



# The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research

## Enthusiastic Response to Conversational Armenian Class at NAASR

Throughout the late winter and spring, each Wednesday evening seventeen ambitious adults have attended a conversational Western Armenian class taught by Anahid Yacoubian at the NAASR Center. With three members of the class driving from New Hampshire and one from the Cape, the enthusiasm of the group is evident from the distances they are willing to travel even in inclement weather.

At the beginning of the course, Yacoubian stated three goals for the class: 1) to have fun while learning; 2) to learn not to be afraid to make mistakes in the process; and 3) not to compete with others in the class, since each person's progress is to be measured from his or her starting point. Since levels of knowledge vary from person to person, accommodations are made for all of the class members.

The group obviously is enjoying working with Yacoubian and with each other, as is clear both from

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Steve Kurkjian and Margaret Defreest converse



Southern California NAASR Board Members Dr. Rubina Perroomian and Bruce Roat, left, with Committee Members Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin, Prof. Martin Adamian, Arsineh Ararat, and NAASR Chairman Nancy Kolligian

## Increased Activity in Southern California for NAASR

Anyone on the NAASR mail or e-mail list or who follows our activities through the newspapers will have noticed that there has been a substantial increase in the number of lectures and other public events in recent years. In particular, there has been a noticeable rise in the level of activity in Southern California. To a large extent, this has resulted from the efforts of NAASR's Southern California Board Members Dr. Rubina Perroomian and Bruce Roat and to the newly-formed NAASR Southern California committee consisting of Prof. Martin Adamian, Arsineh Ararat, Dr. Ohannes Avedikian, Sara Chitjian, Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin, and Dr. Kay Mouradian.

Mangassarian-Goschin, who serves as Director of the Ararat-Eskijian Museum in Mission Hills, has been a vital partner in recent years, as NAASR has co-sponsored a number of lectures and events at the Museum, in addition to events in the Los Angeles area in conjunction with the Armenian program at UCLA, the Organization of Istanbul Armenians, the Diocese and the Prelacy, the Abril Bookstore, and others.

"It has been a priority for NAASR to expand our high-quality programs to other parts of the country, and it is wonderful that the most successful area thus far has been Southern California, with its large Ar-

menian population," said NAASR Chairman Nancy Kolligian. Director of Academic Affairs Marc Mamigonian, who coordinates the scheduling of events, commented that "Having people like Rubina, Bruce, Maggie, and the other interested and committed members there who are very adept at organizing events is very comforting—they do a great job."

Bruce Roat added, "Our dynamic Armenian community in Southern California—including professors, students, and the general public—has shown a strong interest in furthering NAASR's support of Armenian Studies. As our capable, dedicated committee works to augment our regional programs with the support of a growing membership base, we look forward to expanding our support of research, scholarship, and general awareness of the vital Armenian history and culture."

Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin affirmed that "the expansion of NAASR in Southern California demonstrates the continued success and years of dedication of this unique institution to Armenian Studies and research." She added, "NAASR's vision and dedication not only has established the first two chairs of Armenian Studies, but also has preserved and promoted our rich legacy, especially when there were no other institutions available."

# Archives Made Available on the Web

The Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan announced the web posting of issues of *Hnchak*, the central organ of the Hnchakian Party. The Social Democratic Hnchakian (Hunchakian) Party, founded in 1887, was the first Armenian political organization that became a national/international organization aiming at the liberation of Ottoman Armenians.

The collection of *Hnchak* issues presented here covers the period 1887-1915, including

*“The institute’s current priority is to digitize the archives to facilitate academic research and study.”*

the publications of rival factions of the party in 1903. Few full collections remain.

The digitization and webposting of the *Hnchak* collection from the National Library of Armenia has been made possible by the Nor Serount Cultural Association and the Social Democratic Hnchakian Party/California. For further information and to view the archives, please visit the University of Michigan Armenian Studies Program website [www.umich.edu/~iinet/asp/](http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/asp/). This information is located under Academic/Resources.

