman Judith Saryan; Second Vice Chairman Roxanne Etmekjian; Secretary Stepan Piligian; Treasurer Bruce Roat; Advisor Arlene Saryan Alexander; and Advisor Nancy R. Kolligian.

### Engaging Talk by Dr. Khatchig Mouradian

Preceding the Board elections at the Annual Assembly were fascinating remarks from Dr. Khatchig Mouradian, Armenian and Georgian Area Specialist in the African and Middle Eastern Division, Library of Congress, in a talk entitled “From Illumination to Digitization: The Armenian Collections at The Library of Congress.” He acknowledged the cooperation he has enjoyed with NAASR first as a scholar, then as a lecturer at Columbia University, and now at the Library of Congress.

Yervant Chekijian thanked the three outgoing Board members for their years of dedication, generosity, and excellent service: George Aghajyan of Westminister, MA; Nurhan Becidyan of Paramus, NJ; and Sylvia Parsons, formerly of Bethesda, MD, now of San Diego, CA.

### Distinguished New Board Members

The newly elected NAASR Board members are highly distinguished in their respective fields. Dr. Susan Barba is a poet, a translator, and a Senior Editor at *New York Review of Books*. She has been a member of NAASR for 18 years and participated in NAASR’s international conference on “Rethinking Armenian Studies: Past, Present, and Future” in 2002, as a graduate student at Harvard University. She is the author of *Fair Sun* (2017) and *geode* (2020), a finalist for the New England Book Awards and the Massachusetts Book Awards. Her first book, awarded the Anahid Literary Prize from Columbia University and the Minas & Kohar Tölölyan Prize, devotes its second

section to a series of prose poems about a child speaking with her grandfather who details his experiences in the Armenian Genocide. She is also the co-editor, with Victoria Rowe, of *I Want to Live: Poems of Shushanik Kurghinian*, and she is the editor of *A Literary Field Guide*



The 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly was the second held online. Clockwise: Yervant Chekijian, Sarah Ignatius, Ara Araz, Judith Saryan, Marc Mamigonian, Khatchig Mouradian.

to *American Wildflowers*, illustrated by Leanne Shapton, forthcoming in September 2022 from Abrams Press. She received her PhD in comparative literature from Harvard University; her dissertation, *Poets of the Crossroads*, focused on the work of Eghishe Charents, Osip Mandelstam, and W.H. Auden.

Mark A. Momjian has been actively involved in Armenian Studies for over three decades. He has been a NAASR member for many years and a frequent collaborator on programs with Columbia University, co-sponsored by NAASR. After graduating from Columbia Law School, he was elected to the Board of Directors of the Armenian Center at Columbia University, where he is the immediate past Chair. He served as Co-Chair of the Armenian Church Earthquake Fund, spearheading a regional effort that raised over a half-million dollars for the survivors of the devastating 1988 earthquake. A passionate collector of Armenian social history, his material artifacts were exhibited at the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. He is an Adjunct Professor of Law at Villanova University and an Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry at the Drexel University College of Medicine. He has won numerous awards for his public-interest work on behalf of underserved and minority communities, and is listed in *Who’s Who in America* and *Best Lawyers in America*.

Dr. Khatchig Mouradian is the Armenian and Georgian Area Specialist in the African

and Middle Eastern Division (Near East Section) at the Library of Congress; and a lecturer in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies (MESAAS) at Columbia University. He is the author of *The Resistance Network: The Armenian Genocide and Humanitarianism in Ottoman Syria, 1915-1918*. He is a NAASR member, a frequent presenter at NAASR programs and Leadership Circle events, a member of NAASR’s Academic Advisory Committee, and works closely with NAASR on programs at Columbia University. He is the co-editor of a forthcoming book on late-Ottoman history and the editor of *The Armenian Review*. He served as the Henry S. Khanzadian Kazan Visiting Professor at California State University-Fresno, and was a visiting assistant professor at the Division of Global Affairs at Rutgers University. He has received numerous awards and fellowships.

He holds a PhD in History from the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University and a BS in Biology from Haigazian University.

Dr. Anna Ohanyan is the Richard B. Finnegan Distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Stonehill College, and two-time Fulbright Scholar to the South Caucasus. She is a NAASR Leadership Circle member, a frequent presenter at NAASR programs, and a very active member of NAASR’s Contemporary Topics Committee. She is an author and (co)editor of five books, including *Russia Abroad: Driving Regional Fracture in Post-Communist Eurasia and Beyond* (edited, Georgetown University Press, 2018), and *Networked Regionalism as Conflict Management* (Stanford University Press, 2015). Her most recent book manuscript is *The Neighborhood Effect: The Imperial Roots of Regional Fracture in Eurasia*, forthcoming with Stanford University Press in 2022. Her articles have appeared in numerous prestigious journals and newspapers. She served as a doctoral and post-doctoral fellow at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. She received her PhD in Political Science from Syracuse University.

Incumbents re-elected for three-year terms were Roupen Berberian of Glendale, CA; Joan Kolligian of Arlington, MA; Nancy Kolligian of Watertown, MA; Margaret Mgrublian of Pasadena, CA; Bruce Roat of Los Angeles, CA; and Raffi Yeghiayan of Bedford, MA.

# NAASR Announces Winners of Sona Aronian Armenian Studies Book Prizes for 2020–2021

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) is pleased to announce the winners of the 2020 Dr. Sona Aronian Book Prizes for Excellence in Armenian Studies: Prof. Houri Berberian for the

ment of Armenian revolutionaries in each, while also providing insights into the circulation of revolutionaries, ideas, and print across borders.

NAASR Academic Director Marc A. Mamigonian stated that “*Roving Revolutionaries* makes important original contributions to our knowledge of Armenian activism and political thought in the late 19th and early 20th centuries within a wide regional/trans-imperial context and is grounded in thorough research in archival and published sources.”

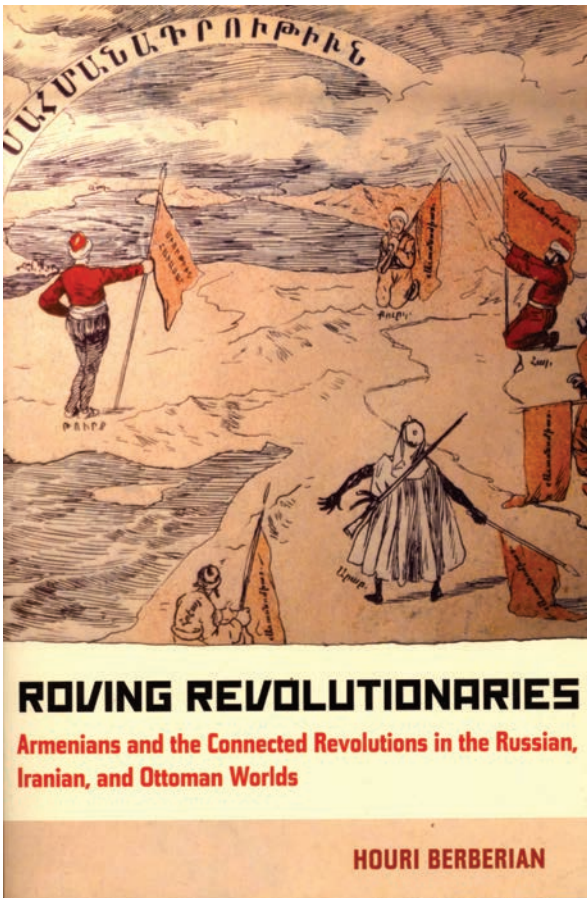
Dr. Berberian, via email, expressed her thanks for “this honor and recognition of *Roving Revolutionaries*, especially at this moment in time, when the book’s protagonists—those committed to peaceful co-existence and self-determination—have become endangered species and the hybrid and cosmopolitan world they inhabited almost unrecognizable.”

The prize awarded for the translation of Keljik’s *Armenian-American Sketches*, originally published as *Amerigahay Badgerner* (Ամերիկահայ պատկերներ), recognizes a team effort which includes the efforts of the three translators, Aris Sevag, Dr. Lou Ann Matossian, and Dr. Vartan Matiossian, as well as the publication’s co-editors Christopher Atamian and

Asdghig Sevag [widow of the late Aris] and the donors been less generous, this chain could have been broken at any moment. The reappearance of the Keljik stories really was due to the passion of every individual along the way.”

Echoing these sentiments, Marc Mamigonian noted that “in awarding the prize for *Armenian-American Sketches*, we recognize the important contribution the book makes to expanding our knowledge of Armenian-American literature and culture. I wish that our late friend and colleague Aris Sevag were alive to receive this award along with Lou Ann and Vartan, and I am grateful that Asdghig can accept on his behalf. Furthermore, while the prize itself is given to translators, we also want to acknowledge with gratitude the vital efforts of Christopher Atamian and Barlow Der Mugrdechian in making this publication a reality.”

The 2021 Aronian Prizes were awarded to Dr. Stephen Badalyan Riegg for *Russia’s Entangled Embrace: The Tsarist Empire and the Armenians, 1801-1914* (Cornell University Press, 2020) and Dr. Marc David Baer for *Sultanic Saviors and Tolerant Turks: Writing Ottoman Jewish History, Denying the Armenian Genocide* (Indiana University Press, 2020); and to Nareg Seferian for his translation of the novel



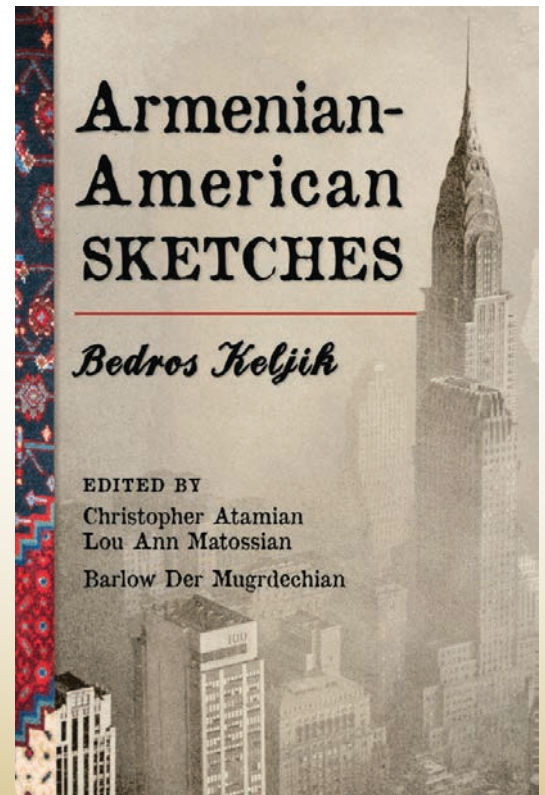
monograph *Roving Revolutionaries: Armenians and the Connected Revolutions in the Russian, Iranian, and Ottoman Worlds* (University of California Press) and Dr. Lou Ann Matossian, Dr. Vartan Matiossian, and the late Aris Sevag for the translation of Bedros Keljik’s *Armenian-American Sketches* (Armenian Studies Series of the Press at California State University, Fresno). The 2020 awards are for books with a 2019 publication date.

NAASR’s Aronian Book Prizes were established in 2014 by the late Dr. Aronian and Dr. Geoffrey Gibbs, to be awarded annually to outstanding scholarly works in the English language in the field of Armenian Studies and translations from Armenian into English.

Berberian’s *Roving Revolutionaries* explores the interconnected aspects of three early twentieth century revolutions—in the Russian, Ottoman, and Iranian empires—through the involve-

ment of Armenian revolutionaries in each, while also providing insights into the circulation of revolutionaries, ideas, and print across borders. Barlow Der Mugrdechian. (Matossian also served as a co-editor.) Lou Ann Matossian first translated one of Keljik’s “sketches” and published it in *Ararat Quarterly* in 1997 and subsequently lectured on Keljik at NAASR in 2010; the late Aris Sevag translated the remainder of the book prior to his death in 2006; and Dr. Matiossian translated additional Keljik pieces published in the *Baikar Annual* in the 1940s.

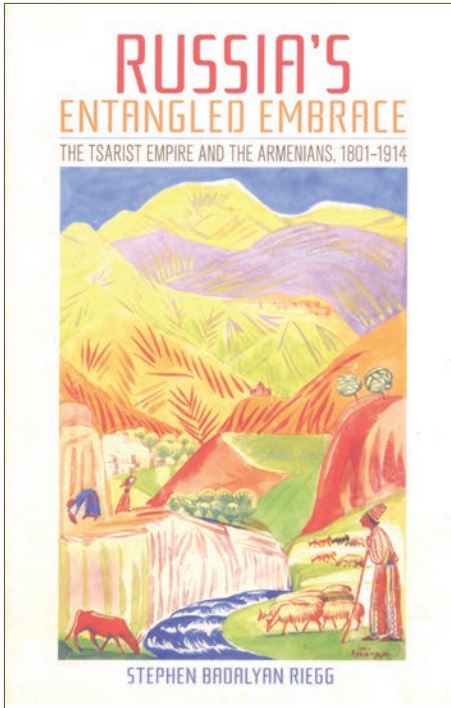
As Dr. Matossian commented, “If Leo Hamalian and Aris Sevag had not published the early translations, or Marc Mamigonian had not invited a lecture on Keljik, or Christopher Atamian had not taken an interest, or Barlow Der Mugrdechian had not accepted our proposal, or Vartan Matiossian and the Keljik brothers had not come on board, or





*Mayda* (Մայժա) by Srpuhi Dussap (Սրբուհի Տիսուպ) (Armenian International Women's Association Press). The 2021 awards are for books with a 2020 publication date.

NAASR's Director of Academic Affairs Mamigonian commented that "this year's prize-winning books—in a year with a number of very valuable publications also worthy of attention—really reflect the diversity of Armenian studies and its inextricable relationship with



other fields such as Russian studies, Ottoman & Turkish studies, and Feminist studies to name just three. I think that Dr. Aronian, with her own diverse interests, would be pleased."

