



# The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research

## Richard Hovannisian To Lead NAASR Armenian Heritage Tour To Cilicia

NAASR will present an Armenian Heritage Tour led by Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian of UCLA and Armen Aroyan of the Armenian Heritage Society to Historic Cilicia and Environs from May 20 to June 2, 2009.



Prof. Richard Hovannisian with NAASR Board Chairman Nancy Kolligian

Please note that due to an unforeseen schedule conflict, Prof. George Bournoutian will be unable to participate in this tour as previously announced.

Please contact NAASR as soon as possible for further details and booking information.

### The planned itinerary for the trip is as follows:

**Weds., May 20, 2009:** Departure from U.S.

**Thurs., May 21 – Fri., May 22:** Istanbul (2 nights)

**Sat., May 23:** Flight to Nevsehir (Cappadocia)

**Sun., May 24:** Tour of Cappadocia and visit to Kayseri (Gesaria)

**Mon., May 25:** Hajin (Saimbeyli), Sis (Kozan), Adana, Mersin

see TOUR, page 15

## Bournoutian Collection Finds New Home at NAASR

NAASR has received the bulk of what will constitute the Ani and George Bournoutian Collection within its Mardigian Armenian Reference and Research Library at its Belmont, MA, headquarters building. Through the hard work of Prof. Bournoutian, NAASR Board Members Bob Bejoian and Raffi Yeghiayan, and a team of volunteers, more than 200 boxes filled with more than 90% of Bournoutian's personal library were carefully packed and will soon be unpacked and placed in a separate space in the NAASR Library. Shelving for the new space has been generously donated by Flint Public Library in Middleton, MA, and in addition Prof. Bournoutian has contributed two handsome wooden bookcases.

The collection of nearly 3,000 volumes has been amassed over Bournoutian's several decades of activity as a historian and has been instrumental in researching many of his publications, which include



Prof. George Bournoutian and NAASR First Vice Chairman Raffi Yeghiayan load up the moving van.

important works and translations on Armenian history with particular attention to interactions with Russia and Persia.

The arrival of the Bournoutian Collection has been greeted with tremendous enthusiasm by the NAASR Board of Directors and staff. "Prof. Bournoutian has been one of the leading Armenian scholars and one of the most prolific for several decades," said NAASR Treasurer Robert Bejoian, who was instrumental in arranging for the transfer of the collection. "Dr. Ani Bournoutian is a fine scholar in her own right. This represents an almost unique opportunity for NAASR to elevate its library to a new level of excellence." Board Chairman Nancy R. Kolligian stated that "NAASR is tremendously honored and flattered to receive a collection of such importance. The collection will stand as a great tribute to the Bournoutians."

see BOOKS, page 14



The Bournoutian Collection in its new home at NAASR.

# News From the NAASR Center

## *Mamigonian Named Director of Academic Affairs*

Marc A. Mamigonian has been named NAASR's Director of Academic Affairs. Mamigonian is about to complete his tenth year at NAASR, where he was initially hired as an assistant to then Board Chairman Manoog S. Young. Subsequently he was named Director of Publications and then Director of Programs and Publications.

Mamigonian said, "I am very grateful to many people: to the NAASR Board and especially Manoog and Nancy for their leadership and support for the past decade; to Sandra Jurigian for her incredible devotion and hard work, to Cathy Minassian and all the members of the NAASR staff; and to the Armenian community and the academic community for their cooperation and many kind words and deeds. It has been a true adventure in the best sense of the word, and I am thrilled to have been a part of the further development of this great organization. I am never bored, I am constantly learning on the job, and I get to participate in the growth of a venerable institution and a vibrant field."



Above: Marc Mamigonian (center) with the NAASR Executive Committee. Below: Members of the NAASR Board of Directors: Standing, left to right: Robert D. Bejoian (Treas.), Luder Tavit Sahagian, Roxanne Etmekjian (Asst. Treas.), Gregory Aftandilian, Shushan M. Teager, Prof. Aram S. Karakashian, Yervant Chekijian. Seated, left to right, Stephen A. Kurkjian (Asst. Sec.), Manoog S. Young, Jack M. Medzorian (2nd Vice Chairman), Nancy R. Kolligian (Chairman), Raffi P. Yeghiayan (1st Vice Chairman), Van M. Aroian (Sec.)



## *A Graded West Armenian Reader*

In the last issue of the NAASR *Newsletter*, we informed you of the availability of *A Graded West Armenian Reader*, edited and compiled by Dr. James Etmekjian and published in 1963 by NAASR and the American Council of Learned Societies, to Armenian schools. Since then, a number of additional schools have taken advantage of this offer, and multiple copies have been provided to St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School in Watertown, MA; Abaka School for the Performing Arts, Watertown, MA; Armenian Sisters Academy, Montrose, CA; Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School, Bayside, NY; Rose and Alex Pilibos Armenian School, Los Angeles, CA; Mesrob Mashtots Institute, Watertown, MA; and Mashdots College, Glendale, CA.

## *Thank You for Your Thoughtfulness*

The following members and friends have contributed books and other media materials to add to the depth and breadth of the NAASR Library's collection. We are very grateful to them for their generosity.

- Armenian General Benevolent Union, New York, NY
- Armenian Studies Program, Calif. State Univ., Fresno, CA
- Dr. Sebouh Aslanian, Long Beach, CA
- Anna and Lucy Bedirian, Watertown, MA
- Dr. Andrew Bostom, Chepachet, RI
- Vigen Der Manuelian, Cambridge, MA
- Free Library of Philadelphia, PA
- Rev. Momik Habeshian, Nicosia, Cyprus
- Paul Kalemkarian, Escondido, CA
- Ruth Kaprelian, Worcester, MA
- Kessab Cultural Center, Reseda, CA
- Mark Krikorian, Washington, DC
- H. & K. Manjikian, Toluca Lake, CA
- Jean Martinian, Arlington, MA
- Jack & Eva Medzorian, Winchester, MA
- Nancy Mehagian, Studio City, CA
- Konstantin Petrossian, Providence, RI
- Dina Seredian (Dina Rose), Irwindale, CA
- Hovann Simonian, Lausanne, Switzerland
- Dr. Dora Sakayan, Montreal, Canada
- Dr. Ara Sanjian, Dearborn, MI
- Helene, Hagop, and Robert Sarkissian, Newton, MA
- Ardashes Shelemian, Watertown, MA
- Dr. Manea Erna Shirinian, Yerevan Southern Poverty Law Center, Montgomery, AL
- Nancy Sweezy, Arlington, MA
- Naomi Topalian, Lexington, MA



Very special thanks to Vigen Der Manuelian for the donation of a color laser printer, and to Judy Gallerie, Librarian, and Adele Carter, Library Director, of the Flint Public Library in Middleton, MA, for the major donation of vital shelving for the Bournoutian Collection in our Mardigian Library.