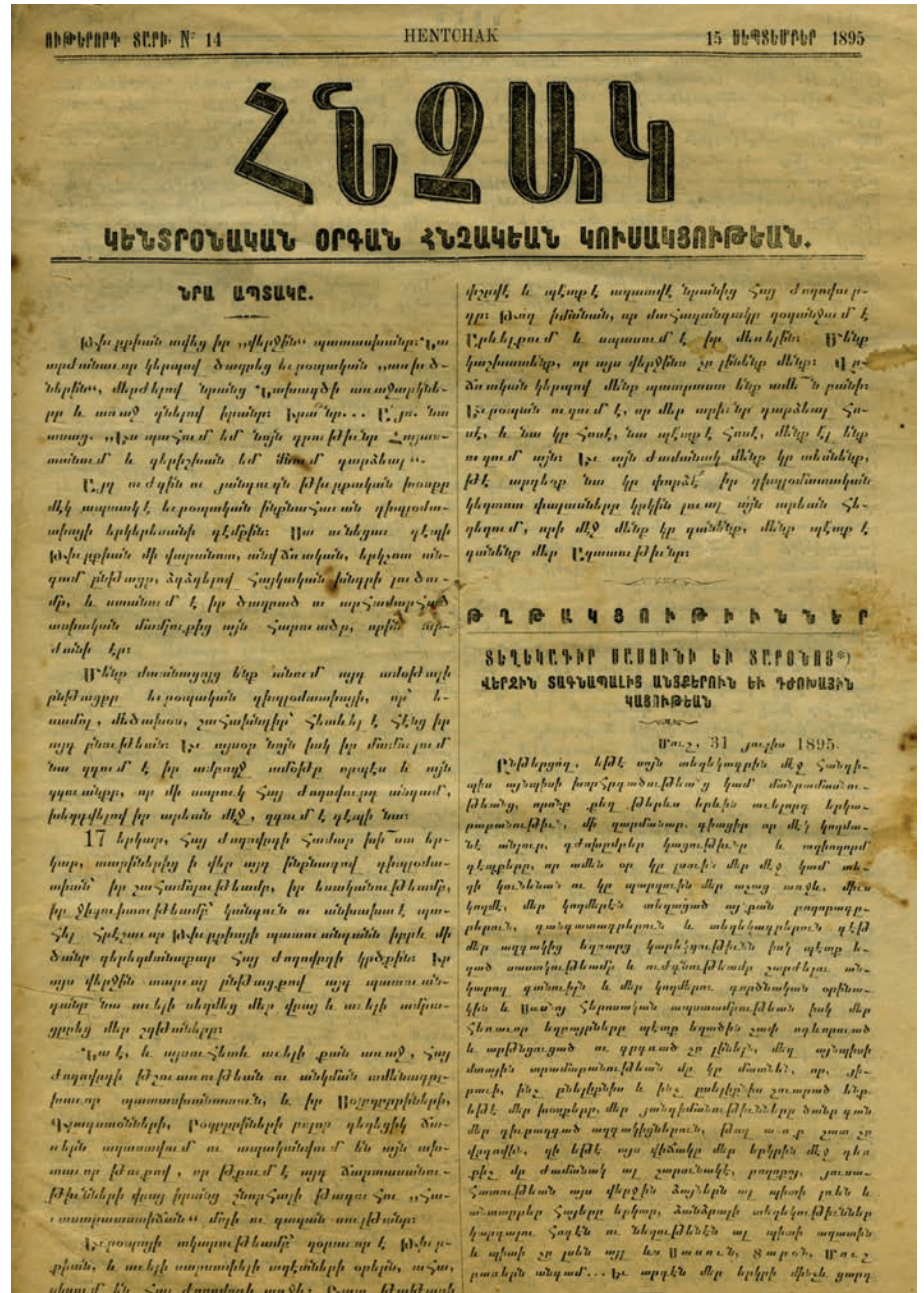
## ARF Establishes Archives Institute

The ARF this week announced the establishment of a central Archive Institute that will digitize the vast archives of the 118-year-old political party.

The ARF World Congress decided on the project last year, and the institute, based in Montebello with offices in Watertown, Mass., and Beirut, Lebanon, is being headed by former *Asbarez* editor Vatche Proodian.

Proodian said the institute’s current priority is to digitize the archives to facilitate academic research and study. It will also prepare material for publication.

Among the archives is the hand-written declaration of independence of the First Republic of Armenia. Also safeguarded are the first and original ARF Manifesto, hand-written letters from ARF founders, World Congress minutes, circulars and regional organizational reports, as well as maps, and an



An 1895 issue of *Hnchak* from the NAASR archives

extensive collection of photographs. Among the maps housed in the archives is one of the Caucasus in 1907 during the Czarist period that delineates the demographic breakdown of Armenians in each administrative region.

The Archive Institute is asking individuals who have valuable archival materials to submit them to the institute for safekeeping;

once there, they will be evaluated and published as part of the political and cultural wealth of the Armenian people.

For more information, visit [www.arfarchives.org](http://www.arfarchives.org), call (323) 726-9931, or email [vproodian@arfarchives.org](mailto:vproodian@arfarchives.org). The Archives Institute is located at 420 Washington Blvd., Montebello, CA 90640.

# NAASR Hosts Scholars' Socials at Belmont Center

In November 2008 and February 2009, NAASR hosted the first two of what it hopes will be a long series of evening socials for area scholars working in Armenian Studies and closely-related fields.

Realizing that there were a number of new people in the area and that there were too few occasions for scholars and researchers to meet and get to know each other, NAASR Director of Academic Affairs along with Administrative Director Cathy Minassian brought together in November a large group, including all of the area Armenian Studies chairholders. After brief presentations by Mamigonian and NAASR Chairman Nancy Kolligian, each of the scholars said a few words about his or



Prof. Ina Baghdiantz McCabe and Dr. Eden Naby in conversation



Above: Prof. George Bournoutian with Dr. Khachik Gevorgyan, Nancy Kolligian, and Marc Mamigonian

Below: Standing, left to right: Marc Mamigonian, Dr. Suzanne Moranian, Prof. Christina Maranci, Dr. Asbed Kotchikian, Rebecca Stengel, Prof. James Russell, Prof. Taner Akcam, Dr. Michael Connolly, Dr. Ara Ghazarians; Seated: Dr. Barbara Merguerian, Prof. Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, Dr. Bedross Der Matossian, Prof. Lucy Der Manuelian, Prof. Levon Chorbajian, Dr. Eden Naby

her work. Prof. James Russell of Harvard University paid special tribute to recently-retired Prof. Lucy Der Manuelian of Tufts University, citing her inspirational role as a pioneer in the study of Armenian art and architecture in the U.S., and Chairman Kolligian presented Der Manuelian with flowers in honor of her career.

In February, a second gathering was convened to coincide with the visit from Prof. George Bournoutian and the unveiling of the Ani and George

Bournoutian Collection in NAASR's Mardigian Library. Those in attendance had a chance to speak briefly to the assembled group before everyone was invited upstairs to visit the Bournoutian Collection.

Both events were a welcome reminder of the vitality of the Armenian Studies community and particularly of the impressive concentration of scholars in and around Boston. It is intended that the next Scholars' Social will be held in the fall of this year.



Attendees at the February Scholars' Social. Standing, left to right: Carol Yeghiayan, Barbara Young, Marc Mamigonian, Dr. Barbara Merguerian, Dr. Gayane Novikova, Prof. George Bournoutian, Dr. Sonia Ketchian, Dr. Bedross Der Matossian, Dr. Khachik Gevorgyan, Shushan Teager, Dr. Dikran Kaligian, Prof. Simon Payaslian, Dr. Asbed Kotchikian; Seated: Nancy Kolligian, Manoog Young, Prof. Lucy Der Manuelian, Raffi Yeghiayan

## Former NAASR Board Member Varnum Paul Dies at Age 100

NAASR notes with sadness the death of Varnum Paul on October 5, 2008. Paul, who had turned 100 the previous month, was a former member of the NAASR Board of Directors for Northern California, NAASR's National Advisory Board, and a 40+ year member of the Association.

Varnum Paul was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1908 to immigrant parents, originally named Bogoshian, from Kharpert in Historic Armenia, and

moved to Fresno with his family around 1917. He was educated at the University of California, Berkeley, from which he also received a JD in 1933.