Stephen Badalyan Riegg is Assistant Professor of History at Texas A&M University. *Russia's Entangled Embrace*, his first book, examines the complex relationship between the Russian imperial state and the Armenians who lived in the empire and in areas that over the course of the long nineteenth century would come under Russian control. In doing so, Stephen Badalyan Riegg explores, at the meeting point of territoriality and religion, the "dramatic vicissitudes of policy and perception [that] characterized Russo-Armenian ties" in this period. The author examines the Armenian case as a vehicle to explore Russia's colonization of the South Caucasus and to disentangle the "complex processes by which imperial Russia mobilized certain groups into loyal minorities."

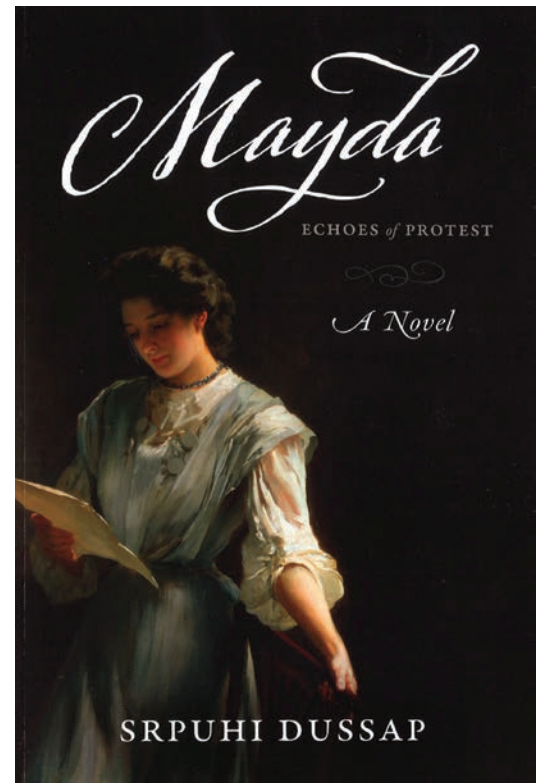
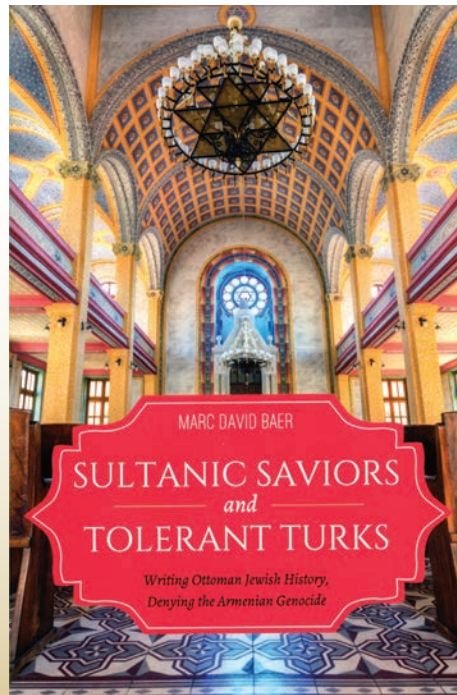
Via email, Riegg wrote that "it is a true honor to learn that my book is a winner of the Dr. Sona Aronian Award. My sincere gratitude goes to the members of the selection committee and the esteemed NAASR organization, which is a model of how to bridge the gap between the public and academe." Riegg commented that "the work of

historians remains as important today as ever. We must resist the illusory search for 'the truth' in history; instead, we must embrace the fact that the past was no less complicated than our present."

Marc David Baer is Professor of International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science. *Sultanic Saviors and Tolerant Turks* provides both the history and analysis of the mythology and stereotypes of Ottoman and Turkish philo-Semitism, and how members of the Jewish community in Turkey and certain scholars leveraged this mythology in the service of denial of the Armenian Genocide. Baer adopts a long historical perspective as he sets out to answer the questions, "How can we understand that group's identification and alliance with the perpetrators and their propagation of denial? What emotional world or affective disposition compels them to take this public stand?"

Baer responded to the news of the prize by email, commenting, "I am greatly honoured to receive this prestigious award from your organisation. It is much-appreciated acknowledgement of my effort integrating the histories of Jews and Armenians, genocide recognition and genocide denial."

Nareg Seferian is a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs in the Washington, D.C., area. His dissertation will focus on the province of Syunik and geographical imaginations in flux following the emergence of new borders after the Second Artsakh War. The translation prize awarded to Seferian for Dussap's ground-breaking feminist novel *Mayda*, first published in Constantinople



in 1883, recognizes not only the excellence of the English-language version but also the enormous historical significance of making available what is one of the earliest novels in Western Armenian, the first known novel by an Armenian woman, and a landmark in the formulation of an Armenian feminism.

Also deserving acknowledgement is the effort of the Armenian International Women's Association to make this and other important works by Armenian women writers available; and specifically, the role of the volume's editor Dr. Lisa Gulesserian, with Dr. Barbara Merguerian (who wrote a short biography of Dussap for the book), Dr. Joy Renjilian-Burgy, Judith A. Saryan, and Danila Jebjian Terpanjian must be noted, as well as Dr. Valentina Calzolari who wrote the learned introduction.

Seferian commented, "I felt very privileged indeed when I was invited to take on the translation. I owe Barbara Merguerian a special debt of gratitude in this regard. Now I feel doubly privileged to be in the company of past recipients of the award. This publication was in truth a team effort, so a great deal of credit is due to the hard-working committee at AIWA. The dedication of AIWA members and supporters is exemplary. I hope our work together reflects Dr. Aronian's hopes and expectations in establishing this award. God bless her memory."

Authors or publishers wishing to submit books for consideration for future Aronian Prizes may contact NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian at [marc@naasr.org](mailto:marc@naasr.org).



# Mass Humanities Grant Supports NAASR Programming on Avedis Derounian Archive

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research in April 2021 received a Mass Humanities grant for programming centered around one of NAASR’s most significant archives—that of Avedis Derounian, aka John Roy Carlson, who infiltrated the American Nazi underground and wrote *Under Cover* (E. P. Dutton, 1943), a *New York Times* best seller with at least 20 reprintings.

The grant for “The Avedis Derounian Archive at NAASR: A Vital Resource on U.S.-Based Extremism,” is part of a new round of Mass Humanities grant-making, totaling more than \$250,000 to 59 cultural organizations to reach their audiences digitally due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with funding provided through the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Using various pseudonyms, Derounian infiltrated the American Nazi underground and as John Roy Carlson published *Under Cover* in 1943 about these experiences. He also wrote *The Plotters* (E. P. Dutton, 1946) and *Cairo to Damascus* (Alfred Knopf, 1951). NAASR’s Digital Capacity grant supported virtual programming to expand understanding of Derounian’s experiences with the threat of domestic fascism and extremism in the US in the 1930s and 1940s as well as a new webpage with digitized materials from the Derounian collection.

Following Derounian’s death, his archives were transferred to NAASR. They are one of NAASR’s most significant special collections, comprising more than 75 boxes of unpublished writings, notes, photographs and other materials. His fascinating life experiences, contained in his archive, reveal striking details about U.S.-based



Avedis Derounian (John Roy Carlson) signing copies of *Under Cover* (image from the Derounian archive)

over 75 years ago, and they are all-too-relevant again today,” commented NAASR’s Executive Director, Sarah Ignatius. “We are very grateful to Mass Humanities and the Massachusetts Cultural Council for recognizing the significance of these materials and supporting our digital programming to expand understanding about them and increasing access to them.”

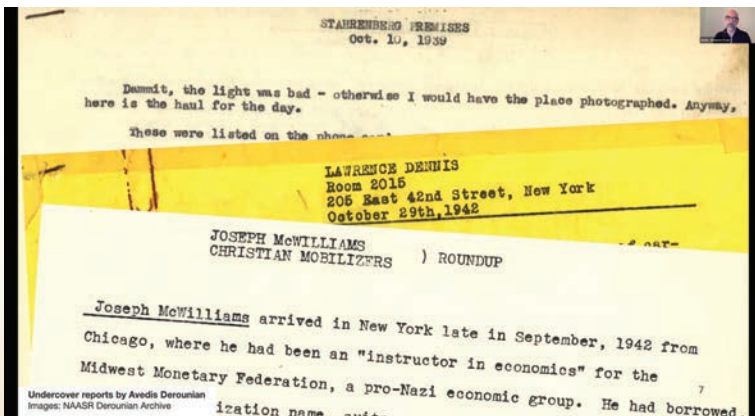
With the support of the Mass Humanities grant, NAASR organized the webinar “The Avedis Derounian Archive at NAASR: A Vital

well qualified to reflect on what it tells us about Derounian’s times and our own.

The webinar was moderated by Michael Bobelian, author of *Children of Armenia: A Forgotten Genocide and the Century-long Struggle for Justice* (Simon & Schuster, 2009) and *Battle for the Marble Palace: Abe Fortas, Earl Warren, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon and the Forging of the Modern Supreme Court* (Schaffner Press, 2019), and a member of the NAASR Board of Directors. Bobelian was well-acquainted with the Derounian archive having made extensive use of it in his research for *Children of Armenia*, drawing on Derounian’s materials relating to his years of active engagement in Armenian-American life from the 1930s on.

After providing a general introduction to Derounian and his life and times, Bobelian introduced the panel of experts who shared their in-depth knowledge of Derounian and the historical context for his “under cover” investigations.

Guido Jimenez-Cruz, a writer and filmmaker who is currently working with Leslie Dann on a screenplay adaptation of “Under Cover: My Four Years in the Nazi Underworld of America,” discussed both the importance of the archive as a repository of information about a tension-filled time in U.S. (and world) history as well as the hu-



Derounian archival images from Guido Jimenez-Cruz’s presentation

fascist, pro-Nazi and other extreme right-wing and extremist groups of that time. “His writings and insights have held immense fascination to the public since publication of his book *Under Cover*

Resource on U.S.-Based Extremism” on November 18, 2021, which featured a discussion with several researchers who have delved deeply into the Derounian archive for their own work and are





Images from the Derounian archive



One of countless propaganda items collected by Avedis Derounian during his years "under cover." This one was published by the red-baiting Constitutional Educational League.

man side of Derounian, as revealed in the documents and in Jimenez-Cruz's conversations with Derounian's family.

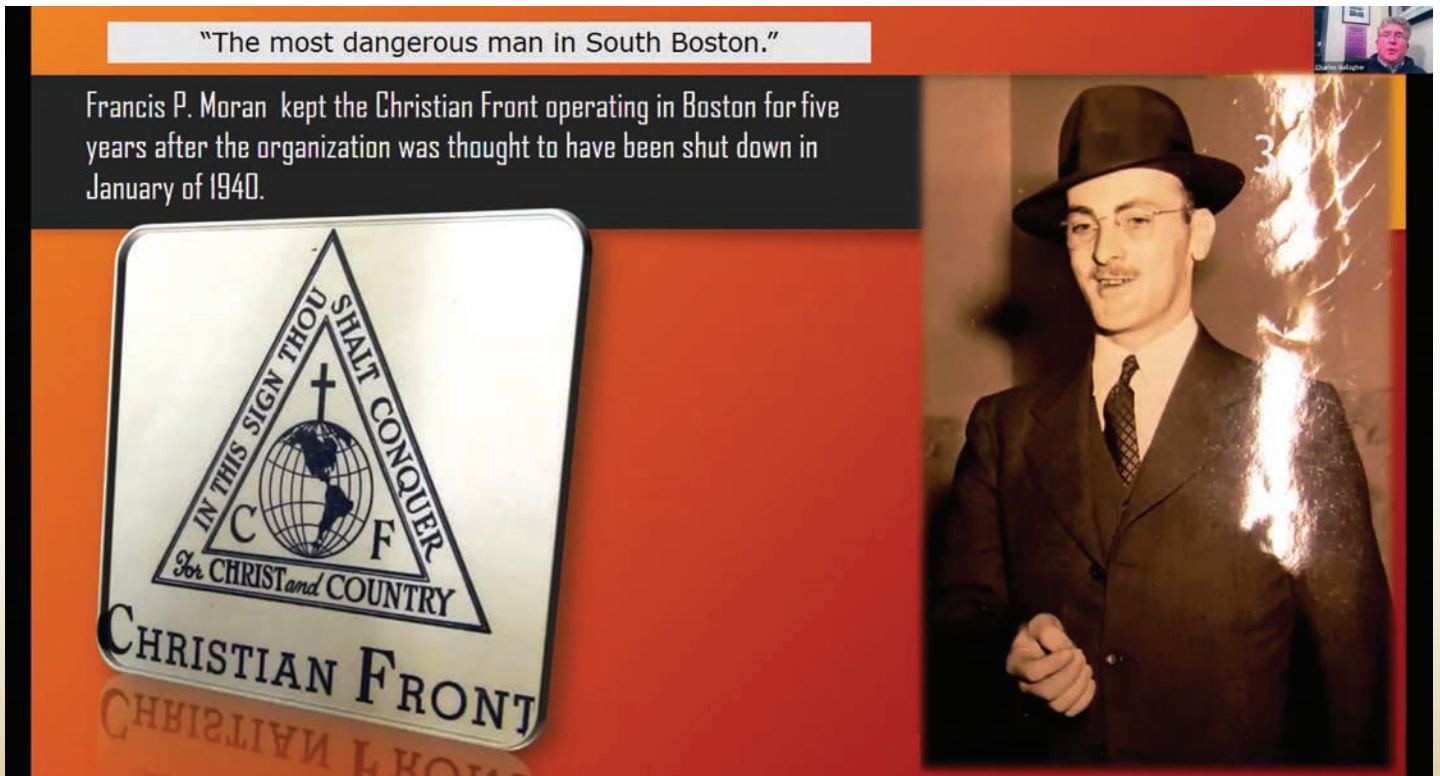
Dr. Charles Gallagher, Associate Professor of History at Boston College, author of *Vatican Secret Diplomacy: Joseph P. Hurley and Pope Pius XII* (Yale Univ. Press, 2008), recently published a new study. *The Nazis of Copley Square: The Forgotten History of the Christian Front, 1939-1945* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2021), which made use of Derounian's files on the Christian Front, which was particularly active in Boston and New York, and its leader Francis Moran.