# A Student's Recollection of NAASR



**By Carl Zeytoonian**

One day when I was a sophomore at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy on Longwood Avenue in Boston, my English professor, Dr. Joseph Skinner, asked me to his office. He had also asked the other Armenian-American students to join us. Among them was Elissa Avagian Karaian, whose father, Jack, was also a pharmacist and an immigrant to the United States after the massacres of Armenians in Turkey.

Elissa and I, and the others, observed Dr. Skinner closely. Out of his normal classroom professorial demeanor, he was quite down-to-earth and warm and friendly. Dr. Skinner was a large man, dignified and very stately, with a bushy moustache and eyebrows. He dressed in a typically New England academic fashion, tweed jacket, dark pants, and wingtip shoes. He was a Dartmouth graduate, with a Ph.D. from Harvard, and was a resident of New Hampshire.

He began to speak to us in Armenian. Needless to say we were all shocked. Then he began to explain when he was doing graduate work at Harvard, one of his professors, Dr. Blake, who was an authority in Armenian history, told him that he could get an advanced degree in Armenian history, which he really wanted to do. However, he would have to learn classical Armenian, which was necessary for translations and research, and, he needed to do it in six months. Dr. Blake suggested the Mekhitarist Institute on the island of San Lazzaro in Venice, Italy.

Dr. Skinner made the trip and studied Armenian intensely for six months. He studied in the very same classroom where Lord Byron, the internationally famous poet, studied. If Lord Byron could master Armenian and preach to the world about Armenian culture and language, then why couldn't he? Joe Skinner worked very hard at it and succeeded. He returned to Harvard and was tested by Dr. Blake and passed, and, ultimately he earned his Ph.D. in history.

We were all truly amazed at this story and knew of Dr. Blake because of his early association with the NAASR founders, about the time of NAASR's formation. We also knew about Harvard's Prof. Richard N. Frye. We were astonished at his knowledge of classical Armenian that was so necessary in his research, especially in the translation corollar-

ies with Persian history with which Armenia was closely linked. Dr. Skinner got to the point of this meeting. He wanted all of us to join NAASR as students. Many of us did so. Imagine an American professor recruiting members for NAASR!

In those early days we had the opportunity to meet such great people like Prof. Emmanuel Varandyan, Stephen Mugar (whom I later worked for), Manoog Young, Kay Kolligian, Gen. Sarkis Zartarian and many, many others. It is appropriate to mention, in this the year of Saroyan, my meeting with William Saroyan. I was invited to a NAASR cocktail reception for Mr. Saroyan, when Manoog Young approached me and asked if I would like to meet the famous author. Having just read *The Human Comedy*, *My Name Is Aram*, and *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze* and admiring this humble, genuine writer who captivated his readers with a humorous and simple style, I was thrilled.

I stood next to Saroyan in the reception line and stared at his noble face and handlebar moustache as he spoke to each and every person waiting in the line. This was one of the highlights of my student life. His ashes have been spread in Armenia and Fresno, Calif., his birthplace. NAASR has been beneficial to Armenians everywhere and its Chairs of Armenian Studies have established core centers of academic studies of Armenian subjects. I have been enriched by my association with NAASR and Manoog Young. NAASR has had a positive impact on my life.

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Manoog S. Young with William Saroyan at the old NAASR headquarters in Cambridge, MA.

# Fall 2008 NAASR Lecture Series

**Sept. 11:** Prof. James Russell, “The Rime of the Book of the Dove: Zoroastrian Cosmology, Armenian Heresiology, and the Russian Novel.” Roman Jakobson Memorial Lecture. At the NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA.

**Sept. 17:** Panel Discussion: “Murder at the Altar: The Context and Legacy of the Abp. Tourian Murder After 75 Years,” with Author/Journalist Terry Phillips, Dr. Ben Alexander, and Fr. Stepanos Doudoukjian, with Dr. Dikran Kaligian, panel discussant.

**Sept. 21:** Dr. Rubina Peroomian, “And Those Who Continued Living in Turkey After 1915,” at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum. Co-sponsored by the Museum and NAASR. (Please note that we hope to have an account of Dr. Peroomian’s talk in a future issue of the *Newsletter*.)

**Sept. 27:** Conference: “The Legacy of the Republic of Armenia, 1918-1921.” Speakers: Benjamin Alexander, Erik Goldstein, Robert Krikorian, Razmik Panossian, Victoria Rowe, and Ara Sanjian. Co-sponsored by

the Charles K. and Elisabeth M. Kenosian Chair in Modern Armenian History and Literature, the Boston University Department of History, the International History Institute at Boston University, and NAASR.

**Oct. 22:** Prof. Azat Yeghiazaryan: “Daredevils of Sasun: The Poetics of the Armenian National Epic.” At the NAASR Center.

**Oct. 30:** Dr. Helen Evans, “Armenia and Byzantium: The Larger Picture.” Co-sponsored with the Knights of Vartan, Ararat Lodge. At the NAASR Center.

## PROGRAM & LECTURE SUMMARIES

### Prof. Russell Speaks on Armenian-Slavic Folklore Connections

Prof. James R. Russell, Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University, delivered the first lecture of NAASR’s fall 2008 series on September 11 at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center in Belmont, MA. Prof. Russell’s lecture, “The Rime of the Book of the Dove: Zoroastrian Cosmology, Armenian Heresiology, and the Russian Novel,” was delivered in honor of the late Prof. Roman Jakobson, the pioneering linguist, Slavicist, folklorist, and NAASR Founding Member.

NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian provided an introduction to the evening, noting that Prof. Russell “continues to expand the boundaries of Armenian Studies and to explore areas previously unexamined or underexamined and to find rich materials there.” He added, “his contributions to Armenian Studies in the broadest possible sense are formidable,” and “at a time when there is much talk about the need to broaden Armenian Studies and integrate it with other disciplines and other fields, he isn’t talking about it, he’s doing it, and has been for many years.”

Russell began by stating that “it is a great honor to be back here to lecture in honor of Roman Jakobson, a colleague whom I never met.” (Jakobson died in 1982.) Acknowledging the significance of the seventh anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, he observed, “I guess it is fitting that this lecture deals with the things that bring different cultures together, cultures of the Christian West and East and Middle East, cultural achievements that have more to do with peace and the excavation of ancient ideas than with ‘the clash of civilizations.’”

The Rime “is an orally transmitted work,” Russell explained, told by “blind, itinerant reciters called *kaleki perekbozbie* who recited it mostly in northern and north-central Russia. The first transcriptions of the text come from the 18th century.” The publication of the Rime and other folk poetry in the 19th century exerted an enormous influence on Russian writers and artists, including the painter Nicholas Roerich, the neighbor of the writer Vladimir Nabokov in St. Petersburg.

What is the poem about? Russell explained: a great book fell from heaven and it was sealed so that no one could open it. Prince Vladimir of Kiev, the first baptized Russian monarch of the 10th cen-

tury, asks King David (who lived some 2000 years before him) to help him. David cannot open the book but he knows the contents and proceeds to relate them to Prince Vladimir.

The bulk of the poem is comprised of a series of questions and answers: How did the world come into being, what are the greatest, largest, oldest, of various things. At the end of the list is the greatest of all of the animals – the *indrik* or unicorn. Why is the unicorn the greatest of all animals? It possesses special qualities: it purifies the waters and is able to travel through all the subterranean passageways of the earth. It is also a representation of absolute goodness. In some versions of the Rime, the unicorn is opposed by another king of the beasts, the lion – which fights and defeats the unicorn.

Prince Vladimir then asks King David to interpret for him a dream he had of two beasts fighting with each other. King David explains that this is the primordial struggle between Truth (*Pravda*) and Falsehood (*Krivda*). Truth vanquishes Falsehood and reigns in Heaven, while here on earth Falsehood reigns, “which is why the world is the way it is,” Russell explained. In other variants, it is Falsehood that conquers Truth.

“This is a very strange work within the corpus of Russian spiritual poems,” Russell noted. Since the 19th century there have been various attempts to trace its sources. However, most explanations have focused on the poem’s Christian elements, whereas, he explained, the poem’s cosmology is dualistic. “Those of you who have heard me lecture before should know what is coming,” Russell joked. “It suggests a source in ancient Iran, in Zoroastrianism.” Specifically, he cited the Zoroastrian book of creation, the *Bundabishn*.

The *Bundabishn* begins with a description of the creation of the world and the battle between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman – i.e., good and evil – and proceeds to enumerate the places and things of the world and give their exemplars – in striking similarity to the Book of the Dove. The parallels do not end there – one of the creatures is the unicorn, and, as Russell said, “Guess what? It’s a purifier of the waters of the earth.” The lion, on the other hand, is an evil being.

Russell showed a number of visual representations of unicorns in medieval Slavic sources. Intriguingly, he also showed an image from the famous medieval Western European unicorn tapestries, now in the Cloisters in New York City. The image showed a unicorn by a fountain, plunging its horn into the waters, purifying them. “How come probably a Flemish tapestry of the late middle ages has a Zoroastrian scene?” The answer, in short, was “that ideas travel orally.”



This observation led to a discussion of how Zoroastrian cosmological material found its way into a folk ballad recited in northern Russia. “This is where Armenia comes in,” Russell stated. He explained that the Armenian theologian Eznik had preserved in his *Refutation of the Sects* a heterodox Zoroastrian cosmology that seems to be closer to the version in the Russian texts (not only the Book of the Dove but other works) than the original Iranian. Furthermore, beginning in the eighth century, Armenians who were part of heretical sects known as the Paulicians were resettled by the Byzantines in the Balkans. The Paulician heresy became a basis for the Bogomil heresy among the Slavs, which spread northward and westward. Both the Paulicians and Bogomils were dualists.

“If oral teachers take these ideas and bring them north into Kievan Rus,” Russell continued, one would expect to find evidence in sources from the 10th-11th centuries. “We find such dualist heretical doctrines current in the north of Russia in the 11th century” in the chronicle called *Povest vremennykh let*, “in which there is an indication of specifically Armenian source.” Part of the chronicle tells of the story of the founding of Kiev by three brothers. Russell pointed out that he shared the opinion of Roman Jakobson, who stated in a NAASR lecture in 1955 that this founding myth derives from a similar story centered on Mush in the work of the Armenian historian Pseudo-Yovhannes Mamikonian.

Russell delved into another aspect of the Book of the Dove that suggests an Armenian influence. The poem describes “Ocean” as “the mother of all seas,” because in the midst of the ocean is a great cathedral which contains the relics of the martyr St. Clement, which emerges every so often and where the Blessed Virgin Mary can be seen, radiating light. In the Armenian epic of Sasun – the basic materials of which Russell dates to the pre-Christian era – there is a submarine shrine, also to the Virgin Mary. He also described “a kind of reprise of the scene” in an Armenian manuscript from Astrakhan that tells of pilgrims on Lake Van traveling to Narek. The boat sinks but a child is kept safe at the bottom of the sea in a chapel where St. Grigor Narekatsi himself shelters him. After a year, the child is found on Narekatsi’s tomb, alive and well.