Paul was an active member of St. John Armenian Apostolic Church in San Francisco, and was the primary architect of the Western Diocese Endowment Fund. He served on the Board of Directors of Heald Colleges, as a trustee of the Rotary Club of the San Francisco Endowment Foundation,

and as attorney for the Masonic Homes of California.

Varnum Paul became a NAASR member in 1958 and was active in the organization's West Coast efforts. In 1987 he became a member of the National Advisory Board and in 1989 he was elected to the Board of Directors.

A munificent contributor to NAASR for decades, Varnum Paul remembered NAASR in his will with a generous bequest.

## Dr. Vartkes L. Broussalian, Former NAASR Board Member, Dies at 80

Vartkes L. Broussalian, Ph.D. of Granada Hills, California, passed away peacefully on February 22, 2009, two days before his 81st birthday. He was a longtime member and supporter of NAASR, having joined in 1971. He served on the NAASR Board of Directors from 1991 until 2003.

Dr. Broussalian was a brilliant economist trained at the London School of Economics and UCLA whose career spanned more than half a century. His dissertation provided additional support for the groundbreaking hypothesis that individuals systematically underestimate the rate of inflation, resulting in the redistribution of wealth from creditors to debtors. Later he contributed to the development of a new field in economics, public choice, extending economic theory to the analysis of government decision-making. In his subsequent career in government he specialized in the application of economic theory and econometric techniques to establish the consequences of alternative economic policies.

He held senior-level positions in various branches of the United States Government including the Executive Office of the President; he taught at several major universities including Duke, UCLA, Northridge, and American University of Armenia; and he served as an advisor to the newly-formed democratic governments of Armenia and Moldova in the early 1990s. Dr. Broussalian made significant contributions to economic theory and public policy through his teaching, research, collegial dialogue, and consulting.

His government service included positions at the Center for Naval Analyses, National Bureau of Standards, and the White House Office of Management and Budget, where he

served for 20 years. He provided analysis and guidance on national policy ranging from consumer safety to gas rationing (during the 1970s gas crisis) to water supply issues. He served in the Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan Administrations.

Dr. Broussalian was born in 1928 in the town of Ramleh in Palestine. His parents, Levon and Zepure, survived the Armenian Genocide of 1915 in Ottoman Turkey and fled to Palestine to start a new life. In 1956, he met and married Marie Therese Hassoun, who had just returned to Beirut after completing her Masters at Columbia to do research at the American University of Beirut where Vartkes was teaching. Together they moved to the U.S. to do graduate studies and build a new life. The

couple was married for 52 years.

Dr. Broussalian was devoted to numerous Armenian causes. In addition to his service to NAASR he was one of the original founders of the Armenian Assembly of America as well as a longtime supporter of the Friends of UCLA Armenian Language and Culture Studies, ARPA Institute, and the American University of Armenia.

Memorial donations can be made to Junior Achievement Worldwide f/b/o Junior Achievement of Armenia (1102 N. Brand Blvd., #61, Glendale California 91202) or to UCLA Foundation-Davidian Fund c/o Friends of UCLA Armenian Language and Culture Studies (P.O. Box 1372, Glendale, CA 91209) or to NAASR.



## Is NAASR In Your Will?

**There are many ways you can help NAASR and its programs for the furtherance of Armenian studies and research. One of the most significant is including NAASR in your estate planning. There are many possibilities – please make an appointment with NAASR to discuss the best plan for you. Call us at 617-489-1610, e-mail us at [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org), or visit us at the NAASR Center in Belmont.**



# NAASR Lectures and Programs

## NOVEMBER 2008 – MARCH 2009

**Thurs., Nov. 6:** Screening of new documentary *The Morgenthau Story* by Apo Torosyan at the NAASR Center

**Sun., Nov. 16:** Dr. Azat Yeghiazaryan, "Daredevils of Sasun: Poetics of the Armenian National Epic," at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum. Co-sponsored by the Museum and NAASR.

**Sun., Nov. 23:** NAASR daytrip to Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC, for "Sunday at the Met" Armenian Program

**Thurs., Dec. 4:** Prof. James Russell: "Black Milk: Bedros Tourian, Paul Celan, and Anselm Kiefer," at the NAASR Center

**Thurs., December 11:** NAASR Christmas Open House with illustrated talk by Prof. Christina Maranci on "Images of the Nativity in Armenian Art"

**Mon., Dec. 15:** Prof. James Russell: "The Armenian Magical Scroll and Outsider Art," at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA). Co-sponsored by ALMA and NAASR.

**Tues., Jan. 13:** Forum on "Armenians in the 21st Century" at Fordham Univ., New York City. Hosted by the Armenian Club of Fordham University and co-sponsored by NAASR, AAA (Armenian Assembly of America), AUA (American University of Armenia), AAHPO (Arm. Amer. Health Professional Org.), EFS (Everek Fenesse Educational Society), ABSA (Armenian Behavioral Science Assoc.), and AASSSG (Armenian-American Society for Studies of Stress & Genocide).

**Weds., Feb. 11:** Prof. George Bournoutian: "The Archival Chamber of Etchmiadzin," at the NAASR Center

**Tues., Feb. 17:** Screening of documentary *Everyone Prays at Holy Etchmiadzin*, at the NAASR Center

**Thurs., Feb. 19:** Prof. George Bournoutian: "The Archival Chamber of Etchmiadzin," at Abril Bookstore, Glendale, CA. Co-sponsored by NAASR and Abril.

**Sun. Feb. 22, 4:00 p.m.:** Prof. George Bournoutian: "The Archival Chamber of Etchmiadzin," at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, Mission Hills, California. Co-sponsored by the Ararat-Eskijian Museum and NAASR.

**Tues., March 3:** Prof. George Bournoutian: "Armenian Church under Persian Rule 1600-1800," at California State Univ.-Fresno. Co-sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program at CSU-Fresno and NAASR.

### NAASR LECTURE SUMMARIES

#### *The Morgenthau Story* at NAASR

On November 6, NAASR held a screening of artist and filmmaker Apo Torosyan's newest work, *The Morgenthau Story*, chronicling several generations of the notable family and their humanitarian efforts on behalf of the Armenian people.