Dr. Christopher Vials, Professor of English

and Director of American Studies at UConn (Storrs), is the author of *Haunted by Hitler: Liberals, the Left, and the Fight against Fascism in the United States* (Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2014) and co-editor of *The Antifascism Reader* (Verso Books, 2020). *Haunted by Hitler* incorporated research carried out by Vials at NAASR using the Derounian archives a decade ago (see *NAASR Newsletter* 2011-2012), while *The Antifascism Reader* includes previously unpublished writings by Derounian.

The panelists' brought fascinating insights into the times Derounian investigated, reflections on his own passion to explore and expose the dark

world of extremism, and its unsettling resonance in our own times. The program is available on NAASR's YouTube channel, and future events on Derounian and his archive will be planned.



From Charles Gallagher's presentation during the November 18 program

# Dadourian Foundation Supports NAASR Programs on Archeology in Armenia

In 2021, for the second consecutive year, NAASR received a generous grant from the Dadourian Foundation to support a series of public programs. In 2020, Dadourian supported a three-event series on art and heritage of the khachkar, and in 2021 an outstanding three-webinar series on “Armenia’s Rich Archeological Heritage: Lessons from Antiquity,” featuring a group of leading Armenian scientists based in the Republic. Founded in 1952 by Dadour and Elise Dadourian, the Dadourian Foundation’s purpose is to assist and support the Armenian Diaspora both in the United States and abroad. The Foundation serves to promote the Armenian Christian faith and cultural identity. Each of the 2021 programs was also co-sponsored by the Ararat-Eskijian Foundation in Mission Hills, CA, and all are available to view on NAASR’s YouTube channel.

The first webinar, on March 13, was a presentation by Dr. Arsen Bobokhyan, Vice-Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography at the Armenian Academy of Sciences, entitled “Vishapakars: Dragon Stones of Armenia’s Mountains.” The mountains of Armenia are home to unique monuments traditionally called by the people *vishapakar* (dragon stone). The main centers of their distribution are Mount Aragats and the Geghama mountains. Today we know of approximately 150 examples of these monuments. Vishapakars are 150-550 cm high,



Arsen Bobokhyan

are made, as a rule, of grayish basalt, and date to the Bronze Age and especially within the second millennium BCE.

Among the many archaeological questions vishapakars raise, one of the most important is the problem of their protection. Both their destruction and removal took place as early as the beginning of the first millennium BCE, in the Urartian period, increased during the Middle Ages, and unfortunately continues to this day. Bobokhyan’s lecture provided a historical overview as well as a discussion of recent efforts towards increasing research on and protection of these remarkable monuments.



Mariam Shakhmuradyan

The second and third programs featured scholars who were recent recipients of grants from NAASR and the Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies to support their fieldwork.

On November 13, Dr. Benik Vardanyan spoke on “The Ancient Archaeological Landscape of Lernakert in the Shirak Region,” with English-language translation provided by Mariam Shakhmuradyan. Vardanyan is a researcher at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Armenian Academy of Sciences and the Director of the excavations at Lernakert in Shirak in 2019-21.

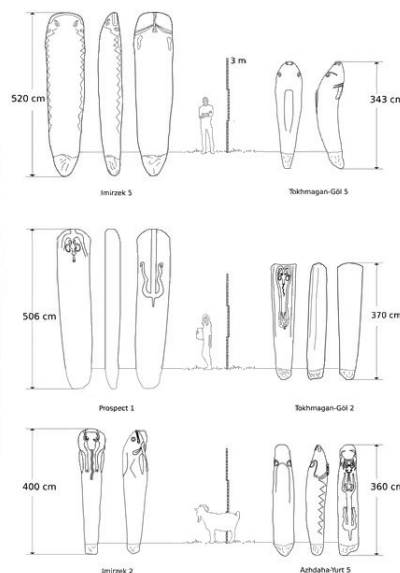
The investigation of fortress-settlements, necropoli, and their infrastructure is of key importance for the study of the archaeological landscape of the Bronze and Iron Age Armenia. The investigation of the Lernakert archaeological complex on the northwestern slope of Mt. Aragats in 2020-2021, supported by grants from NAASR and Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies, has revealed various data on the emergence of the fortress-settlements, the chronology of the settlements and necropoli, and the organization of the habitat of Bronze and Iron Age Shirak.

The recent investigations shed new light on the multiple uses and transformations of the ancient landscape of Lernakert and promise further insights about pre-historic Armenia.

On November 20, Mariam Shakhmuradyan, of the Department of Early Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, presented “Desert Kites”: Mysterious Prehistoric Structures in Armenia.”

“Desert kites” are large-scale stone structures of different forms, discovered in the Middle East and Central Asia, as well as in Armenia. They usually consist of two long rows of stones, several kilometers long, of an enclosure that can reach several dozen acres. The enclosure can have various forms: some are geometric while others resemble more complex shapes (includ-

## Vishap Stelae Typology



Arsen Bobokhyan detailed a vishap investigation





Mariam Shakhmuradyan carrying out fieldwork for her research on “desert kites” in Armenia

ing, most notably, a child’s kite).

Although kites have been studied by many scientific research centers around the world for nearly a century, their function and the place and time of their origin remain a mystery to archaeology. The fact that there are more than five thousand of them in the world, and a lot of effort has been put into their construction, indi-

icates their significance, and thus a whole page of the history of the ancient world remains undiscovered. Armenian kites hold great potential to shed light on these mysterious structures due to their high level of preservation and rich archaeological environment.

Shakhmuradyan was the recipient of a grant in 2021 from NAASR and the Knights of Vartan

Fund for Armenian Studies in support of her ongoing research on desert kites in Armenia, and we will undoubtedly hear more about her work in the future.

In 2022, the Dadourian Foundation will continue its support of NAASR’s programs through a series called “Armenian Cartography: Ancient Maps and Modern-Day Border Disputes.”



Figure 23 The excavation areas 1 and 7 at Veri Berd

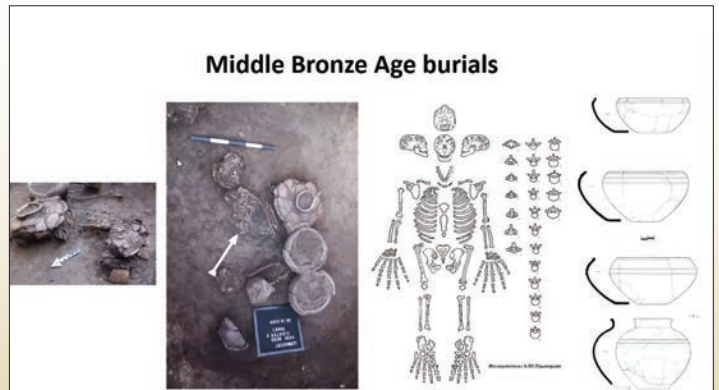


Figure 33 Tomb №7 of the tomb cluster № 2 (Photos: B. Vardanyan)

Excavations at Lermakert shown by Benik Vardanyan

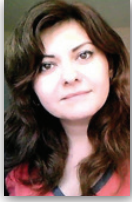




# NAASR and the Knights of Vartan Issue Grants in 2021



Grants issued jointly by NAASR and Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies except where noted.



**Lilia Arakelyan**, Department of Politics & International Relations, Florida International University, grant in support of project “A Case Study of International Terrorism: Foreign Fighters in the Nagorno-Karabakh War.”



**Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev**, Aix-Marseille Université, and **Haroutioun Khatchadourian**, grant in support of forthcoming publication “The Destruction of Armenian Heritage by Azerbaijan,” co-edited by the applicants.



**Seda Manukyan**, PhD student and researcher, Matenadaran/Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, travel grant to visit Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem to view items for research project on Scenes of Christ’s Healing Power in Armenian manuscripts. Grant issued by NAASR, with support from Dean Shahinian.



Maria Armoudian



Katherine Smits

**Maria Armoudian and Katherine Smits**, both of University of Auckland, grant in support of research project “How Soon we

Forget: Memory entrepreneurs, modern public diplomacy and the remaking of WWI memory in New Zealand.”



**Merih Erol**, Faculty of Social Sciences, Özyeğin University, Istanbul, travel grant to support research trip for project “Armenian Refugees from Anatolia: Survival, Identity, and Citizenship in Greece (1920-2020).”



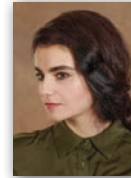
**Deborah Mayersen**, University of New South Wales Canberra, at the Australian Defence Force Academy, travel grant to conduct archival research in support of project “Investigating Armenian Resistance to the Hamidian Massacres.”



**Rosie Vartyter Aroush**, grant to support publication of *Identity, Family, and Community Experiences among LGBTQ Armenians in the Diaspora* to be published by Routledge.



**Tatul Hakobyan/Ani Centre**, grant to support creation of a report on the Syunik region of Armenia, covering its geography, history, demographics, economy, and social situation.



**Hayarpi Papikyan**, adjunct faculty, American University of Armenia, grant to support research project “Armenian Church parish schools as centers of community and social life in Artsakh, 1870-1920.”



Houri Berberian

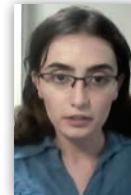


Talinn Grigor

**Houri Berberian, Talinn Grigor**, University of California, Irvine, and **Talinn Grigor**, University of California, Davis, grant in support of forthcoming book “Contesting the Silences: Minoritarian Modernism and the Armenian Women of Iran,” examining the history of Armenian women in modern Iran from the beginning of Naser al-Din Shah’s reign in 1848 to the 1979 fall of the Pahlavi dynasty.



**Carla Kekejian**, PhD candidate in Communication Sciences and Disorders, University of Utah, grant to support dissertation “Does translanguaging lead to an accurate picture of linguistic ability? An exploratory study with Armenian-English bilingual children.”



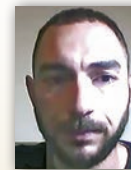
**Mariam Shakhmuradyan**, Department of Early Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, grant in support of project “An Archaeological Investigation of ‘Desert Kites’ in Armenia.”



**Alessia Boschis**, Università degli Studi di Torino, grant to support project “Armenian Cultural Heritage in European Travel Literature: The Cases of Nakhichevan and Artsakh.”



**Ovsanna Keshishyan**, PhD student and researcher, Matenadaran / Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, travel grant to support visit Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem to view items for dissertation work on “The Artistic Decoration of Cilician Handwritten Bibles in the 13-14th centuries.” Grant issued by NAASR, with support from Dean Shahinian.



**Benik Vardanyan**, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Sciences of the Republic Armenia, principal researcher, Lernakert archaeological project, grant to support investigation of the



**Emre Can Daglioglu**, PhD candidate in History, Stanford University, travel grant to conduct research for dissertation in the Bibliothèque Nubar de l’UGAB in Paris to use unexamined archival materials and Armenian-language published materials.



**Armen Manuk-Khaloyan**, PhD student, Georgetown University, travel grant to conduct research in archives in Armenia and in Turkey for dissertation “Reimagining Empire: Ottoman Armenians and the Encounter with Imperial Modernity, 1870-1914,” specifically for chapter



**Jelle Verheij**, PhD candidate in History, University of Amsterdam, grant to support doctoral project on “The Armenian Massacres, 1894-1897.”

examining correspondence between Daniel Varuzhan and his wife Araksi Tashjian.





## NAASR Receives Gift of Steinway Grand Piano

A magnificent Steinway Model B grand piano arrived at NAASR on December 10, 2021, the gift of Eugene Taylor and Abraham Krikorian of Port Jefferson, NY. The piano, in pristine condition and professionally maintained since its purchase, has had only one owner until now.

Eugene Taylor recalled, "I was fortunate to live within a 100-mile radius of Steinway Hall in New York City and be able to select and buy the piano directly from there. Steinway also sent tuning experts to the house a number of times after I purchased it to make minor adjustments. Each piano is as different as humans are to each other."

It had all along been the dream of the lead donor to NAASR's building, board member and former professional clarinetist Edward Avedisian, that it would become a place for musical events. When he was informed of the intended gift he was ecstatic, recognizing immediately that such a piano does not come your way often.

"There are so many memories connected with this instrument," Taylor said, "and we hope that the piano will provide years of service to NAASR."

Taylor and Krikorian over the past several years have gradually been donating to NAASR their large and rich collection of books and other materials focused on the Armenian Genocide, late Ottoman Armenian life, and works on comparative genocide and mass violence, which includes many rare items, as well as a remarkable collection of framed Near East Relief Posters which are on display at NAASR.

We will keep you posted about an inaugural concert in 2022.





# Noted Writer and Intellectual Tavit Khachgontz and the NAASR Library

On October 16, 2021, NAASR was visited by Mr. Harry Keshishian and his daughter Sandra, accompanied by NAASR supporter and friend Edward Shooshanian. They met with Academic Director Marc Mamigonian to discuss—and learn more about—author Tavit Khachgontz (Դավիթ Խաչկոնց = Dawit' Khach'konts', 1866-1918). Khachgontz was the grandfather of Mr. Keshishian.

Several months before, Shooshanian and Keshishian had visited NAASR and were surprised to learn that the NAASR library had several

titles by Khachgontz. Subsequently, NAASR Library Curator Ani Babaian and Marc Mamigonian did some research on the author to fill out their knowledge, and this information was shared with Keshishian and his daughter.