Finally, Prof. Russell talked about the encoding of a key image from the Book of the Dove – that of the *indrik* or unicorn – in Vladimir Nabokov’s novel *Podvig*, translated by Nabokov as *Glory*. (Russell has taught, and is currently teaching, a course at Harvard called “Four Cambridge Writers,” dealing with Nabokov, T. S. Eliot, Delmore Schwartz, and William S. Burroughs.) The book’s hero, Martin, has a grandmother named Indrikov. The Romantic Mar-



Prof. James Russell

tin, an exile from Soviet Russia who is compared to Tristan, undertakes a doomed quest back into Russia that comes to a tragic end.

“Most of Nabokov’s heroes are misfits of some kind,” Russell explained. “The better sort, the ones that don’t seduce little girls, are Russian liberal democrats, well-bred, kindly intellectuals, outraged at the jaundiced belief in the West that Russia is intrinsically deposed to tyranny. Arguing against such a prejudice, Nabokov discovers ancient native roots of pluralism in Russia that he peppers his novels with.”

The diversity of sources that Nabokov and the entire Russian literary tradition draw upon “constitute a kind of literary archaeological record of an alternative political and social Russia. It is a history, then, cosmopolitan in its nature that involves sources of heterogeneous origin, indicators of Russia’s membership in a large multinational civilization,” including those of Iran and Armenia.

In conclusion, Russell stated, “I would like to believe, as we commemorate the spirits of the great scholars of the past who tried to bridge cultures, and who hover on their wings above us, that this heavy, hoary book...can also be seen as we study it, as an opening into the future, taking flight, as the wings of a dove do ... into peace and into a place where unicorn and lion can live in harmony.”

Following Prof. Russell’s engrossing lecture there was a reception and refreshments, and members of the large audience had the opportunity to discuss with the speaker and among themselves the many intriguing issues raised in the course of the evening.

Prof. James R. Russell has been the Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University since 1992. His books include *Bosphorus Nights: The Complete Lyric Poems of Bedros Tourian*, *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, *The Book of Flowers*, *An Armenian Epic: The Heroes of Kasht*, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, and *Hovhannes Tlkurantsi and the Medieval Armenian Lyric Tradition*.

## NAASR Panel Discussion on Abp. Tourian Murder Draws Large Crowd, Intense Interest

Nearly 200 people packed the NAASR Center in Belmont, MA, on September 17, 2008, to hear a panel discussion entitled “‘Murder at the Altar’: The Context and Legacy of the Archbishop Tourian Murder After 75 Years.” The panelists were Terry Phillips, Dr. Ben Alexander, and Fr. Stepanos Doudoukjian, with Dr. Dikran Kaligian serving as panel discussant. NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian acted as moderator for the evening.

Before introducing the panelists, Mamigonian provided an explanation of the rationale for the event, which centered on a sensitive subject that has seldom been discussed publicly in the 75 years since it occurred. He acknowledged “the very real pain of the bitterly divided community that emerged out of the events we will hear about tonight. These divisions were real: they wounded families and damaged lives.” He added, “it is not my place as a member of a younger generation and as someone who grew up outside the community to pretend that this is not a painful subject for many or to suggest that addressing painful subjects is ever easy.”

Mamigonian stated that “in gathering tonight to hear about and discuss what happened 75 years ago and what it means today, our purpose is not opening old wounds or reawakening bitter divisions for their own sake. If it is a reality that the community is not fully healed, we are presented with an opportunity to reach a deeper understanding of ourselves. We are striving to fulfill part of NAASR’s

mission: to present scholarship and research on anything that falls under the category of Armenian Studies to the general public. The only position we hold on history is to say: because it happened, we should try to understand why it happened and what it meant and continues to mean.”

The first speaker, Terry Phillips, is the author of the historical novel *Murder at the Altar* that centers on the killing of Archbishop Ghevont Tourian on December 24, 1933. Phillips, a veteran journalist, provided a narrative of key events leading up to that day, the day itself, and its aftermath. Starting with the July 1, 1933, “flag incident” that occurred in Chicago at the Armenian Day festivity of the Chicago International Exposition, he began by quoting at length the official report of the organizing committee. The report explained that an Armenian group was originally invited to appear in native costume with their national flag, but since no agreement could be reached over what flag to use – the red, blue, and orange tri-color of the ARF (Tashnag)-governed Armenian Republic of 1918-20 being objected to by anti-Tashnags – it was agreed there would be no flag. Thus, when a tri-color flag was displayed on July 1 and its removal was ordered, there was general pandemonium. Tourian stated that he would not appear with the tri-color on display as it would indicate his support for the ARF and cause dissent and possibly lead to reprisals to Armenians in the USSR. Instead, he suggested that only the American flag be displayed. A riot ensued after a vote of the audience was taken and the tri-color was removed.

Between this incident and December 24, Phillips explained, there were a number of other violent or nearly violent occurrences. Most notably, on August 13, Tourian was at a picnic in Westboro, MA, and was attacked, resulting in arrests. After a tense visit to Holy



Left to right, Dr. Dikran Kaligian, Dr. Benjamin Alexander, Terry Phillips, and Fr. Stepanos Doudoukjian

Trinity Church in Boston in early December, Tourian remarked to his host in nearby Medford, “You know, they are going to kill me.”

Phillips then proceeded to the fateful day of the murder. Holy Cross Church was packed well beyond its usual capacity for the archbishop’s visit. As the procession advanced towards the altar, nine men jumped out of the pews, several grabbed Tourian, some struck him, and others prevented anyone else from intervening. In

the confusion, one man stabbed Tourian with a butcher’s knife. By the time Dr. Movses Housepian, the father of author Marjorie Housepian, reached the church, it was too late.

Two men were charged with first degree murder and another seven were charged with manslaughter. The trial began on June 11, 1934, and guilty verdicts were handed down on July 13. Future governor of New York and presidential candidate Thomas Dewey was hired by the Armenian Church as a private counsel to assist the prosecution. Phillips, who worked extensively with the records of the trial in the New York state archives, indicated that by today’s standards the trial was highly irregular and that the judge was far from impartial. The two men charged with first-degree murder were sentenced to death (later commuted to life in prison) and the other seven received prison sentences of varying lengths. By 1960, all of the men had been paroled.