Prior to the showing of the film at the NAASR Center, Prof. James R. Russell, Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University, who had been invited by Torosyan to offer introductory remarks, gave a short but stirring talk. Portions of it are quoted below.

First there was the long darkness. Like the tidal wave that you see in a dream of impotent fear, it inundated the great and the small towns of Armenia...

An American diplomat protested, but his government took the side of the murderers, and still does. Because every voice—Ambassador Morgenthau's, Armin Wegner's, Haji Khalil's—was confined in a cell of silence, the destroyers of the living world went on to despoil other towns, to empty other homes, silence other voices...

But in defiance of the algebra of cynicism and the machinery of death, the voices were never entirely silenced. The human rights movement, as we know from Peter Balakian's work, began to take shape in part because, against the Armenian Genocide, American citizens invoked, without the aid of their government, nature's rights and nature's God...

[In Istanbul] where the very evil was first conceived, today, the best and the most articulate voices of the great and ill-served Turk-

ish nation, Nazim Hikmet's people, are speaking up.

We are here tonight to honor a Jewish American whose heroic work is celebrated in a film by an Armenian American, and the Armenian Chair at Harvard has the privilege to co-sponsor this event. It could be a bitter occasion: the Armenian Genocide continues to be denied and anti-Semitism is very much alive. And in Darfur, and in Somalia, who can speak of human rights?

But this is no ordinary night. The sparks of extinguished lives, as it turns out, do kindle a fire, and the fire cannot be encompassed by darkness. When Dr. King and Hrant Dink died, crowds gathered, but they gathered to mourn... Too much of what we have seen are protest marches or memorial throngs. But in the small hours of yesterday, Wednesday morning, there was something else, a different kind of throng: a celebration. In Harvard Square, throughout Cambridge, across the nation, and over all the world...

It is too soon to abandon the fight, to abandon the light now. So let the time come when the celebrations will erupt in Istanbul and Ankara, in Samsun and Adana, that glasses of raki will be poured, that celebrations will come as only Anatolians know how, on the night when the Turkish Republic, following the leadership of the United States, elects its first Armenian president...

Till that moment comes, let's continue to fight, and not forget, and say again as we know so well how to say, 'Yes we can.'

*The Morgenthau Story* immediately followed Prof. Russell's remarks. Telling the story of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau through the use of archival photos and footage but primarily through interviews with three descendants, grandsons Henry Morgenthau III and Robert M. Morgenthau, and great-granddaughter Dr. Pamela Steiner, the hour-long documentary provided a detailed account of

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the ambassador's life both before and after his tenure representing the U.S. in Istanbul (1913-16).

The documentary also stressed the commitment of the family, through the generations, to Ambassador Morgenthau's mission of helping the Armenian people and working for recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Following the film, Apo Torosyan offered remarks concerning the making of the film and his experiences showing it in Greece in honor of Ambassador Morgenthau.

## NAASR Group Visits Met for Special Program

On Nov. 23, NAASR led a day-trip by charter bus to New York City to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to attend the museum's Armenia-themed "Sunday at the Met" program consisting of a series of lectures, a musical-poetic performance, and the exhibition in the Ja-

haris Gallery for Byzantine Art of the recently-acquired 12th century *khatchkar* on long-term loan from the State History Museum in Yerevan and the Armenian government.

The Hagop Kevorkian Fund made possible the presentation for the "Sunday at the Met" program. Speakers for the afternoon's program included Prof. Nina G. Garsoian, Prof. Thomas F. Matthews, and Prof. Lynn A. Jones.

For those who attended the event via NAASR's excursion, the bus trip to New York also provided an Armenian history lecture by Christina Maranci, the newly appointed Arthur H. Dadian and Ara Oztemel Professor of Armenian Art and Architectural History at Tufts University.

Maranci stated, "I have found proof in Armenia of the first preserved image of the true cross—rescued by Emperor Heraclius after it was held hostage by the Persians" in the 7th century. She said of Heraclius himself that "He was brilliant militarily and politically against the Persians, who devastated the region. Returning the true cross was a major victory for the Christians...It's thought Heraclius was from an Armenian family."



Members of the NAASR group on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Photo courtesy of Andy Turpin.*

Speaking of a carved image of an exalted figure crouching before the true cross on the walls of the Armenian church of Mren, Maranci explained that her research finds that this figure is Heraclius and that “This image doesn’t appear anywhere else—it’s a totally unusual scene. In Byzantium the emperor was never shown crouching in humble garb.”



Prof. Christina Maranci begins her lecture on the bus ride to New York City for Sunday at the Met.

She continued, “My evidence came, in the beginning, from a biography of Heraclius that I was reading for fun that mentioned that when Heraclius returned the true cross to Jerusalem he wasn’t wearing his imperial garb.”

Maranci noted that Heraclius was notorious for being a show-off, but she recounted the story of why he was without his royal garb in Jerusalem, explaining that allegedly when he tried to enter the Golden Gate by which Christ entered the city upon an ass wearing his royal robes and upon his white steed, “the stones themselves sealed before him.”

She continued, “As soon as Heraclius took off his crown and wore humble garb—as

instructed to him by the Angel of the Lord—the stones allowed him to pass on foot, with tears streaming down his face.”

Images of this scene appear in Western European sources and, Maranci noted, “the Swedish scholar I’m working with thinks there is a missing source—probably Greek—and I think so, too.”

At the museum, the NAASR group had an opportunity to visit the newly re-installed Jaharis Gallery, including the new khachkar and other Armenian items alongside the rich Byzantine holdings. The group then was treated to an impressive series of speakers: Prof. Garsoian, Gevork Avedissian Professor Emerita of Armenian History and Civilization, Columbia University, spoke on the subject of “Early Medieval Armenian History”; Prof. Thomas Mathews, John Langloth Loeb Professor Emeritus of the History of Art, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, discussed “Icons in Armenia”; and Prof. Lynn Jones, Assistant Professor, Department of Art History, Florida State University, gave a talk entitled “Pious Ancestry and the Decorative Programs of the Church of the Holy Cross at Aghtamar.”