Drawing on material published in Teotig's *Amenun Taretsoysē* (1910), *Nor Arabkiri Teghekatu* (Dec. 1951), *Patmut'iwn Hayots' Arabkiri*, the newspaper *Shant*, and other sources, a brief biography was assembled.

Tavit Khachgontz was born in Mashgerd in the area of Arabgir, and from 1878 on he



Left to right: Harry Keshishian, Sandra Keshishian, Edward Shooshanian



Map of Central and North America from Khachgontz's *Nor badgerazart ashkharhakrut'iwn* (1904)

was educated in Constantinople. After 1885 he worked continually until his death as an educator, editor, and writer for various Armenian schools and periodicals, including but not limited to *Surhandak*, *Buzantion*, and *Shant*. In the late 1890s he was the editor of *Piuragn* weekly newspaper as well as the daily *Dzaghig*. In the early 1900s, Khachgontz served as co-editor of the *Ēndardzak orats'oyts' Surb P'rkchean Azgayin Hiwandanots'i Hayots'* = Հնդարձակ օրացոյց Սուրբ Փրկչեան Ազգային Հիւանդանոցի Հայոց [Comprehensive Calendar of St. Prkich Armenian National Hospital].

The National Library of Armenia lists 27 titles by Khachgontz, giving us some sense of how prolific a writer he was. A complete listing of his writings probably does not exist and would be difficult to compile, since, according to *Bararan Hay Grağan Tsatskanunneri* (Dictionary of Armenian Pseudonyms): “Tavit Khachgontz had many pen names, such as: Dawo, Iks, Kuntsik Tondraketsi, Mashkertuni, Hakakagh-Gisheruk. His articles were published in periodicals in Constantinople such as: *Piwragh*, *Tsaghik*, *Surhandak*, *Loys*, *Aghbiwr*, *Shant*, *Surhandak*.”

Khachgontz died under mysterious circumstances. According to an account published in *Shant* shortly after his death:

“Last Friday T. Khachgontz came to the editorial office to take his newspaper. He said that he would come on Monday at noon to see his article to be published. We mentioned to him about the simple depth of the study. Khachgontz accepted our remark modestly. And he left. At the moment of leaving, we noticed that he hesitated to say something.

“He offered to pay for the upcoming article in advance. Then he asked us to prepare the map of Van that he had drawn. On Monday morning, we received the tragic and unexpected news about his death. On Sunday morning, his body was found near Halic Oglu in Khasgiugh [Hasköy].



Khachgontz probably fell victim to a crime because he had no serious reason to commit suicide.

“Our unfortunate contributor has authored various textbooks. He wrote for Chobanian’s Dzaghigh and Armenian newspapers in Bolis. He has served in the capital and provincial schools. He was a folklorist (folklore collector), but with his death teaching suffered a significant loss.”

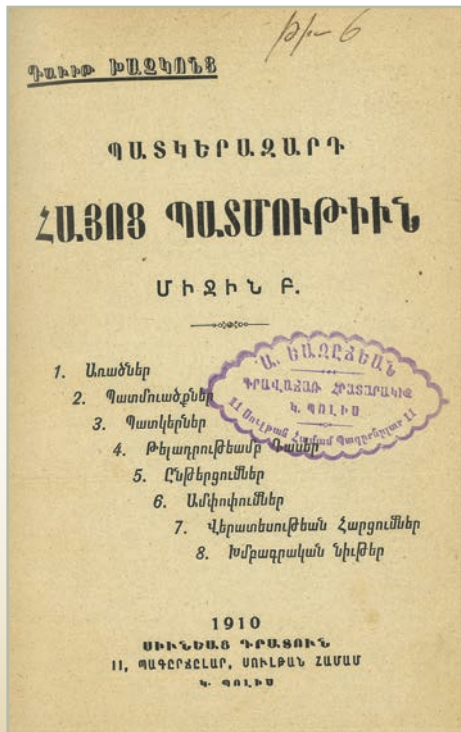
Khachgontz’s grandson and great-granddaughter affirmed that the family believed he was the victim of foul play. He had been arrested for political purposes in the 1890s and in 1905, according to Teotig, and his descendants suspect he may have been killed for similar reasons. Sadly, many of his books and writings were lost in a fire in 1904, and according to his family, others that survived were lost when the family immigrated to America in the early 1920s.

Although NAASR’s holdings of Khachgontz’s works are not huge in number, their presence here provided a wonderful opportunity to connect with his descendants and allowed us the privilege of sharing information about their ancestor above and beyond what they themselves already knew.

Titles by Tavit Khachgontz in the NAASR Mardigian Library

(All books are in Western Armenian, and are here transliterated using the Library of Congress’s Western Armenian standard.)

Nor badgerazart ashkharhakrut’iwn: Pazmat’iw k’ardesnerov = Նոր պատկերագարդ



Title page of Khachgontz’s Badgerazart Hayots’ Badmut’iwn (1910)



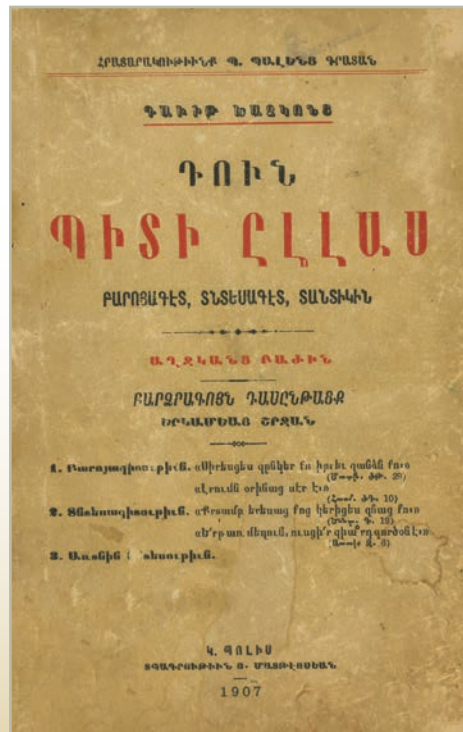
Pages from Khachgontz’s Badgerazart groni usum (1905)

աշխարհագրութիւն: Բազմաթիւ քարտէսներով [New illustrated geography: With many maps]

G. Bolis: H. Madt’ëosean, 1904.

Badgerazart groni usum: Darragan tasënt’ats’k’ = Պատկերագարդ կրօնի ուսում: Տարրական դասընթացք [Illustrated study of religion: Elementary course]

G. Bolis: H. Madt’ëosean, 1905.



Cover of Khachgontz’s Tun bidi ells paroyakéd, dndesakéd, orënsaged: Partsrakoyñ tasënt’ats’k’ ergameay shrjan (1907)

Tun bidi ells paroyakéd, dndesakéd, orënsaged: Partsrakoyñ tasënt’ats’k’ ergameay shrjan : Aghjgants’ pazhin = Դուն պիտի ըլլաս բարոյագէտ, տնտեսագէտ, օրէնագէտ: Բարձրագոյն դասընթացք երկամեայ շրջան: Աղջկանց բաժին [You will be an ethicist, an economist, a jurist: For higher course for two years: Girls section]

G. Bolis: Hradaragrut’iwnk’ B. Balentz Kradun, 1907.

Badgerazart grōni usum: Dzanōtēn andzanōtē, t’antsrats’ealēn hawadalik’ē, Tēmhantimanagan usuts’um u asdichanagan zarkats’um = Պատկերագարդ կրօնի ուսում: Ծանօթէն անծանօթը, թանձրացեալէն հաւատալիքը, Դէյանդանական ուսուցում ու աստիճանական զարգացում [Illustrated study of religion: From known to unknown, deepening your belief, facing difficulty and gradual development]

G. Bolis: Dbakrut’iwn H. Madt’ëosean, 1909.

Badgerazart Hayots’ Badmut’iwn: Mijin P. = Պատկերագարդ Հայոց Պատմութիւն: Միջին Բ [Illustrated Armenian History: Secondary B.]

G. Bolis: Siwneats’ Kradun, 1910.



# Pandemic Or Not, NAASR's Mardigian Library Thrives

Although in 2021 NAASR's Mardigian Library was accessible for in-person use on a limited, by-appointment basis, it was nevertheless an extremely busy year for the library.

In summer 2021 NAASR welcomed visiting researchers Dr. Talinn Grigor of UC Davis and Dr. Houri Berberian from UC Irvine, PhD student Hazal Özdemir from Northwestern University, independent researcher Greg Daugherty, and writer/filmmakers Guido Jimenez-Cruz and Leslie Dann from New York. In addition, during the summer, Miles Mamigonian photographed a large number of issues of several early Armenian-American newspapers for Bedros Torosian, a graduate student at UC Irvine. Throughout this time period we have filled many research-related requests for information and/or scans of items.

Library Curator Ani Babaian continues her work cataloguing materials and organizing the library's various subcollections. As of the end of the year, the library holds over 32,000 catalogued books and other items such as recordings, maps, posters, and periodical titles.

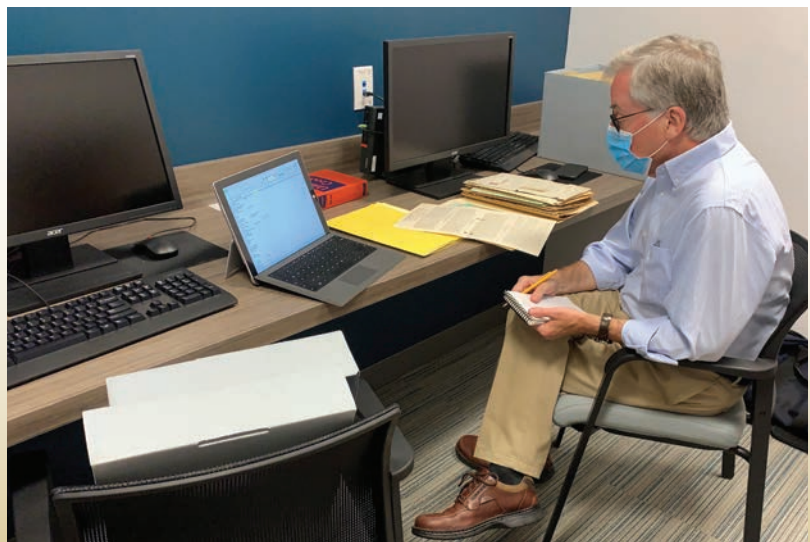
The library's collection of periodicals, which are housed in a special section on mobile shelving on the first floor, were extensively reorganized by Ani Babaian and Miles Mamigonian. In summer and fall, Sara Macaleer, a Tufts University graduate student, started a detailed inventory/finding aid for the large Avedis Derounian/John Roy Carlson archive. Nareg Kalaydjian, who also works with Laura Yardumian in the NAASR Bookstore, catalogued NAASR's collection of more than 300 LPs (33 1/3 records).



Issue of Bahag newspaper, digitized in summer 2021 by Miles Mamigonian



Armenia's Ambassador to the U.S. Varoujan Nersesyan visited NAASR and the Mardigian Library in April. Here he shows a book to Carolyn Mugar.



Researcher Greg Daugherty working with the Derounian archives at NAASR



# DONATIONS TO NAASR'S MARDIGIAN LIBRARY

The following donors have contributed items to NAASR's Edward and Helen Mardigian Library in 2021. Donations to the Mardigian Library from our members and friends have been instrumental in making the library what it is today, and continue to be the most important source for the growth of our holdings.

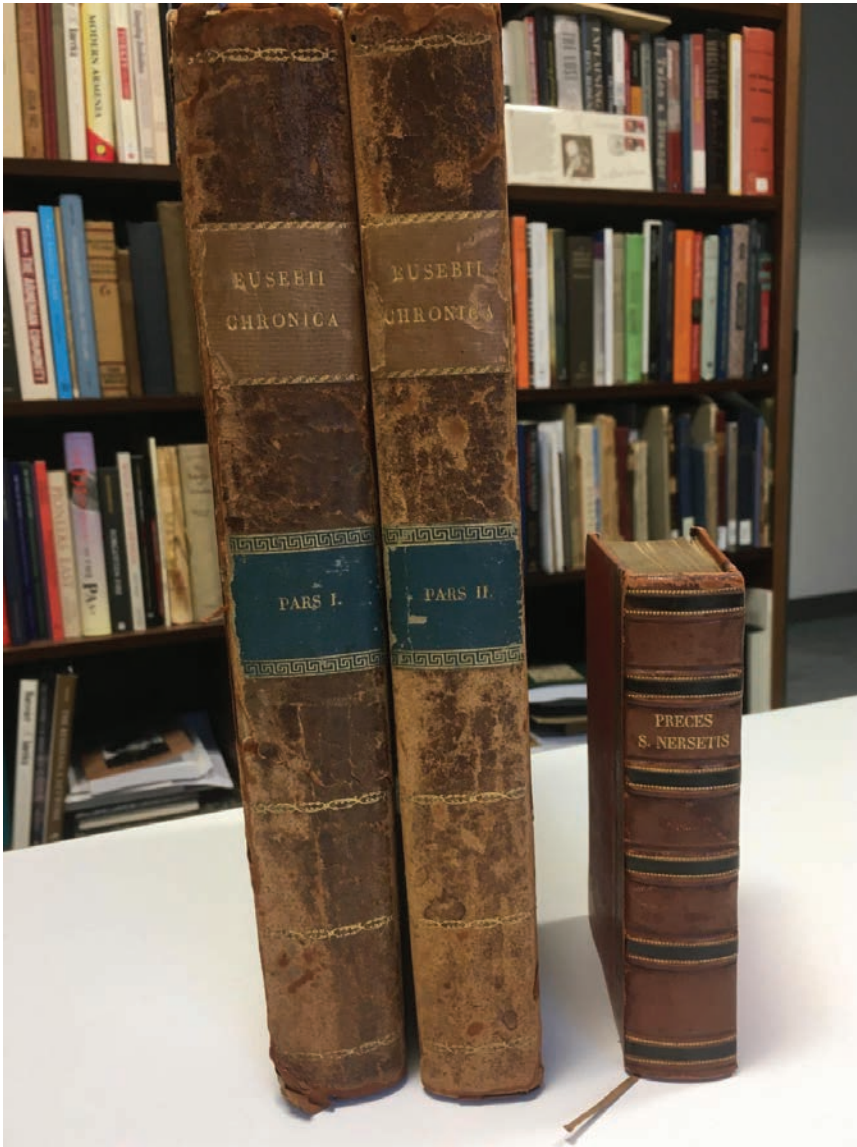
If you have materials in any language on Armenian and related subjects that you wish to consider donating to NAASR, please contact Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian at [marc@naasr.org](mailto:marc@naasr.org) or 617-489-1610. Due to space limitations we cannot accept all items; we can only take items that we need to expand our collection.