The second speaker, Fr. Stepanos Doudoukjian of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary in New York, drew on his Master’s thesis written at St. Nersess in 1993, “Oral History: An Intergenerational Study of the Effects of the Assassination of Archbishop Leon Tourian in 1933 on Armenian Americans.” Drawing on the extensive research for his thesis, Fr. Stepanos related numerous accounts of the divided and traumatized community that emerged from this period.

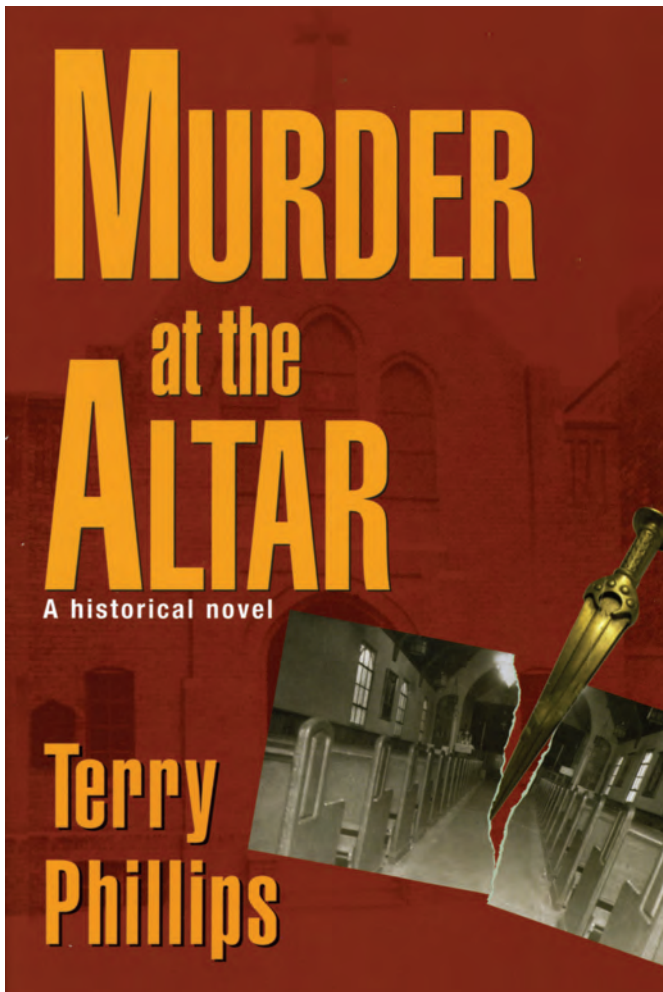
In the early 1990s as he gathered oral histories relating to the Tourian murder and its aftermath, he recalled, he felt himself “walking on untreaded territory.” Fr. Stepanos was primarily interested in tracing the intergenerational effects of the Tourian murder, and so he interviewed not only those old enough to be eyewitnesses but also their children (mainly those born in the 1940s) and grandchildren (those born after 1955).

Doudoukjian also pointed out that conflicts of a political nature within the Armenian Church in the United States did not begin with the arrival of Tourian in the early 1930s or even with the destruction of the Republic in the early 1920s. Indeed, he noted that going back to the early 1900s the Church suffered from severe political disruptions. However, the assassination of Abp. Tourian “created irreconcilable tensions among their ranks.”

Regarding his interviews with twenty-five members of the “first generation,” Fr. Stepanos categorized their most common responses as follows: “shock and disbelief, shame, relationship to the Genocide, fear, satisfaction, anger and pain, and hopelessness.” He proceeded to give examples of each type of response. One of the most striking was one from a man who had felt so disgraced by the murder that he changed his name, left the Armenian community, and was only returning to it after six decades.

Dr. Benjamin Alexander of Towson University in Maryland gave a talk based on his article “Contested Memories: Divided Diaspora: Armenian Americans, the Thousand-Day Republic, and the Polarized Response to an Archbishop’s Murder,” which was published in the *Journal of American Ethnic History*. Alexander began, “when Archbishop Tourian demanded the removal of the tri-color flag on July 1, 1933, a roomful of Armenians who had gathered that day to celebrate their ethnicity saw two different symbols of their identity unable to co-exist on one stage. The moment the incident occurred, the divided reaction was such that the Armenians in that room were obviously living in two parallel universes even as they observed the same finite action.” He then detailed how these parallel universes came into being and how they functioned.

In short, he explained, when Archbishop Tourian “refused to appear on stage with the tri-color flag, “it trigger[ed] such a polarized response [because] Tashnag Armenians felt a powerful allegiance to that flag, and to the republic for which it stood: the independent



Cover of Terry Phillips' historical novel, *Murder at the Altar*

thousand-day republic which had existed in Armenia from May of 1918 to November of 1920, with a government dominated at all times by the Tashnag party...Non-Tashnag Armenians, in contrast, had never considered the republic to represent any such thing, and its flag had little meaning for them now."

In order to understand what was going on in the era of the first Armenian Republic and the decades following, Alexander stated, it is imperative to be aware of "the role that global political parties played in the lives of Armenians in America, including but not limited to the fact that the parties controlled the leading ethnic presses from which Armenians got their daily news and comment." The rival Armenian newspapers "had sharply defined visions and aspirations which they transmitted to their constituents in ongoing rivalry with one another for popular support in those immigrant communities." He clarified, "in effect, the partisan organizations were marketers, competing with each other for consumers of their vision. Let me interject that this should not be confused with saying that they were leading Armenians in America anyplace they did not want to be led. Marketing is a mutually consensual and symbiotic relationship."

The newspapers, which he categorized generally as the Tashnag press, "represented by *Hairenik*," "the anti-Tashnag/Ramgavar press,

which for brevity's sake here can be represented by *Azk* during the World War I years and by *Baikar* after 1922," had completely opposite takes on the 1918-20 Republic. The Tashnag press "depicted the republic as being synonymous with Armenia," whereas the anti-Tashnag/Ramgavar press "wrote of a free and independent Armenia that would be cobbled together in the future at negotiating tables under Boghos Nubar Pasha's guidance. During the life of the republic, the Ramgavar press either criticized the prevailing regime overtly, or more subtly wrote of Armenia without referring to it."