Videos of the entire Met program can be viewed online at <http://www.youtube.com/user/metmuseum>.

Following the program’s historical program, actress Nora Armani and cellist David Bakamjian presented a repertoire of music and poetry entitled “Evocations of Armenia.” The poems primarily came from Gerald Papasian’s volume *Sojourn at Ararat: Poems of Armenia* and highlights by Armani and her accompanist included Paruir Sevak’s “Good Day,” the pre-Christian verse “The Birth of Vahagn,” and Hovhanness Toumanian’s “The Dove’s Abbey,” beautifully told with grace and politesse by Armani.

(Adapted from “‘Sunday at the Met’ Showcases Newly Exhibited Khatchkar and NAASR’s Dedication to Armenian Patronage,” by Andy Turpin, *The Armenian Weekly*, Nov. 29, 2008.)

## Stairway to Heaven, Benediction in Blasphemy: Russell Speaks on the Poet Tourian and the Symbolism of Black Milk

On Dec. 4, James R. Russell, Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University, spoke at NAASR on “Black Milk and the Stairway to Heaven: Bedros Tourian, Paul Celan, and Anselm Kiefer.”

He began in prologue by recounting that, “Shortly before his own tragic death of consumption in February 1872 at the age of 21, the Armenian poet Bedros Tourian mourned his school friend Vartan Lufian, who had just been carried off by the same disease, in these verses.” Russell then read Tourian’s famous poem, “Laments.”

Russell explained of the poem’s imagery, and of the importance of the theme of religious inversion it evokes, that, “The image of the black milk of the grave stands out in the poem: milk has the metonymical force, not only of whiteness, but of the protected, sanctified innocence of mother and child. Blackness here is the reversal that shocks, with the force of the impossible...Tourian compounds this awful vision with a parody, a crucifixion without resurrection, when he calls Vartan’s parting glance a nail piercing his side.”

Russell then spoke about how Tourian and the infamous murder of Tourian’s cousin, Archbishop Ghevont Tourian, affected, in poetic solidarity, the characterizations in the 1944 novel (only recently published) of Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs, *And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks*—in which one of the main characters is named Tourian.

Turning to speak about the Holocaust and its occurrence so close upon the heels of the Armenian genocide, Russell then transitioned to speaking of the post-WWII poetry of Romanian Holocaust survivor Paul Celan—via a moment of preface about the notoriously anti-Semitic writings of the poet T.S. Eliot and how these exemplified the kind of apathy and tacit facilitation that enabled the rise of fascism and the implementation of the Holocaust to occur.

Russell said, “Paul Celan was to rediscover, in the wake of the destruction of the European Jews, the images of black milk and of a terribly warped ascent—not Jacob’s ladder but crematorium smokestack—that had come first from the pen of a gentle Armenian boy as he lay dying.”

He explained, “Jewish musicians were forced to play at the camps; and in his memoir *Music of Another World* one survivor, Szymon Laks, wrote that at Auschwitz, ‘white became black, and black, white; values were turned 180 degrees.’ And the first thing that stands out in Celan’s poem [‘Death Fugue’] is, of course, the arresting and now familiar image of black milk, which inmates drink (in the poem) again and again, even as Tourian and his friend were sated of black milk of their own impending deaths.”

He continued, “In Celan’s poem, Margarete is not only Goethe’s innocent girl; she is also Mary, who in medieval Christian symbolism triumphs over her opponent Synagoga, a downcast maiden representative of the obsolete covenant of Israel. Shulamith in the poem is Synagoga, her ashen hair symbolic both of her nation’s decrepitude and its literal reduction to ashes.”

Russell stated, “In the years after the massacres of 1895-96 and before 1915, Armenian neo-pagans had already decried as suicidal what they perceived as the Christian ethos of passivity; and afterwards, Vahan Tekeyan in his poem, ‘We will say to God’ was to denounce the Christian Deity and His Heaven, leaving the latter to the Turks and reclaiming Hell—the killing fields of Anatolia—for the Armenians.”

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Prof. James Russell with Fr. Dajad Davidian on December 4

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Noting that “Until Turkish society recognizes and collectively repents the Armenian genocide, any appreciation of Armenian culture in the country, whether in the Ottoman period or after, is bound to lack the necessary moral dimension that completeness and critical candor require.” Russell stated that “no painter where he lived has yet portrayed the lake where he gazed, in whose depths his heart, a book that was not a book, that was on fire, was burning.” However, in a post-Holocaust Germany that has acknowledged its crime, the artist Anselm Kiefer has confronted the horror of Nazi atrocities and has based a number of works on Celan’s poems. Russell showed and analyzed a number of Kiefer’s paintings.

He ended, “They did not recognize the honor due me, but they will seek me yet,” Bedros Tourian once said. So one looks for his echoes and his affinities, in the Kabbala and St. John of the Cross, in Rimbaud and Verlaine, in T.S. Eliot and the Beat writers, in Paul Celan and Anselm Kiefer. [Tourian] is both an isolated innovator and the inheritor of a civilization teeming with visionary imaginations; a lonely sufferer and the bold spokesman for tortured millions; a forgotten voice and a genius beginning to receive the honor due him. But there is much yet to be sought; and there are many rungs yet on the stairway to Bedros Tourian to ascend.”

(By Andy Turpin, *The Armenian Weekly*, Dec. 13, 2008, with additional material)

## NAASR Hosts Christmas Open House with Talk on “Images of the Nativity in Armenian Art”

On Dec. 11, NAASR hosted its annual Christmas Open House, this year featuring an illustrated talk on “Images of the Nativity in Armenian Art” by Prof. Christina Maranci, Arthur H. Dadian and Ara Oztemel Professor of Armenian Art and Architecture at Tufts University.

Maranci prefaced her talk by explaining that, “I’m not an expert on Armenian Christian Nativity scenes per se—so this talk is a bit impromptu.”

But she began by saying, “In medieval painting there’s this tendency to have a centralized image [particularly in Nativity scenes], usually Christ, sometimes surrounded by, in this case, the Evangelists.”

She noted, “The question is [for such depictions and arrangements], how do you turn a recumbent image [Madonna and Child] into a central figure. If she has just given birth, to see her standing would seem odd.”