Bahlmann Abbot, Greenwood, VA  
 George & Joyce Aghjayan, Cambridge, MA  
 Linda Aintablian, Andover, MA  
 Adrienne Alexanian, New York, NY  
 Amaras Press, Watertown, MA  
 Richard Anooshian, London, United Kingdom  
 Ararat-Eskijian Museum, Mission Hills, CA  
 Nora Armani, New York, NY  
 Armenian Institute, London, United Kingdom  
 Alik Arzoumanian, Cambridge, MA  
 Nancy & George Bedirian, Pullman, WA  
 Kasper Bejoian, Watertown, MA  
 Michael & Edina Bobelian, Cold Spring Harbor, NY  
 The Catholicosate of Armenia Major and Armenia Minor, Glendale, CA  
 Ellen Sarkisian Chesnut, Alameda, CA  
 Rosemary Hartounian Cohen, Los Angeles, CA  
 Aghop Der-Karabetian, Rancho Cucamonga, CA  
 Marina Djabbarzade, Washington, D.C.  
 Dr. Heratch & Sonya Doumanian, Chicago, IL  
 Pamela & Ara Gechijian, Lincoln, MA  
 Loretta Gelenian, North Chelmsford, MA  
 Dr. Ara Ghazarian, Lexington, MA  
 Family of Vartan Gregorian, New York, NY  
 Varujan Gulderian, Waltham, MA  
 Hranush Hranti Hakobyan, Yerevan, Armenia  
 Joanne Gulezian Hartunian & Dr. Nelson Hartunian, Centerville, MA  
 Gina Ann Hablalian, Watertown, MA  
 Avedis Hadjian, New York, NY  
 David Hedison, Newton, MA  
 Sharon Hekimian, Watertown, MA  
 Edna Hovagimian, Walpole, MA  
 Sarah Ignatius, Somerville, MA  
 Ara & Milka Jeknavorian, Chelmsford, MA  
 Estate of Aram Johnson, Lexington, MA  
 Ariana Kabodian, Novi, MI  
 Nareg Kalaydjian, Woburn, MA  
 Rouzan Karabakhtsian, New York, NY  
 Paul & Sandra Kalemkiarian, Arcadia, CA  
 David Kitabjian, Perkasi, PA  
 Nancy R. Kolligian, Watertown, MA  
 Abraham Krikorian & Eugene L. Taylor, Port Jefferson, NY  
 Dr. Gerard J. Libaridian, Cambridge, MA  
 Archie & Hratch Manavian, Dollard-Des-Ormeaux, Canada  
 Peter Manuelian, Seattle, WA  
 Zabelle Margosian, Somerville, MA  
 Cathy Burnham Martin, Mill Spring, NC

Eva Medzorian, Winchester, MA  
 Anahit Mousheghian, Yerevan, Armenia  
 Garbis Moushigian, Fresno, CA  
 Dr. Carolann & K. George Najarian, Orleans, MA  
 Shahan Natalie Family Foundation, Burbank, CA  
 Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL  
 Harry & Hripsime Parsekian, Watertown, MA  
 Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives, Watertown, MA  
 Rikkyo University Center for Asian Area Studies, Tokyo, Japan  
 Daniel & Ludmila Sahakian, State College, PA  
 Dr. Nansen & Marina Saleri, Houston, TX  
 Rubina Sevadjian, Norfolk, UK  
 Anahid Shahrik, Cambridge, MA  
 Lorne Shirinian, Toronto, Canada  
 St. Illuminator's Armenian Apostolic Cathedral, New York, NY  
 St. Leon Armenian Church, Fair Lawn, NJ  
 Dr. Khachatur Stepanyan, Yerevan, Armenia  
 Elise Tashjian Levine, Needham, MA  
 Shushan Teager, Belmont, MA  
 Dr. Alan Whitehorn, Kingston, Canada  
 Lori and Karin Yeni-Komshian, Los Gatos, CA  
 Houry Youssoufian, Winchester, MA  
 Dr. David Zakarian, Bicester, United Kingdom



Sarah Ignatius takes a moment to browse in the library (photo by SMMA)



The two-volume edition of Eusebius's *Chronicle* and the small volume of St. Nerses Shnorhali's prayer in 24 languages

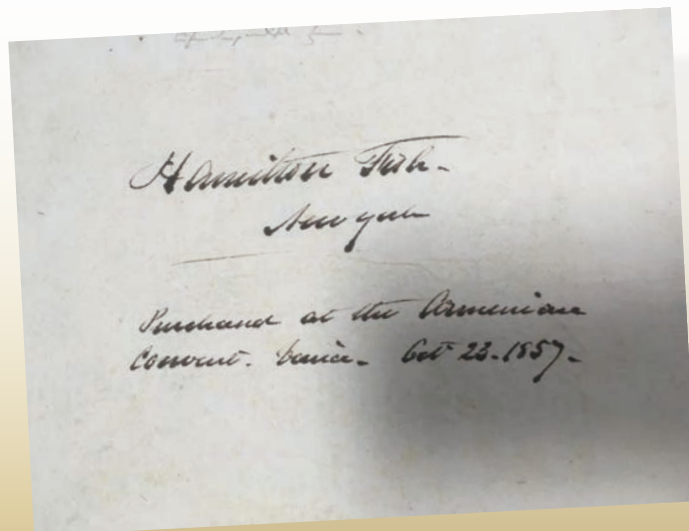
## TREASURES OF NAASR'S MARDIGIAN LIBRARY

# Bringing Books to Life

Beginning in 2020, continuing through 2021, and with no end in sight, NAASR's "Treasures of the Mardigian Library" has presented some of the rare, remarkable, famous, obscure, and unusual items from the library's large holdings. Written and compiled by NAASR's Library Curator Ani Babaian and Academic Director Marc Mamigonian, the features emphasize that the books and other items in the library are not merely carriers of written text, or images, or sounds—although they are certainly that—but are also repositories of information about their authors and owners, the communities in which they lived, and indeed the worldwide Armenian diaspora. They are also a way of reminding us all that libraries are not just rooms with shelves of books—they are living and breathing things.

The response from NAASR members and other readers has been tremendously gratifying. Longtime NAASR friend (and, now, Board member) and book collector Mark Momjian comments that "If you want to understand how books and other material artifacts come alive, read *Library Treasures*." Jennifer Manoukian, PhD student at UCLA, commented on the two-part feature on the work of Boston-based publisher E. A. Yeran that "It was such a treat to read your exploration! I actually came across a copy of the *Armeno-American Letter Writer* [one of the Yeran publications featured] this summer and spent an afternoon reading through it. Such important and intriguing insight into these early communities and the practical concerns on their minds. I'm glad that more people will know about this book and so many others thanks to your write-up."

Comments and additional information about items in these features are greatly appreciated. All of the "Treasures" features can be found on the NAASR website at <https://naasr.org/blogs/treasures-of-naasrs-mardigian-library>. We present in this issue of the *Newsletter* one sample of the "Treasures" features.



Hamilton Fish's inscription in one of the Eusebius volumes



# From Venice to Boston: The Awgerean Brothers, Hamilton Fish, and Vartan Gregorian

In this “Treasures of the NAASR Mardigian Library” feature we highlight two titles that are related to each other in both obvious and rather exceptional ways. They are part of the extraordinary body of work of two brilliant brothers from Ankara who became Mekhitarist monks in Venice. They passed through the hands of a noted 19th century American statesman, other unknown owners, and “the savior of the New York Public Library” on their journey to NAASR’s Mardigian Library.

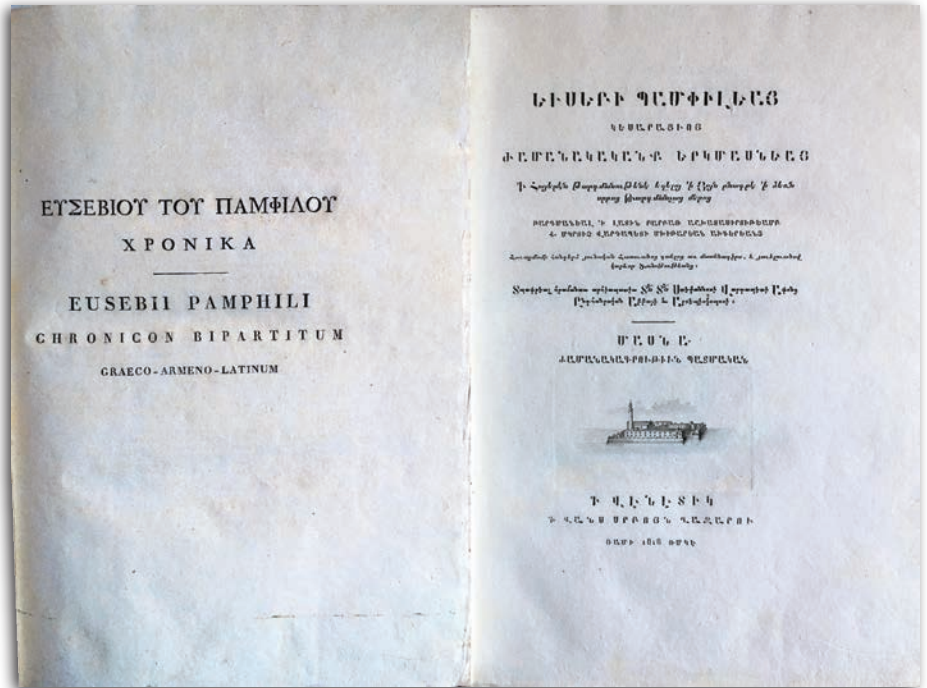
We offer this in tribute to all of those who keep the spirit of learning and the love of books alive, from the Mekhitarist Fathers of San Lazzaro to Vartan Gregorian.

### The Chronicle of Eusebius

**Title:** *Ewsebi Pamp'ileay Kesarats'woy Zhamanakank' Erkmasneay: Masn A = Eusebii Pamphili Caesariensis Episcopi Chronicon Bipartitum* = Եւսեբի Պամփիլէայ Կեսարացոյ ժամանակականք երկմասնէայ: Մասն Ա [The Chronicle of Eusebius Pamphilius of Caesarea in Two Parts: Part 1]

**Publication Information:** I Vēnētik: I Vans Srboyn Ghazaru, 1818

**Title:** *Ewsēbi Pamp'ileay Kesarats'woy Zhamanakank' Erkmasneay: Masn B = Eusebii Pamphili Caesariensis Episcopi Chronicon Bipartitum* = Եւսեբի Պամփիլէայ Կեսարացոյ ժամանակականք երկմասնէայ: Մասն Բ. [The Chronicle of Eusebius Pamphilius of Caesarea in Two Parts: Part 2]



Eusebius title pages in Latin and Greek and in Classical Armenian

**Publication Information:** I Vēnētik: I Vans Srboyn Ghazaru, 1818  
NAASR Mardigian Library

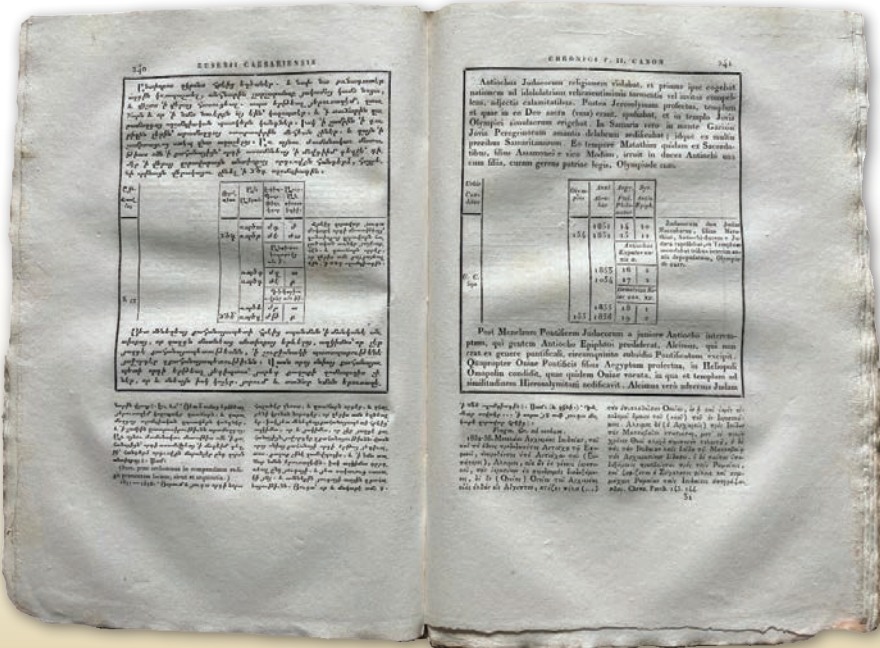
The older of the publications featured here is a significant Armenian and Latin edition of Eusebius’ *Chronicle* (*Zhamanakank'*), published in Venice at San Lazzaro in two large (21 cm. x 30 cm.) volumes in 1818. Volume one contains the text of the *Chronicle* and an index while the second contains detailed canon tables and an index.