After the fall of the Republic, "partisan advocates continued to rehearse the contested memories from the war and Republic years, with conflicting commentaries on the present situation and indictments of each other's actions and motives." Alexander cited an editorial in *Hairenik* that "recalled the Republic as the time 'when the Armenian people enjoyed a completely free and democratic order,'" while the Ramgavar press "recalled the Tashnag regime as corrupt and oppressive, its collapse as partly the result of the dissatisfaction of its people, and the Sovietization of the country as a nick-of-time rescue."

At the time of the Tourian murder and the trials that followed, two entirely different versions of events were depicted in the pages of the rival presses. However, as Alexander made clear, this was hardly a new development because "the whole saga also drew on a trove of contested memories from the years 1918-20, memories which the competing partisan press organs helped to cultivate at the time and then assiduously rehearsed in the years since."

Dr. Dikran Kaligian of Regis College in Weston, MA, faced the formidable task of responding to the three panelists' presentations and providing context and insight into how the murder was portrayed in the Tashnag community at the time, based on his extensive readings on the subject. He emphasized that the "parallel universes" discussed by Dr. Alexander applied to "everything that had to do with the Armenian reality at the time."

Beginning with how the trial of the nine men accused of involvement in the murder was portrayed in the *Hairenik* newspapers, Kaligian explained that "the *Hairenik* was writing very clearly that these men didn't do it," and that they were picked out of the crowd as suspects simply because they were ARF members. Such a position should not be brushed aside as merely paranoid, he made clear, in light of the equally overblown rhetoric emanating at the same time from anti-ARF newspapers, especially the pro-communist paper *Panvor*, and the fact that many people—even those who were nowhere near New York at the time of the killing—came forward to volunteer to testify. It was not that they had information about the crime, Kaligian said, but they wanted to take a stand against the Tashnags regardless. Also, according to the *Hairenik*, witnesses with exculpatory evidence were turned away.

Kaligian also discussed a topic that Terry Phillips had touched on and addresses in his book, that is, the serious irregularities of the trial itself. There were problems of language—some of the defendants did not speak English and there were concerns that their testimony was not being translated properly. More serious still was the blatant bias of the judge, who was openly hostile to the defendants.

Speaking about Fr. Stepanos' work with oral histories, Kaligian himself recalled growing up in the 1970s and hearing talk about the murder of Tourian and that it had caused the split in the church. However, as he noted, the split had already effectively occurred at the September 1933 Diocesan convention. Of course, the assassination "made permanent what had happened [in September], but the fact is that the meeting that took place in September, long before the assassination, was the actual split in the Armenian Church." However, because it was so dramatic and received so much attention, of

course, it is the murder that is remembered as causing the schism.

It is also important to keep in mind, Kaligian stressed, as the speakers pointed out, that the assassination was part of a series of events stretching back to the arrival of Abp. Tourian in 1931, and beyond. One of Tourian's first controversial acts was to order the inclusion of "the Soviet Republic of Armenia" in a prayer in the liturgy of the Armenian Church. It could hardly have been a surprise that this provoked a reaction "given the fact that it was the Soviet Union that had expelled the ARF, that had banned the ARF, and had killed ARF leaders." Another action that was seen as provocative was Tourian's order to clergy to keep April 24 observances confined to the churches for fear of being connected with any political rallies that might appear to be anti-Soviet.

Finally, Kaligian expanded on Alexander's discussion of the radically differing portrayals of the first Republic of Armenia and Soviet Armenia. One side considered Soviet Armenia free, the other as an enslaved nation used by Moscow. "These differing perspectives on Soviet Armenia are critical in the atmosphere which leads to the events of 1933," said Kaligian. These contrasting views extended to how Tourian was perceived: the Tashnags tended to see him as a tool of Moscow, since the Catholicos in Etchmiadzin at this time had to be approved by the Soviet authorities, and thus it was suspected that he instructed his bishops to act in a pro-Soviet manner. The "great fear was that the Soviets were using the Armenian Church to inflict harm on the ARF and perhaps split the Armenian community," and thus weaken it. Whether this was true or not, Kaligian observed, this was the end result as the factions in the community collectively blamed each other for the murder and the divisions in the community.

Regarding the much-vexed issue of the tricolor flag and the intense and opposite emotions it aroused in Tashnags and non-Tashnags, Kaligian pointed out that even in the U.S. the subject of the flag and its desecration engenders extreme responses. It would have been hardly surprising, then, that the flag of the first independent Armenian state since the 14th century had been invested with a great deal of importance. He observed, too, that today the tri-color is again the flag of Armenia and flies outside of all Armenian churches, "the same flag that only twenty years ago was still controversial and you would not find in front of half of the churches." He asked rhetorically, "how could something that was so divisive in 1933 be a symbol of unity today? Clearly, it is more than just a piece of cloth."

In summing up, Kaligian praised the three panelists for "presenting very well that we cannot understand the conditions of 1933 if we do not understand this polarization. The violence had already started, and the violence would continue after December 1933."

Following Kaligian's response, the panelists had the opportunity to expand on earlier points. The evening ended with questions from the audience and a reception. Conversations continued long after the program ended and many commented that an important step had been taken by breaking the silence on this important and difficult subject.

## BU Symposium Highlights "Legacy of the First Republic"

On September 27, Boston University's (BU) Charles K. and Elisabeth M. Kenosian Chair in Modern Armenian History organized an all-day symposium on "The Legacy of the First Republic of Armenia, 1918-21." The symposium was co-sponsored by the BU Department of History, Department of International Relations, the International History Institute, and NAASR.