Maranci continued, “How do you centralize an image of a scene that in many ways is uncentralizable was the question I wanted to tackle.” Showing another slide, she stated, “Here is a later example of the late medieval European style with the Virgin kneeling, surrounded by mid-wives. Here you see [artists] have started to create depth and a horizon line.”

Maranci explained, “The other question I wanted to deal with is that Christian images are never a perfect reproduction of biblical life. They always have a narrative life of their own. Much of these scenes are taken from Apocryphal texts informing Christian artists.”

She noted, “There are layers of meaning here [in such medieval and Armenian late medieval paintings]. The use of pattern and zones of patterns is so crucial to late medieval Armenian painting.”

What’s interesting, she noted, is that the Nativity scene is never of importance in early Christian art. “What’s important then was that Christ is savior and that he heals the sick and raises the dead. We see this when we look for early examples in the Roman catacombs,” she added.

In many ways Armenian depictions of the Nativity are more accurate to what biblical scholars think was the actuality of the real event historically—though Maranci spoke from the perspective of an art historian. Notably, Maranci in her showing of a close-up taken from the Trebizond Gospels, states, “Here, they [the artists] solve the centrality issue by placing the Virgin in a cave—you see this in Armenian and Byzantine art.”

Of artistic traditions more localized to Armenia in Nativity scenes, Maranci pointed to a Nativity scene painted in Siunik in which Mary is holding an apple and noted, “Yes, this could be a reversal of Original Sin themes—but as an Armenian folk tradition red apples are given as a gift to signify the bride is a virgin, maybe that’s what we’re seeing.”

Of Mary in particular, Maranci cited those Armenian illuminations that show depictions of the Annunciation with the Madonna in a questioning pose towards the angel Gabriel as he tells her of her destiny.

In these scenes, the concept of free will seems to play a greater role in the story as Mary questions the angel Gabriel about her role and to make sure he is not actually a demon trying to lead her astray. An Assyrian audience member pointed out, and Maranci agreed, that this dimension of the story is often found in Syriac and Aramaic ver-



sions of the story as well.

Maranci said of the Armenian example of this caveat, “Clearly, Mary’s ‘having a moment’ and Tom Mathews [Dr. Thomas F. Mathews] puts forth that this form of debate may have come from the ‘Armenian Gospel of the Infancy,’ in which there’s a long, protracted debate [with Gabriel] as to whether she should do this or not.”

A reading by Maranci and Marc A. Mamigonian of a dialogue between Mary and Gabriel from the “Armenian Gospel of the Infancy,” translated from a French version, followed before refreshments.

(By Andy Turpin,  
*The Armenian Weekly*,  
Dec. 20, 2008)



Prof. Christina Maranci speaking at the NAASR Christmas Open House

## Russell Speaks on Magic Scrolls for ALMA and NAASR

On December 15, 2008, Prof. James Russell, Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University, gave a detailed illustrated lecture at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) entitled “The Armenian Magical Scroll and Outsider Art.” The lecture was co-sponsored by ALMA and NAASR.

Russell, in the course of his lecture, set out to analyze “the contents and styles of the Armenian magical scrolls and their sources; then to construct a hypothetical schema of the personality, experience, and training of the artist on the basis of what is known of the makers of the very similar magical scrolls of Ethiopia; and finally, combining salient features of magical art and the particulars of the people who make it, to relate the East Christian genre to that of Outsider Art and outsider artists in the West, with particular attention to the contrasting evaluations of religious experience and practice in the two kinds of society.”

He explained that *hmayils* “are employed for defense against demons, particularly the ancient Child-Stealing Witch, called in Armenian *Al* or *T'pgha*. These scrolls contain a number of prayers culled from Scripture, Christian hagiography, and the writings of Armenian theologians and mystics, as well as incantations that are fairly standard from one scroll to another; and these texts generally follow a prescribed order. They are divided by pictures of Christ, of saints, and of demons, again in the same order.”

While, he noted, “the content and iconography of the scrolls are freer than the program of a Gospel manuscript, and the performance of magic does not have the same sanction as the liturgy,” nonetheless, “the artist-scribe worked in compliance with a fixed tradition.” At the same time, though, “the art of the scrolls can also be bold and uncanny in a way Gospel book illumination is not, including fanciful symbols and strange patterns; and when these depart widely from recognized, canonical forms, one can discern the mark of individuality, of improvisation.”

Comparing the art of Armenian *hmayils* with their Ethiopian coun-

terparts, on which there has been some scholarly work, he determined that they “are so very close in subject and style to those of Armenia that they may fairly be said to belong to a single, common East Christian tradition of folk religion.” Thus, “in both nations, a sanctioned niche is thus found for individuals who might be stigmatized as marginal or abnormal elsewhere: a feature of traditional societies innocent of the blessings or curses of psychiatry and its attendant world view.”

Russell then made a transition to a discussion and examples of outsider art, a genre which he sees as having great similarity to *hmayils*. “Outsider artists,” he explained, “need not be inmates of asylums, and at the other end of the continuum they can be moderately well-adjusted housewives, businessmen, and the like; but just as often they are disenfranchised people who wake up one day to find all hope finally lost, and in an act of heroic resistance to their social dysfunctionality throw themselves into the great task of creating a body of artistic work.” Seen either by society or themselves as outside of any mainstream, “they are, it would seem, creating a cosmology that provides a context in which they can invest their fragmented lives with meaning and achieve a feeling of wholeness, of integrity. Such an artistic release, one notes, most often has a magico-religious aspect, the expression of a vision.” Some artists who might be so classified eventually find recognition and acceptance—“legitimacy.” An example might be seen in the English mystical Romantic poet and artist William Blake.

Russell’s lecture took place in conjunction with an exhibit featuring Armenian prayer scrolls from ALMA’s collection. The ALMA collections include Armenian examples of talismanic scrolls, both older handwritten scrolls and 19th and early 20th century printed scrolls.

## Public Forum at Fordham Discusses Armenians in the 21st Century

“What is the future of Armenia and its diaspora in the 21st Century?” On January 13, 75 people from as far as Boston convened at Fordham University in Manhattan to discuss this question. For Armenians, the 20th Century was a dark one—with genocide, Stalinist oppression, earthquake in 1988 and, since 1991, freedom with turbulence. In this forum, a diverse panel of experts reviewed the likely future of the Armenian diaspora.