Eusebius Pamphili (ca. 260-340 AD) was bishop of Caesarea in Palestine. According to Britannica, “His fame rests on his *Ecclesiastical History*, which he probably began to write during the Roman persecutions and revised several times between 312 and 324. In this work Eusebius produced what may be called, at best, a fully documented history of the Christian church, and, at worst, collections of passages from his sources.”

The *Chronicle* was written in Greek, but only fragments of the original Greek text survive. However, it was translated into Armenian in the fifth century. According to Robert Bedrosian, who has translated the Armenian text into English, “Reflecting 5th century Armenia’s multi-lingual cultural milieu, Eusebius’ *Chronicle* initially was translated into Armenian from the original Greek, then corrected using a Syriac edition. During the same period Eusebius’ other influential work, the *Ecclesiastical History*, was translated into Armenian from the Syriac. From almost the moment of their translation, Eusebius’ works played an important role in the development of Armenian historical writing.”

The 1818 Venice edition was prepared by order of Abbot Step'annos Agonts' = Ստեփաննոս Ագոնց (1740-1824) by the great Mekhitarist scholar Mkrtych' Awgerean = Մկրտիչ Աւգերեան, also known as Jean-Baptiste Aucher (1762-1854), who

*continued on next page*



Pages from the second volume of Eusebius’s *Chronicle*, with text in three languages



# Treasures of NAASR’s Mardigian Library: Bringing Books to Life

from previous page

was the elder of two extraordinary brothers originally from Ankara who became members of the Mekhitarist order and important scholars. Mkrtych’s brother Harut’iwn = Յարութիւն Աւգերեան, also known as Paschal Aucher (1774-1827), among his many other accomplishments, was also famed as Lord Byron’s Armenian teacher and collaborator. Neither Mkrtych’ nor Harut’iwn can be done justice in this short feature but will undoubtedly be highlighted in future installments of Library Treasures.<sup>1</sup>

In his preface to Armenian readers, Awgerean describes his work as a source of “pride for the Armenians and a surprise gift for the Greeks,” as it is giving back this important Greek text that has been preserved in Armenian. He explains that the source he worked from was a parchment written in excellent *bolragir*, undated and untitled, written in the period of Nersēs Shnorhali [1102-1173] it seems for use of his brother Grigor III Pahlavuni, because his stamp is there. He also pays tribute to the efforts of Hakob Vardapet Stepanean Erkaneants’ = Յակոբ Վարդապետ Ստեփանեան Երկանեանց who had earlier translated the text into Latin.

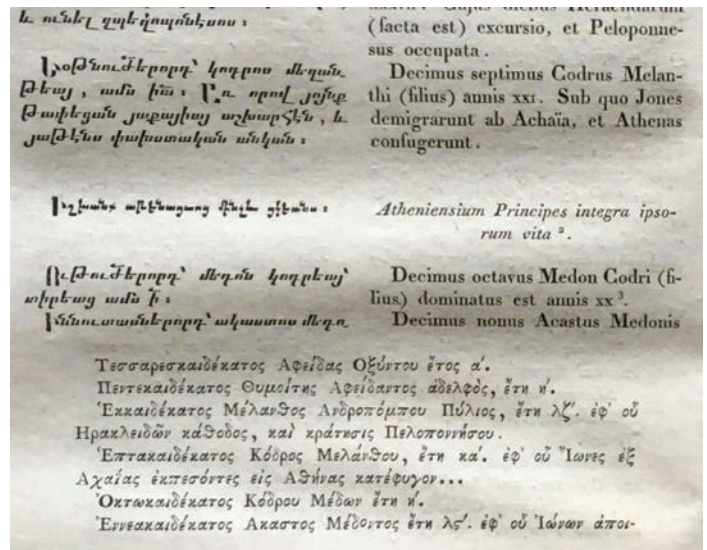
## St. Nerses’ Prayer in Twenty-Four Languages

**Title:** *Preces Sancti Nersetis Clajensis Armeniorum Patriarchae; viginti quatuor linguis editae* [Prayers of St. Nerses Klajetsi, Patriarch of Armenia: in twenty-four languages]

**Publication Information:** Venetiis: In Insula S. Lazari, 1837 [2nd edition]

NAASR Mardigian Library, from the collection of Vartan Gregorian

The second title bears the Latin title *Preces Sancti Nersetis Clajensis Armeniorum Patriarchae; viginti quatuor linguis editae*, and is a small



Detail of multi-language text

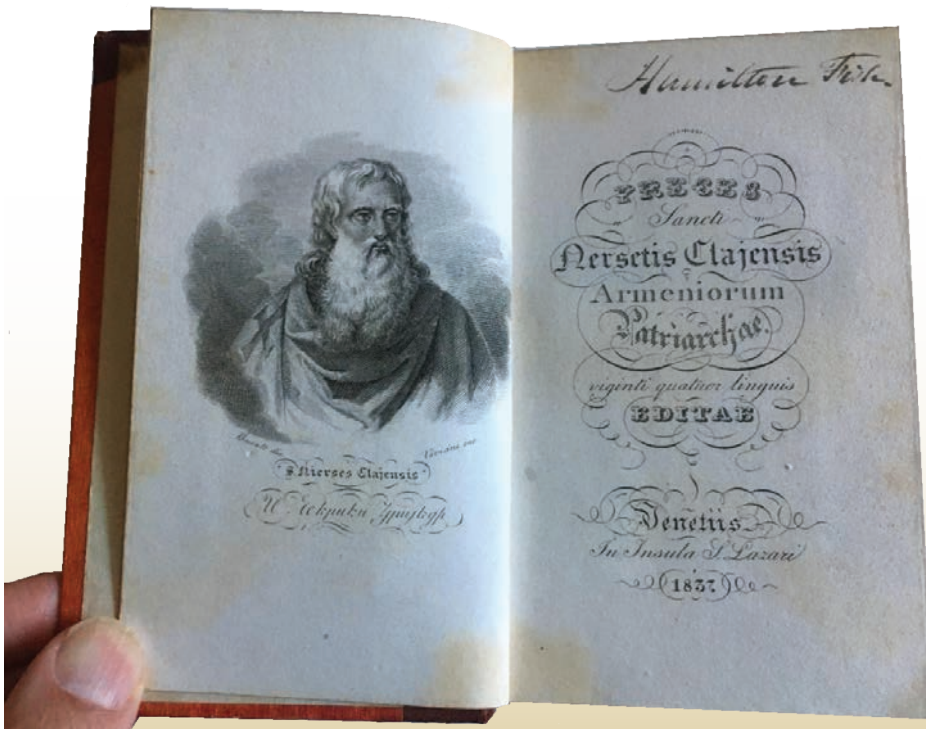
(9 cm. x 15 cm.) volume containing the prayer *Hawatov khostovanim* = Հաւատով խոստովանիմ (I confess with faith) by Nersēs Shnorhali = Ներսէս Ծնրիալի or Nersēs Klajetsi = Ներսէս Կլայեցի, in twenty-four languages, including, of course, Classical Armenian.

In a prefatory piece in Latin appearing only in the first edition, Harut’iwn Awgerean (as Paschalis Aucher) writes that “these prayers, adapted for the common use of the faithful, and divided into as many parts as the day has hours ... I, inspired by the examples of others, first into six, then into ten, and then into fourteen, and at last into sixteen different languages I translated. And now in order to fulfill my vow, I offer them translated into twenty-four, in those letters which each language has as its own.”<sup>2</sup>

First published in 1823, a second edition appeared in 1837 and NAASR’s Mardigian Library has two copies of the second edition. The library’s second copy is a very recent arrival, having been received in November 2021 as part of an important donation of books from the collection of Vartan Gregorian (1934-2021), the late President of the Carnegie Corporation and former President of the New York Public Library and Brown University, for whom the NAASR headquarters building is named.

However, the fraternal connection of the gifted brothers Mkrtych’ and Harut’iwn Awgerean is not the end of the connections between these books published in Venice.

While unfortunately we have not found the record of who donated the Eusebius volumes to NAASR, a donation that likely occurred in the 1960s or 1970s, we do know who the original owner of the volumes was and when it was purchased. Inside the front covers is written “Hamilton Fish. New York. Purchased at the Armenian Convent. Venice. Oct. 23, 1857.”



*Preces Sancti Nersetis Clajensis Armeniorum Patriarchae; viginti quatuor linguis editae*, from the collection of Vartan Gregorian



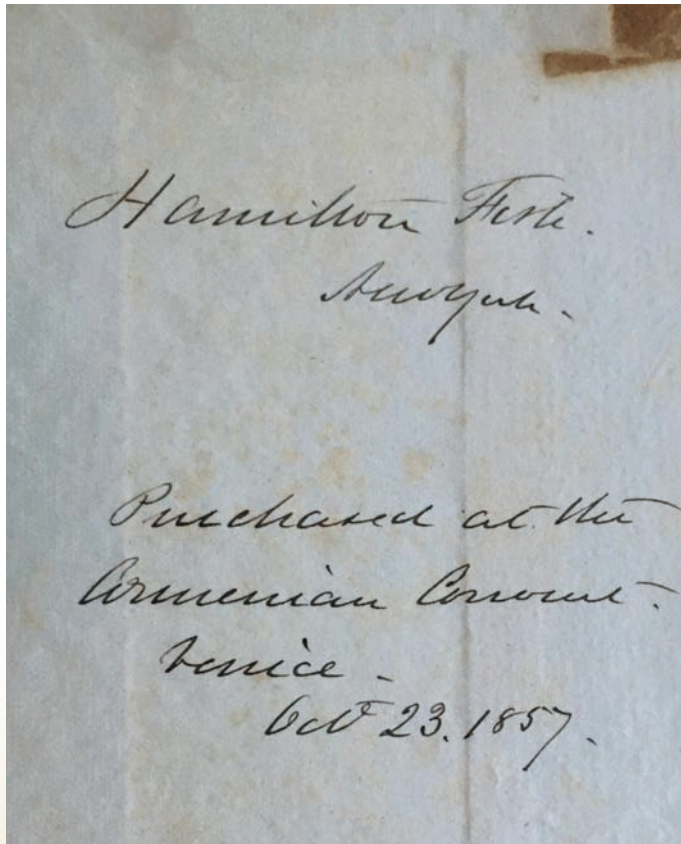
### Enter Senator Hamilton Fish

Hamilton Fish (1808-93) in October 1857 was a recently retired U.S. Senator for New York (elected in 1851). Fish was the scion of a prominent New York family, son of a Revolutionary War officer who married a descendant of Peter Stuyvesant, the last governor of New Netherlands until it was ceded to the British in 1664.

Fish was a member of the Whig Party, had previously served in the U.S. House of Representatives (elected in 1842), as Lieutenant Governor of New York (elected 1847), and then as Governor (elected 1848). He served in the Senate until March 1857, and then spent two years in Europe traveling with his family.<sup>3</sup> The photograph here, by Matthew Brady, shows Fish around this time.

Fish would later serve as Secretary of State in the administration of Ulysses S. Grant (1869-1877). A number of Fish's descendants distinguished themselves in public service, including his son, grandson, and great-grandson, all bearing the name Hamilton Fish, and all serving in the House of Representatives for the state of New York.

In light of this, imagine our surprise when we recently received the donation of books from the late Vartan Gregorian, opened the copy of *Preces Sancti Nersis Clajensis* and found an identical inscription: "Hamilton Fish. New York. Purchased at the Armenian Convent. Venice. Oct. 23, 1857."



Hamilton Fish's inscription in the St. Nerses volume

We don't know how Vartan Gregorian came to have this particular book in his collection, whether he purchased it or if it was given to him; but it is a source of a great pride to us that a man who devoted a considerable part of his life to libraries and books wanted his Armenian books to become part of NAASR's library. And to be able to reunite books purchased at one of the most important sites of Armenian scholarship and publishing by a distinguished American political figure more than



Hamilton Fish, ca. late 1850s, photographed by Matthew Brady

160 years ago—one might call that a "fish story," but we are tempted to call it fate.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> On the Awgereans, see *Bazmavēp*, special supplement, Aug. 15, 1901, pp. 101-13. Thanks to Sebouh Aslanian for sharing this source.

<sup>2</sup> Thanks to John Turner for the Latin translation. Awgerean's preface takes in the form of an encomium to Alexander Raphael (1775-1850), who was the eldest son of Edward Raphael (aka Edward Raphael Gharamiants), a wealthy Catholic Armenian merchant from Madras, originally from New Julfa, and one of the founders of the Collegio Armeno Moorat-Raphael in Venice. Alexander Raphael would become the Sheriff of London (1834), the first British Armenian elected to Parliament in 1847. For a great deal more about the Raphael family see Liz Chater's "The Raphaels: In the Shadow of Mexborough" on her "Armenians in India" blog, David A. Kennedy's "From Madras to Surbiton: Alexander Raphael, Unbeaten Champion, 1775-1850," and also see Sebouh Aslanian's "The Cultural Flourishing of the Armenian Communities in India and Around the Indian Ocean and the Development of Their Social and Political Thought in the Eighteenth Century" (in *Imprints of a Civilization*, edited by Gabriella Uluhogian, Boghos Levon Zekian, and Vartan Karapetian, 2011) and his forthcoming *Early Modernity and Mobility: Port Cities and Printers Across the Armenian Diaspora, 1512-1800*.

<sup>3</sup> See Amos Elwood Corning, *Hamilton Fish* (Lamere Publishing Company, 1918).



## IN MEMORIAM

# Van M. Aroian

(1927-2021)

## Long-Serving NAASR Board Member and Charter Member

NAASR marked with sadness the passing on July 14 of Van M. Aroian of Worcester, MA, the senior member of its Board of Directors, at the age of 94. Aroian was a Charter Member of NAASR, having joined in the organization's first year, 1955, and served on its Board of Directors since 1992, including many years on the Executive Committee.