Symposium speakers and panelists included Erik Goldstein (BU), Ara Sanjian (University of Michigan-Dearborn), Victoria Rowe (University of Greenwich, U.K.), Benjamin F. Alexander (Towson University, Md.), Razmik Panossian (Montreal, Canada), and Robert Krikorian (George Washington University). Simon Payaslian (B.U.) gave the opening remarks. NAASR Board Chairman Nancy R. Kolligian offered brief remarks, saying "NAASR is very honored to have a place in this effort to advance knowledge of modern Armenian history."

Erik Goldstein presented first on the topic "Great Britain and the Re-Emergence of Armenian Statehood." "Like Britain at the time, this is very Anglo-centric; it's all about Britain inside the region, not Armenia outside the region," he said. Goldstein explained that Britannia's love affair with Armenia was stimulated by the publication in the 1850s of a collection of lithograph drawings of the Church of the Holy Wisdom, Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. "This led to a similar interest in the churches of the East and Eastern Christianity," he said. "Although we know the differences in Armenian Christianity, in London at the time they were all referred to as Eastern Chris-



Dr. Victoria Rowe

tians...though everyone studied their Bible and knew in Jerusalem there was an Armenian Quarter."

The view of the Turks in the British press, he explained, "was largely negative from 1870 onwards and in 1876 an 'Eastern Question Association' is formed." He noted how in the late 1870s, Ottoman atrocities perpetrated in Bulgaria preceded a further interest in Armenians, particularly by British Prime Minister William Gladstone.

"Gladstone won an election based on his concern for the Bulgarians after the Bulgarian atrocities. This is unusual because elections are seldom won on foreign policy...though his last speeches in Britain were all about Armenians and he became a great advocate of Armenian rights."

Following Gladstone's death, the Anglo-Armenian Society of



Great Britain erected a stained-glass window to his memory, and James Bryce took over rallying the Armenian cause. Goldstein said of Bryce, “He’s important to the movement because he knows how to organize campaigns. Unusual for the time, he had traveled to Armenia in 1876 and wrote the first eyewitness articles about the region for the Royal Geographic Society.”

He added, “He wrote one monograph, *Armenia and Mount Ararat* after actually climbing Ararat and by 1879 was the driving force in Britain for the Anglo-Armenian Society.”

Of larger British foreign policy towards Armenia, Goldstein explained, “It’s important to know who supports Armenia at this time. By the turn of the 20th century, Britain realizes it can’t support everywhere by itself and begins to look for allies.”

“The difficulty for Britain,” he explained “was to gauge its involvement in a region that was very hard to get to. After all, Britain projected its power by its navy—so if an area was landlocked it was inaccessible.”

Goldstein noted that guarding land-sea trade routes and supply lines to India was always Britain’s supreme end. After Arthur James Balfour defended Britain’s support of Armenia and the First Republic on the grounds that it was a gateway to India, Lord Curzon replied, “These gateways are getting further and further from India.”

“The British also wanted to make sure the French couldn’t get access to the oil in or near Armenia [now in Azerbaijan]. The reality in London was a real suspicion of the French,” Goldstein explained.

Of the realpolitik of the First Republic and the possibility of a U.S. mandate in the Treaty of Sèvres—to be solely supplied logistically through British imperial ports—Goldstein explained, “America would have been dependent on Britain and Wilson was advised against accepting it. It was only then that the British started promoting it—when they knew Wilson couldn’t accept it and it became a non-starter.”

“Quite simply,” he concluded, “in 1919 Britain was strategically overstretched and controlled one-fourth of the entire world. But in 1920 there were revolts in Ireland, Egypt, in Afghanistan, and seemingly in India. There was no thought to a further commitment to Armenia.”

Ara Sanjian spoke next on “Continuing the All-Russian Revolution of February 1917: The Challenge of Land Reform.”

“At the beginning of the 20th century, life in eastern Armenia still had a very agrarian quality,” he explained. Speaking about the Special Transcaucasian Committee (OZAKOM) of March to November 1917, he said, “We have to remember that the Armenian Church was the largest landowning party in Eastern Armenia.”

Turning to speak about the Transcaucasian Commissariat of November to February 1918, he cited the publication of the “regulation for transferring the state, church, and private estates to the land committees.”

Of the internal dissention over issues of land in the First Republic, Sanjian noted that the radical wing of the governing ARF had called for the full socialization of all land, but the administration held



Prof. Simon Payaslian with panelists (left to right) Dr. Benjamin Alexander, Dr. Razmik Panossian, and Dr. Robert Krikorian

back to not alienate the Armenian bourgeoisie. The administration wanted to appeal to them because of their professional experience and because they would appear more appealing to Western democracies.

Victoria Rowe concluded the symposium’s morning sessions, speaking about “Women as Political Actors in the First Republic of Armenia and in the Creation of International Networks of Refugee Relief, 1918-25.”

She began, “The story of Armenian women in politics is a story of firsts.” But why, she asked, “were Armenian women given the right to vote in the First Republic in 1919? ... The reason why may have been in part purely practical—due to the miniscule population of the Republic.”

Yet, the Armenian intelligentsia, she explained, “especially the younger, educated men, largely supported an expansion of Armenian feminism. In the republic, there was an overall acceptance of Armenian women in political life. After young Armenian male reformers spent time in Europe and North America, it led them to believe that one of the secrets of the West was the increased role of women in the public sphere.”

Of the Republic period, Rowe stated, “The first parliamentary elections, held in June 1919, saw three women elected to parliament. Each of these women was married to members of the Tashnag party but this should not obscure the fact that each was highly educated in her own right.”

Rowe used the life and political career of a republic parliamentarian as a case study, citing, “After the 1919 Peace Conference she was responsible for ‘women and children’ and the distribution of aid from the Near East Relief Society. The winter of 1919 was particularly severe and in this way her role was not a small one.”

“Armenian women’s political role in the republic put them at the forefront of women’s history and influence at the League of Nations,” she concluded.

Ben Alexander spoke first in the symposium's second session on the topic of "The Thousand-Day Republic and the Assassination of Archbishop Tourian." He recounted the basic chronology of the First Republic's rise and fall, stating, "After a brief Tashnag uprising in February 1921, the much-reduced eastern slice of the homeland began life under Bolshevik rule as the Soviet Republic of Armenia. As the decade of the 1920s got under way, recriminations flew in both directions between Tashnag and non-Tashnag over the nature of the Republic and the circumstances of its collapse."