The Forum was welcomed by Artur Sedrakyan, President of the Fordham University Armenian Club. He noted this was the first of a bimonthly series of public forums to be hosted by Fordham and other university Armenian clubs in the New York area.

The Chairperson of the forum was attorney Bryan Ardouny, Executive Director of the Armenian Assembly in Washington, D.C., who just arrived from the U.S. Congressional hearings in Washington to confirm Hillary Rodham Clinton as Secretary of State. Ardouny emphasized the importance of public forums, and his Assembly’s active encouragement of student involvement in them.

Harold Takooshian of Fordham University discussed “Armenians in America,” noting how this 500,000-member community has made great contributions dating back to 1618. It is currently riven by a set of centripetal forces drawing it together, and centrifugal forces driving it apart.

Marc Mamigonian of NAASR reviewed “Armenian Studies in the U.S.,” including extensive materials documenting the work of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, of which he is the Director of Academic Affairs. He welcomed participants to join NAASR and to be updated on upcoming events.

*continued on next page*



Dr. Lawrence Najarian addresses the audience with Brian Ardouny looking on.

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By videotape, Ani Kalayjian of [www.meaningfulworld.com](http://www.meaningfulworld.com) spoke on “Armenians at the UN,” describing the seven Armenian organizations now working with the UN. David Akopyan of the UN Development Program (UNDP) also spoke, introducing five of his Armenian colleagues now working in UN agencies.

Dr. Lawrence Najarian, the President of AAHPO, came from Philadelphia to discuss “Health in Armenia: Role of the Diaspora” and his Armenian-American Health Providers Organization, [www.aahpo.org](http://www.aahpo.org). Dr. Najarian noted that AAHPO hosts the Tenth Armenian Medical Congress in the New York City Hilton Hotel on July 1-4, 2009, where students can register for free to learn about health careers.

Carol Aslanian of the AGBU discussed “The American University of Armenia: Making History.” She noted that the AUA, an affiliate of the University of California, granted 1,800 graduate degrees since its founding in 1991. In fact, six AUA graduates were in the audience, including Fordham Professor Gayane Hovakimian.

This forum was hosted by Fordham University and its Armenian Club. Along with the Armenian Assembly and NAASR, a consortium of community groups participated in this forum: AUA (American University of Armenia), AAHPO (Armenian American Health Professional Organization), EFES (Everek Fenesse Educational Society), ABSA (Armenian Behavioral Science Association), AASSSG (Armenian American Society for Studies of Stress & Genocide), and FIRST (Fordham Institute for Research, Service, and Teaching).

## Bournoutian Speaks at NAASR About New Book, *Jambr*

On Feb. 11, George Bournoutian, Professor of East European and Middle Eastern Studies at Iona College, spoke at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) on the recent publication of his latest translation work, *Jambr* (Archival Chamber).

An economic record and history from the Holy See of Etchmiadzin of its holdings, *Jambr* is the first English translation of a rich source of materials assembled in the 18th century by Catholicos Simeon of Yerevan.

Marc A. Mamigonian, NAASR’s Director of Academic Affairs, introduced Bournoutian’s talk, saying, “He’s just flown in from Antarctica—and that’s the first time I can say that about any of our speakers.”

“In 1771, Simeon of Etchmiadzin established the first printing press in Armenia,” Bournoutian said. “And *Jambr* occupies the role of the most important of his writings. The term itself comes from the French word, *chambre*.”

Catholicos Simeon, he explained, used these documents against “numerous Muslim khans that sought to usurp or tax the archives of the Holy See of Etchmiadzin.”

“*Jambr* begins, chapter one, with the history of the Apostolic Church and the establishment of the Holy See. Simeon then details the lives of the various Catholicos’s.”

Of crucial importance was that Simeon lists the amounts of mills owned by the See: threshing mills, oil and pressing mills, and properties owned by the Holy See and in the Yerevan region.

During the tumultuous periods chronicled in *Jambr*, Bournoutian stressed that an important perspective to reading the work is the uniqueness of the Armenian Church. He noted, “Our church is a national church for Armenians only, unlike Catholicism that has Spaniards, Frenchmen, etc.”

Until the 12th century, the Holy See remained in the boundaries of historic Armenia, he explained. In 1439, during the Council of Florence, the Armenian, Greek, and Coptic Churches attempted to rejoin the Church in Rome, but by 1441, “the Holy See was moved back to Etchmiadzin.”

He said of the Holy See’s reliquary that “Without the right arm of St. Gregory the Illuminator, no Armenian Church had legitimacy.”

Bournoutian recounted the clerical reign of Grigor X from 1443-65, stating, “Grigor was responsible for obtaining the four major vil-



Prof. George Bournoutian with NAASR Chairman Emeritus Manoog Young and Chairman Nancy Kolligian

lages that compose the majority of Etchmiadzin’s land holdings from the Muslim Turkmen. ... Under Grigor X, the Muslim sharia court for the first time accepted the Armenian Church with the same tax-exempt status as Muslim mosques.”

He continued, “In all the documents from then forth, it’s very important that the Catholicos is referred to as the Caliph of the Armenians, a Muslim term with the same respect as the Muslim Caliph. Just as the Caliph was emissary of Muhammad, so the Catholicos was the emissary of Christ.”

Bournoutian also noted that there was a clergy infighting period in the Holy See history. “There was a time of co-Catholicos’s, and at times there were up to four Catholicos’s in Etchmiadzin!”

Turning to speak of Movses of Sunik’s reign in the See circa 1610, Bournoutian explained, “This was the renaissance period of Etchmiadzin when the creation of the Hermitage of Sunik would end the corruption of Etchmiadzin and the period of the co-agitators [co-Catholicos’s].”

He added, “Two years later Movses was elected official Catholicos of Etchmiadzin and the period of chaos was over.”