He is survived by Mary, his wife of more than 60 years, and sons Mihran and Raffi and their families, and nieces and nephews including fellow NAASR Board Member Bruce W. Roat, who recalled his uncle as "a strong, positive leader in my extended family and a great role model of the greatest generation."

As a Board Member who was involved with NAASR from its very outset, Aroian brought a wealth of experience and knowledge but always wanted the organization to be looking ahead, rather than backwards. Current NAASR Chairman Yervant Chekijian remarked that "Van, as one of the longest serving members of the Board, believed in active participation in NAASR's administration, planning, and vision for the future," and indeed until recent physical setbacks slowed him down Van remained a highly involved member of the Board and a fixture at NAASR programs, logging many miles of driving between Worcester and Belmont.

Former NAASR Chairman Nancy Kolligian stated "Van meant so much to all of us—not only as a dedicated NAASR member and Board member but also as a man of keen intellect and knowledge who contributed so much to NAASR for decades. I valued him as a friend and mentor and will be forever grateful that he was a part of my life."

NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc Mamigonian, who worked closely with Aroian for more than 20 years, called him a "stalwart" and "a man of ideas and of integrity, decency, and commitment to what NAASR represents."

Van M. Aroian was born in Boston on June 5, 1927, to Mihran and Satenig (Tashjian) Aroian, respectively of Kharpert and Hussenig, Historic Armenia. They married in Boston and raised Van and his sisters Alice and Myra. He earned a BA at Boston University and MA in Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. He was a fellow in Urban Geography at Clark University and an Urban Planner and Deputy Director of the Worcester Redevelopment Authority. He later joined his brother-in-law, Kevork, and wife Mary Balekdjian Aroian in importing and retailing Oriental carpets.

It was during Aroian's time as a graduate student at Harvard that he met and studied with Prof. Richard Frye. In 1999, during the celebration of NAASR's 45th anniversary, Aroian recalled that "as a graduate student in 1951-1952 I approached Dr. Frye and stated that it was time to get a professorship in the Armenian area. He agreed strongly and urged me to go out and see what could be done. I canvassed the gamut of political and religious leaders; the con-



sensus was there, but the apparent mechanism was not. One day I entered the office to find Prof. Frye and Manoog Young and the other founders [Thomas Amirian and Arra Avakian] in serious discussion. ... By 1954 NAASR was formed and in five short years by 1959 with the establishment of the Harvard chair, the dream of Professors Blake, who had passed on in 1950, and Frye who had carried the idea forward had been realized. The rest is history."

Van served NAASR in many capacities over the years, including as a member of the 40th anniversary committee, as chairman of several of NAASR's academic conferences, as recording secretary of the Executive Committee, and many more. He was also active in the Worcester Historical Society, of which he was a past chairman; the Worcester Ecumenical Council; and the Armenian Church of Our Savior in Worcester.

Characteristically, while he initially was skeptical of NAASR's plans to build a new headquarters, Van came to embrace the idea and was a joyful presence at the grand opening on November 1, 2019. NAASR Executive Director Sarah Ignatius remembered "how meaningful it was for Van along with his fellow NAASR elder statesman, the late Jack Medzorian, to be there, braving the cold to help cut the ribbon and inaugurate a new era for the organization he served so well and for so long."



Van and Mary Aroian on the 2009 NAASR trip to Armenian Cilicia





## Sahag Dakesian

(1924-2021)

*NAASR Board Member and Charter Member*

Sahag Robert Dakesian of Hudson, MA, passed away on February 27, 2021, at the age of 96. He was a Senior Scientist/Engineer for 40 years at major electronic companies in the Boston area including Sylvania, Honeywell, and Raytheon. Sahag was a Charter Member of NAASR, having joined in 1955, and remained a member continuously for the rest of his life. In 2020, he was recognized for his 65-years of membership.

Sahag served on the NAASR Board of Directors (1962-69) and on its Executive Committee, taking an active role in the organization's work during important years of growth for NAASR and for Armenian Studies in the U.S. He was especially proud of his role as an organizer of the pioneering NAASR 1967 trip to Historic Armenia, which, unfortunately, he was unable to join due to a family illness. He credited his participation in NAASR with strengthening his knowledge and appreciation of his Armenian heritage.

Sahag Dakesian was born on July 6, 1924, in Roxbury (Boston), MA, to Rupen and Nuvart (Harpootlian) Dakesian. His parents were born in Ottoman Armenia and were survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

In 1961 he married Margaret Mugurdichian from Providence, RI, and remained there until 1969. Eventually, he and Margaret relocated to Sudbury, MA, where they resided for 41 years until 2010, after which they moved to Hudson.

Sahag Dakesian is survived by his wife Margaret, sister Lucille Diranian, sister-in-law Bertha Mugurdichian, his nephews and nieces: Richard Diranian and his wife Karen; Nancy Paloian and her husband Michael; Kenneth Diranian; Deborah Davenport and her husband Jim; and Ann Morgan. He also leaves behind his grand-nieces and grand-nephews: Alexa, Melissa, and Lindsey Diranian; Andrea and Adam Paloian; Jessie, Christopher and his wife Lindsay, Michael and his wife Franchesca, and Andrew and his wife Yunji Davenport; and great-great-nephew and great-great-niece Arlo Davenport and Edith Davenport.

# George Bournoutian (1943-2021)

## *Prolific and Dedicated Scholar and Friend*

NAASR joins with scholars and friends all over the world in mourning the passing of an esteemed colleague, Prof. George Bournoutian. While wishing to honor his stated wishes that no outpourings of sentiment follow his death, out of respect for his enormous contributions we offer this brief appreciation and extend our deepest sympathies to his family.

George Bournoutian was born and raised in Isfahan, Iran. Over the course of a long and productive career he published more than thirty books as author or translator which have been translated into many languages, and he taught at UCLA, Columbia University, Tufts University, New York University, Rutgers, University of Connecticut, and only recently retired after many years at Iona College.

Among his publications are *The Khanate of Erevan Under Qajar Rule; A Concise History of the Armenian People; The History of Vardapet Arakel of Tabriz; Two Chronicles on the History of Karabagh; The Travel Accounts of Simeon of Poland; Jambr; The 1823 Russian Survey of the Karabagh Province: A Primary Source on the Demography and Economy of Karabagh in the Early 19th Century; A Brief History of the Aghuank Region; The 1829-1832 Russian Surveys of the Khanate of Nakhichevan; and Armenia and Imperial Decline: The Yerevan Province, 1900-1914.*

In addition to his writings, George was a prolific lecturer, giving innumerable talks including many for NAASR over the years in Belmont and all over the U.S. and Canada. He was also a world traveler and led NAASR's first Armenian Heritage Tour in decades in 2006 to the Republic of Armenia and Historic Armenia.

In 2008, he enriched NAASR's library immeasurably when he transferred his huge scholarly library, the Ani and George Bournoutian Collection, which has become a cornerstone of the Mardigian Library. NAASR,



George Bournoutian with Nancy Kolligian and Marc Mamigonian after a lecture in 2009



in turn, was proud to support his work through grants for several of his publications.

Former NAASR Chairman Nancy Kolligian recalled that George "was an outstanding scholar who electrified the room when he entered it. I will remember going to Armenia and Historic Armenia with him on our 2006



George Bournoutian with fellow 2006 NAASR Armenian Heritage Tour travelers George Krikorian, Nancy Kolligian, Judy Kolligian, Van Aroian, Mary Aroian, Bob Bejoian

NAASR trip—we had such a great time." Current Chairman Yervant Chekijian remembered Bournoutian as "totally committed to the honest exploration of Armenia's history."

NAASR Academic Director Marc Mamigonian remarked that "George was warm, opinionated, unfiltered, brilliant, hilarious, and utterly indefatigable. He was always in the middle of a book project and excited about the next one. While it is difficult to accept that there will be no next book, no one can say that George Bournoutian didn't get the most out of life, and he leaves an incredible legacy."

Anyone who ever met George Bournoutian or heard one of his lectures could feel his energy and boundless vitality. Those qualities will endure in his huge scholarly output, which will continue to enrich us, and in our memories of him as a friend and a scholar. He will indeed be missed.

# Lucy Der Manuelian

*Arthur H. Dadian and Ara T. Oztemel Professor of Armenian Art in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at Tufts University*

*Editor's note: With the permission of the author, we share this heartfelt appreciation of Lucy Der Manuelian by Christina Maranci, who succeeded Der Manuelian as Arthur H. Dadian and Ara T. Oztemel Chair of Armenian Art in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at Tufts.*

On September 20, 2021, Lucy Der Manuelian passed away at her home in Belmont, Massachusetts. Dr. Der Manuelian (fondly referred to by many of us as “Lucy”) was the founder and first occupant of the Arthur H. Dadian and Ara T. Oztemel Chair of Armenian Art in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at Tufts. The Tufts chair is the first and only endowed professorship of Armenian art outside the Republic of Armenia. It was launched in 1984 as a rotating lectureship at Tufts in conjunction with Harvard, McGill, Boston University, and Northeastern, so that courses in Armenian art could be taught at each institution in succession. In 1989, the lectureship became an endowed position with a permanent home at Tufts. This owes entirely to Lucy’s energies, and the financial support of New Deal attorney Arthur H. Dadian and import/export magnate Ara T. Oztemel, the latter known for bringing Coca-Cola to the Soviet Union. Lucy retired in 2006.

Lucy was educated at Harvard (Radcliffe), and, after a twenty-year hiatus from academia in which she raised two children, received her PhD at Boston University in 1980. Her dissertation was supported by a fellowship at the Bunting (now the Harvard-Radcliffe) Institute (1971-1973), and an IREX (International Research and Exchange Board) grant in 1977 for travel to the Soviet Union. The project, supervised by noted scholar of Islamic art, Oleg Grabar, concerned the medieval sculptural program of Geghard, and was the first serious English-language monograph on that site. Lucy’s project was innovative in its comparative approach to the monument, considering the sculptural program of Geghard in relation not only to Armenian iconography, but also to the artistic traditions of Byzantium and Islam. Her dissertation is also widely considered to be the first American dissertation dedicated to Armenian art.

Lucy lent her expertise in Armenian art and architecture to a range of scholarly projects, authoring articles on major Armenian monuments and artistic themes for *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (1982-1989) and *Grove Dictionary of Art* (now Oxford Art Online). She was an author

and researcher for the massive microfiche work known as *Armenian Architecture* (Zug: Inter Documentation, c. 1980-c.1990). She contributed articles to several important Armenological volumes, including *Medieval Armenian Culture* (Thomas Samuelian, ed., Chico: Scholars Press, 1984). In addition to work on Armenian architecture and sculpture, Lucy published widely on a variety of topics within Armenian art. Among her most noted projects are her publications on carpets, including the exhibition catalogue, *Weavers, Merchants, and Kings: The Inscribed Rugs of Armenia-Kimbell Art Museum* (Forth Worth, Kimbell Art Museum 1984) which provided a crucial English-language scholarly foundation for the history of Armenian rug weaving. Lucy’s interests also extended to the study of important Armenian-Americans, including Moses Gulesian. In addition to contributing to conventional academic projects, she was remarkably prescient about technology, making use of film and the internet (as early as the 1990s) in her pedagogy and research.

Lucy is best known in the Armenian community as a tireless advocate for Armenian art, lecturing to audiences around the world, and educating Armenians in the US about their rich medieval cultural heritage. Almost everyone in the community has a “Lucy story” about the first time they heard her lecture. She was an activist for Armenian cultural heritage long before that concept became familiar to us all.

Lucy was fearless, physically and psychologically. Before the era of drones, she hung out of helicopters to take good aerial shots of monasteries and churches. At the height of the Soviet period, the KGB suspected that she was a spy because of all her travel and photography. One night they visited her in Yerevan, and, to avoid handing over the film, Lucy hid it inside her dress, daring them to manhandle her. Art history won and we have the photographs.

As everyone who knew her can attest, Lucy was unconventional and indomitable. An avid tennis player, she had boundless energy. She believed in using every minute: she kept a stack of books in the car and read at every stoplight (often to the consternation of drivers behind her). She kept apples and packets of cheese and crackers in her pockets to eat on the go, but was also a very fine chef, such that Julia Child came to her house for dinner and enjoyed Lucy’s chicken cooked with cherries. Lucy sometimes held office hours in her car if she couldn’t find a parking spot.

Along with her family and friends, the entire Armenian community, the Tufts community, her students, and her colleagues, I am

intensely sad to know that Lucy is no longer with us. She was a life force for Armenian art. I was so fortunate to learn from and be mentored by her. I think she was happiest standing in front of an audience, sharing her knowledge about Armenian art. I remember her telling me that before beginning a presentation, you should pause and smile at your audience (she had a thousand-watt smile). I hope she is doing that now, giving her “helicopter lecture” (as we affectionately called it) and teaching a whole new audience about Armenian art.



Lucy Der Manuelian with Marc Mamigonian and Nancy Kolligian

*Christina Maranci*

*Arthur H. Dadian and Ara T. Oztemel Professor of Armenian Art, Tufts University*





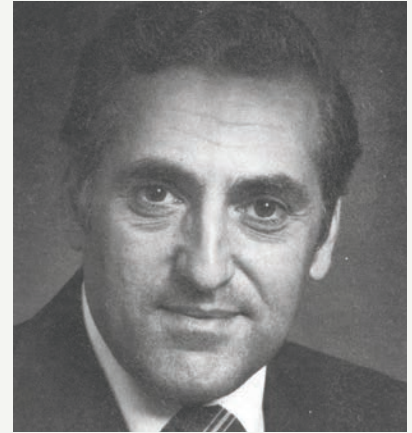
## NAASR Receives Generous Bequest from Longtime Member Bernard Zulalian

The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) has received a very generous bequest of \$750,000 from the estate of Bernard L. Zulalian of Belmont, MA. Among NAASR's longest serving members, Mr. Zulalian joined the organization in 1964 and was a staunch supporter for over 55 years. He passed away in May 2020.

He cared deeply about NAASR's mission advancing Armenian Studies. Throughout the years, he took on a variety of roles, serving on various NAASR committees and contributing generously, and he regularly attended programs at the NAASR center. His generous gift will support NAASR's programming and activities for generations to come.

"It is a true honor that Bernard, a quietly devoted NAASR member for decades, chose to make this substantial bequest," said NAASR Board Chairman Yervant Chekijian. "It shows his deep commitment to NAASR's mission and his wish for the organization to continue to attain our goals even after he is gone. We are deeply grateful for his thoughtfulness and dedication."

Bernard was the son of the late Madeline (Aslanian) and Tatoul Zulalian. A graduate of UMass Amherst, he received his MBA in 1960 from Babson College, majoring in finance and investments, and worked as an Accounting Manager at Raytheon for many years. He served in the U.S. Army and was active in local Belmont government, serving as a Town Meeting member, a member and Chair of the Recreation Commission, and a member and Chair of the Housing Authority.



## Lucy Der Manuelian and NAASR

By Marc A. Mamigonian

Following Lucy Der Manuelian's passing, and as preparation for remarks to be given at her memorial service, I spent time exploring the voluminous file at NAASR on Lucy, dating back to the 1960s. Frankly, I was amazed at the story it told, as well as surprised. I was not aware that NAASR gave Lucy a series of grants to help her advance her scholarly work, starting in the early 1970s when she was a research fellow at the Radcliffe Institute to travel to Armenia to study monuments in the early phase of her journey as a scholar, and continuing during her graduate studies and beyond.

In 1981, after she had completed her doctoral dissertation, she wrote a beautiful note to NAASR's chairman Manoog Young, saying "from the very beginning, NAASR's support and encouragement meant a great deal to me both professionally and personally. This expression of support helped me in my determination to succeed in writing a dissertation on Armenian art, no matter what the obstacles." I hear in those words her gratitude and justifiable pride in her accomplishment. We can be proud to have played any role in her pioneering accomplishments.



Lucy Der Manuelian with Helen Evans and Nancy Kolligian

## Dr. Vartiter Hovannisian, 1930-2021

Long-time activist, scholar, and physician Vartiter Kotcholosian Hovannisian, MD, passed away on November 25, 2021, in Los Angeles. She was 90.

A constant presence at the side of her husband, the preeminent scholar of modern Armenian history, Professor Richard Hovannisian, Dr. Vartiter K. Hovannisian herself was an activist and scholar.



In the early days of Armenia's independence, Dr. Hovannisian traveled there to provide assistance and input, becoming an advocate for better healthcare in the fledgling republic, especially for women's health.

She traveled the four corners of the world to interview residents of her ancestral home of Dzitogh, in Garin (Erzeroum) in Western Armenia, eventually compiling a book that chronicled the history and the lives of the people who called that part of the world their home.

Born in Kharkov, Ukraine in 1930, Dr. Hovannisian spent years enduring the hardships in Displaced Persons camps in Germany after World War II. She and her family eventually settled in Fresno, where she attended Fresno State University. She received her doctoral degree in medicine from the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine. For decades, she worked at Kaiser Permanente's Panorama City campus in the Internal Medicine department until her retirement.

Dr. Hovannisian was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother, whose life experiences were instilled not just in her family but the Armenian community at large.

(Asbarez, November 29, 2021)

IN MEMORIAM

# Vartan Gregorian

(1934-2021)

With great sadness and profound respect, we mourn the passing of Vartan Gregorian, brilliant educator, generous-hearted humanitarian, and friend after whom NAASR's beautiful new headquarters is named. May his legacy continue to inspire generations to come.

*“Vartan Gregorian embodies the values at the heart of NAASR’s mission. He has dedicated his entire life to educational advancement and the pursuit of knowledge, engaging in public service throughout his career, and working to better the human condition. We are grateful that we can acknowledge and memorialize his tremendous accomplishments by naming the institution’s new headquarters the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building.”*

**Edward Avedisian**

NAASR Board of Directors and lead donor,  
NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building



Vartan Gregorian and Edward Avedisian

Born in Tabriz, Iran, Vartan Gregorian received his elementary education in Iran and his secondary education at Collège Arménien in Beirut, Lebanon. In 1956, he entered Stanford University, where he majored in history and the humanities, graduating with honors in 1958. He was awarded a PhD in history and humanities from Stanford in 1964. Gregorian has taught European intellectual history and Middle Eastern history at San Francisco State College, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of Texas at Austin.



Vartan Gregorian with Andrew Heiskell at the NYPL on Fifth Avenue (Andrew Heiskell Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University)

In 1972, he joined the University of Pennsylvania faculty and was appointed Tarzian Professor of Armenian and Caucasian History and professor of South Asian History. He was founding dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Penn in 1974 and four years later became its twenty-third provost until 1981. His outstanding tenure at the university has been honored with endowed professorships in English and in the Humanities

and through several graduate fellowships in the humanities.

After an academic career spanning two decades, Gregorian served as President of The New York Public Library from 1980 to 1989. The institution includes a network of four research libraries and 83 branch libraries,

and during his tenure, Gregorian was widely credited with restoring the status of the library as a financially sound, cultural landmark. In 1989, he was appointed the 16th President of Brown University, where he led a campaign that raised over \$500 million, bringing the institution's endowment past the \$1 billion mark. Gregorian also oversaw the creation of several new academic departments. In honor of his legacy at



Vartan Gregorian with Edward Avedisian and Yervant Chekijian at the grand opening of the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building (Ken Martin photo)

the university, a residence quadrangle was named after him, as well as three professorships: the Vartan Gregorian Assistant Professorship, The Brooke Russell Astor Professorship in the Humanities in Honor of Vartan Gregorian, and the Aga Khan Professorship in Islamic Humanities created in honor of Gregorian. In 1997, the City of Providence renamed the Fox Point Public Elementary School after Gregorian to acknowledge his role in strengthening relationships between the university and the community.

In 1997, Gregorian assumed the presidency of one of the country's oldest grantmaking foundations, Carnegie Corporation of New York. His philanthropic work and scholarly accomplishments have been recognized with more than 70 honorary degrees and dozens of significant awards, including the National Humanities Medal, awarded by President William J. Clinton; and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, awarded by President George W. Bush. President George H. W. Bush appointed Gregorian to the J. William Fulbright Board of Foreign Scholarships, and President Barack Obama appointed him to the selection committee of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships. Gregorian has also been decorated by the Austrian, Italian, Portuguese, French, and Armenian governments.

Gregorian was a member of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, which awarded him an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters in 2001, following an honorary degree awarded by Yerevan State University in 1995. He was a former trustee of the American University of Armenia, a trustee emeritus of the Dilijan International School of Armenia, and a co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative with Ruben Vardanyan and Dr. Noubar Afeyan, who established the Vartan Gregorian Scholarship Program in 2018 to support scholarly research of Armenian history. In 2012, Gregorian was presented with the Republic of Armenia's Medal of Mkhitar Gosh, and in 2017, he was the recipient of the country's Order of Honor.



## NAASR Receives Armenian Library of Vartan Gregorian

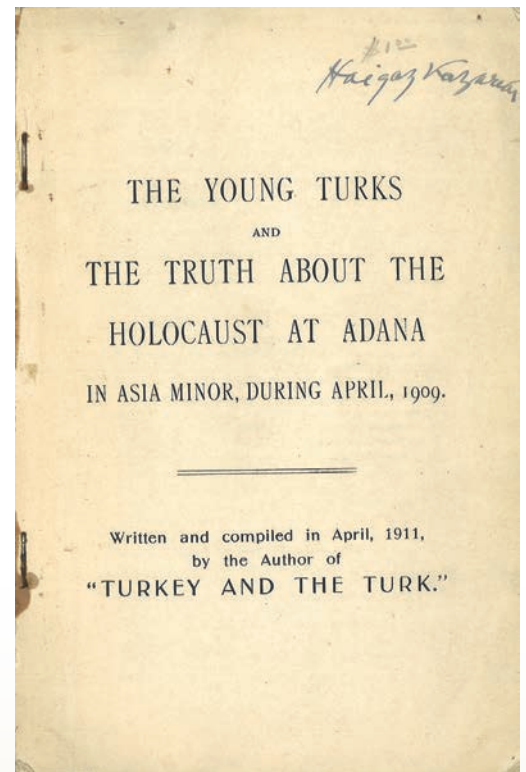
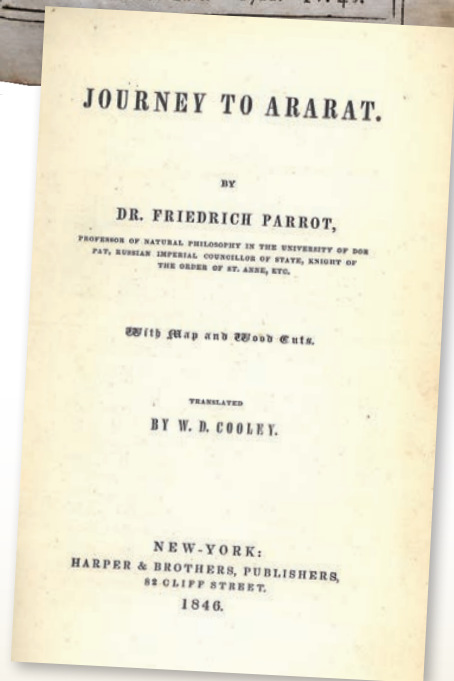
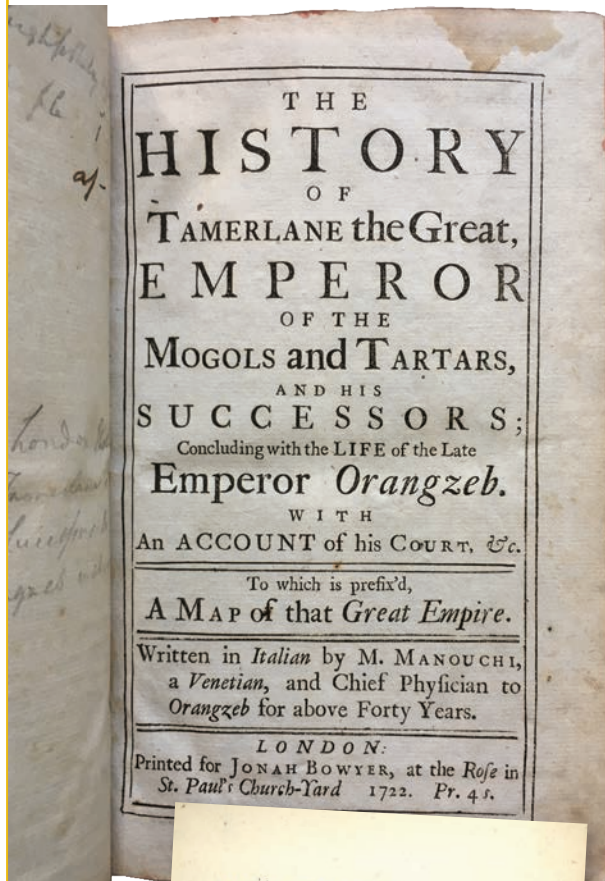
In November 2019, at the time of the grand opening of the new NAASR building, Vartan Gregorian, for whom the building was named, promised that NAASR would receive his Armenian library, an extraordinary gesture from a man for whom books and libraries were a way of life.

Following Gregorian's untimely passing in April 2021, steps were taken through the kindness of his nephew, NAASR member and friend Ara Arakelian, and other members of the family and staff at the Carnegie Corporation, arrangements were made for the transfer to NAASR of well over 600 books and periodical titles, spanning a wide range of subjects. The collection arrived at NAASR in the late fall and at the time of the writing of the Newsletter is still in the process of being listed.

A preliminary assessment, however, reveals a number of fascinating items and aspects of the collection. The oldest item is *The History of Tamerlane the Great, Emperor of the Mogols and Tartars and His Successors*, published in London in 1722. Other rarities include Friedrich Parrot's *Journey to Ararat* (1846), *The Trans-Caucasian Campaign of the Turkish Army Under Omer Pasha* by Laurence Oliphant (1856), and a number of books identifiable as having belonged to Haigazn Kazarian. Kazarian was a pioneering researcher on the Armenian Genocide, and some of his books and papers had been donated to NAASR more than a decade ago by his son (see *NAASR Newsletter*, Spring-Summer 2010, p. 9).

One item from the collection, the 1837 *Preces Sancti Nersesis Clajensis Armeniorum Patriarchae*, published at San Lazzaro in Venice, was featured in a "Treasures of the Mardigian Library" installment (see p. 18 of this *Newsletter*) and others will be highlighted in the future.

The Vartan Gregorian Collection will be kept permanently on display in NAASR's Mardigian Library in a specially designated area.



Rare copy of *The Young Turks and the Truth about the Holocaust at Adana in Asia Minor, during April 1909*, formerly owned by Haigazn Kazarian

## Is NAASR In Your Will?

There are many ways you can help NAASR and its programs to advance Armenian Studies. One of the most significant is to include NAASR in your estate

planning. Contact NAASR to discuss possibilities and ask for NAASR's estate planning booklet at 617-489-1610, or e-mail us at [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org).

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# NAASR *Book Beat*

Be sure to check out our monthly *Book Beat*, featuring surprising finds in our bookstore. Past themes have included “Explorations through the Centuries,” “Diplomats as Authors,” “Resistance and Survival,” “Armenian Identity,” “Children’s Corner,” “Gift Books,” and so much more.

On our website, you can also order for your own home an Eternity Sculpture Ornament by Michael Aram, who created and donated to NAASR the one-of-a-kind, monumental Eternity Sculpture, which graces the front of our Vartan Gregorian building.



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