“Simeon regarded the Holy See of Etchmiadzin as the only legitimate seat of religion for Armenians.” Yet other Armenian communities regarded their own religious heads as leaders of the Armenian

Church. Bournoutian quoted Simeon, who wrote how “the Armenian people in Constantinople—out of ignorance—have begun calling the leaders in Constantinople Patriarchs.” Simeon, in contrast, went so far in his rancor as to call them “whores.”

“The Nuncios of Etchmiadzin collected dues from all the Armenian Dioceses in all the Ottoman, Persian, and Russian provinces,” Bournoutian continued. “It all comes down to money.” When Etchmiadzin fell under Russian imperial dominion (called the “Ottoman Catholicos period”) “Yerevani Armenians started to elect their own Catholicos.”

During the Ottoman period, “Armenian merchants and minor Armenian princes began to purchase property through the Muslim courts. These types of immovable properties could be transferred, rented, sold, and inherited as private property, but only the church land was tax-exempt.”

Bournoutian continued, “We have documents to prove that if peasants could not pay their dues, the Church of Etchmiadzin would foreclose on the property.” Of historical prominence he cited, “This is very unusual to see, cases of two Christians going against each other in a Muslim court.”

“The Holy See, unlike other monasteries, paid no taxes. It’s very complicated and it’s a 500-page book. It’s not an exciting book, but it’s a very important legal source to those in the field [of history],” he concluded.

(By Andy Turpin, *The Armenian Weekly*, March 3, 2009)

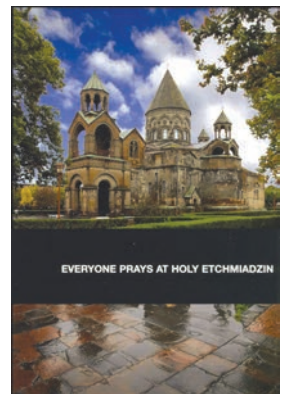
## Everyone Prays at Holy Etchmiadzin Shows at NAASR

NAASR hosted a screening of the documentary *Everyone Prays at Holy Etchmiadzin* on February 17 at the NAASR Center. The film, produced and directed by Debra Gonsker Vinik and David Vinik under the auspices of His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, and by direction of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), had a single television airing in the Boston area in December 2008.

*Everyone Prays at Holy Etchmiadzin* documents the daily life and seasonal passages of the Mother See of the Armenian Apostolic Church, using imagery from major feast day celebrations and footage of the visits of spiritual and secular leaders, including His Holiness Karekin II’s pontifical visit to the United States.

The documentary also features interviews with scholars Prof. George Bournoutian, Dr. Helen Evans, Dr. Roberta Ervine, Dr. Vartan Gregorian, Dr. Rachel Goshgarian, Fr. Vahan Hovhannessian, and Prof. James R. Russell, as well as Church leaders such as His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, and Bishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate.

*Everyone Prays at Holy Etchmiadzin* was extremely well received by the audience, many of whom were seeing it for the first time—though some were there for a repeat viewing. Many felt that it was the best television program on an Armenian subject that they had seen.



# Call for Papers: Conference on the Armenian Diaspora

## BOSTON UNIVERSITY — SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2010

*Sponsored by:*

Charles K. and Elisabeth M. Kenosian Chair of Modern Armenian History and Literature, Boston University  
National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Inc.  
International Institute for Diaspora Studies (A Division of the Zoryan Institute)

Armenian diasporan communities emerged over centuries as a result of voluntary migration and forced displacement in times of military conflicts, the Genocide during WWI, and economic and political crises. This conference aims to bring together scholars to present their new research on the Armenian diaspora. Papers will explore the evolution of Armenian diasporan communities and stimulate analyses of current issues. Comparative analyses of Armenian diasporan communities are particularly encouraged. Individual papers and panel submissions presenting original contributions are invited on the following topics related to the Armenian diaspora:

- Diaspora and Fine Arts
- Diaspora and Psychology
- Diaspora and Cultural Development
- Diaspora and Social Issues
- Diaspora and Feminism
- Diaspora Studies and Historiography
- Diaspora and Literature
- Diaspora and the Armenian Media
- Diaspora, Transnationalism, and Globalization
- Diaspora and Ethnonationalism
- Diasporan Identity and Host State Governments
- Transdisciplinarity of Diaspora Studies

**Please mail or e-mail a short abstract of 300 words to the organizer of the conference:**

**Professor Simon Payaslian, Kenosian Chair  
Department of History, Boston University  
226 Bay State Road, Boston, MA 02215  
Phone: (617) 353-8313 • E-mail: payas@bu.edu**

**Please include the following information with your abstract: (1) Full name and title; (2) Academic affiliation; and (3) Address, e-mail, and telephone number**

**CONFERENCE POLICY:**

**All papers will be in English.  
Published papers cannot be considered.**

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

*Deadline for submission of abstracts:*  
**July 15, 2009**

*Notification of acceptance to presenters:*  
**July 30, 2009**



Left to right, standing: Daniel Hagopian, George Krikorian, Alisa Stepanian, Stephen Kurkjian, Jennifer Phillips, Judy Kolligian, Nancy Kolligian, Ruth Bowler, Grace Kulegian, Carol Parker, Mike Nigohosian; Seated: Faith Cass, Linda Orfaly, Anahid Yacoubian, Margaret Defreest, Cathy Minassian; Not pictured: Taylor McLaughlin, Roger Hagopian

## Enthusiastic Response to Conversational Armenian Class at NAASR

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their comments and from the fact that they have extended the course for an additional ten weeks, into June.

NAASR Chairman Nancy Kolligian, who has attended the class, declares, "What do you get when you put together a dynamic language teacher and an enthusiastic group of students who are eager to learn conversational Armenian and have fun doing it? Conversational Armenian 101 at NAASR!"

Other class members agree. "Anahid is professional and warmly encouraging with students of quite different comprehension levels," says one, while another notes that "we get giggly in our self-consciousness and are having a ton of fun." For some, the class represents an opportunity to connect or reconnect with their ancestry. One member wrote, "after many years I am learning the words of my *medzmayr*," and another observed that "coming from a background where Armenian was spoken in the house but never truly explained, this class was invaluable to me in bringing together bits and pieces I have heard over the years."



**NAASR Newsletter** ISSN 0890-3794

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