He continued, "The Tashnag party declared a stance of fierce opposition to the new regime, while the other groups—the Hunchak party, the newly reconstituted Armenian Democratic Liberal, or Ramgavar, party, and the newly founded and ardently pro-Bolshevik Progressive party—accepted Soviet rule over the eastern remnants of historic Armenia."

"The lines that were drawn at the time of the republic's collapse remained drawn in 1933," Alexander explained. "What stands to be examined now is the particular set of factors that caused so many Armenian-Americans to have internalized these partisan interpretations of past and present events. For that, a major factor in the equation is the role that the partisan press in the United States played throughout this entire period."

He continued, "Generally, throughout the life of the republic, the *Hairenik* praised the work of the regime and treated it as synonymous with the homeland and the nation. *Azk* wrote skeptically and critically of the Tashnag-controlled republic and at times barely acknowledged its relevance."

Alexander recounted the events of the infamous 1933 Archbishop Tourian murder and how the *Hairenik* and *Baïkar* newspaper publications' partisan coverage of the murder's trial and aftermath vastly differed from each other in political slant. "On July 1, 1933, when Archbishop Tourian refused to share the stage with the tricolor, the multitude of Armenians in the room witnessing the incident saw two completely different occurrences, a product of the disparate histories that they either remembered or had heard recounted about the events of 1918–20. Some looked upon the tricolor as the sacred symbol of their nation and upon Archbishop Tourian as a tool of that nation's enemy. Others in that room saw Archbishop Tourian himself as the sacred symbol of their nation and the tricolor as a much less meaningful entity."

He ended, stating, "The cultivated ideologies were specific enough that in the outrage over the flag incident of July 1 and the assassination of December 24, Armenian-Americans as well as Armenians worldwide displayed a variety of diasporic nationalism which entailed loyalty and solicitude, not only to their homeland, but to their respective partisan factions as well."

Razmik Panossian spoke next on "The Impact of the First Republic on Armenian Identity in the 20th Century." He began by praising how far Armenian communities had come in the spirit of dialogue. "A conference like this on this subject would not have been possible 20 years ago," he said.

"The first point I want to make is that the military victories that led to the Republic's founding gave Armenians a real sense of victory after the genocide," he began. "But this view was very confined to the Tashnags in the diaspora. That changed in Soviet Armenia in 1968 when a memorial to the Battle of Sardarabad was erected."

He continued, "Seeing this importance eventually became a pan-Armenian view... Tashnags kept the idea of Armenian independence alive in the diaspora, though they did not have a monopoly on it. This led to the development of the Karabagh movement later on."

Of the Republic period, Panossian stated, "One could say realis-

tically that in Armenian political thinking—over many hundreds of years—Armenians had come to rely on larger powers." For that reason, he argued, the founding of the First Republic was truly extraordinary. "The founders were very smart men but even they could not conceive an Armenian polity that would not rely on a major power. The reality of independence changed their emphasis to statehood and state-building."

He cited some of these independent state-building advances, noting that by 1919 the Republic had established a state university, currency, and Armenian as the state language. Yet, "another, uglier part of history was the ethnic cleansing of thousands of Muslims, Azeris, Tatars, and other mixed communities," he noted.

Panossian also spoke to the internal political and social dynamics of the republic and the challenges its government faced, explaining, "National identity was constructed upon the eastern pillar and western pillar... Independence was in fact a manifestation of the Russian Empire and small groups of refugees from Western Armenia that did not actually consider the Republic their Armenia."

"Western Armenians felt themselves to be more conservative and the Eastern Armenians to be more internationalist," he said. "In 1919, the Armenians sent two delegations to Versailles, one from Eastern Armenia and one from Western Armenia. They eventually came together on the same position to the Allies, but after much dissention."

Panossian ended anecdotally, stating, "Meanwhile, I was shocked when I finally traveled to the Ataturk museum and saw a map of Wilsonian Armenia. The museum shows the same map as the symbol of the disaster that could have been, if not for Ataturk."

Robert Krikorian spoke on "The Legacy of the First Independent Republic of Armenia and the Collapse of Soviet Power."

"I will build upon the notion of contested memory and the building of national independence in Armenia after 1991," he began. "We forget that independence was not a given in 1991. There was a question of whether Armenia was really ready for independence. Glasnost gave way to more open discussions on the possibility of independence and a reexamination of history."

Krikorian continued, "The explanation of these issues gave way to an even broader explanation of history regarding Stalin's policies of drawing borders, industrial environmental degradation, etc. Armenia turned to history to show that areas of land had been historically Armenian."

Of the fall of the First Republic, Krikorian said, "One of the first things the Communists did was appropriate the historical record. They took history very, very seriously. They wrote the narrative that Armenians welcomed Bolshevik rule."

He explained, "It wasn't the Russians coming in to save Armenians, though; it was the Russians and the Turks deciding to divide Armenia up." But, he noted, "the change in opinion towards this realization in Armenia came after 1988 and the very slow and inadequate response of the Soviet authorities to the earthquake."

"In 1991, the Armenian government knew that without a sober and realistic look at the history and political realities, Armenian independence would finish the 20th century as it started it," he said of Armenia's attempts to reinvigorate ties with the diaspora. Richard Hovannisian's being accepted as one of the first foreign members elected to the Academy of Arts and Sciences sent a strong message [of diaspora support]. And after the Karabagh liberation movement Armenians began to imagine that they might be able to actually achieve and maintain an independent state."

Krikorian concluded, "Armenians have used history as an instrument to further their claim to Karabagh just as the Soviets used it as a weapon."

During the question and answer session that followed the symposium, Krikorian said that historical dialogue is moving forward in Armenia and that “What’s being talked about is intellectual discussion about ‘the Third Force’, that is, Armenia’s historical reliance on the Great Powers, the Soviets, etc., that is impeding Armenia’s quest for statehood.”

(By Andy Turpin, *The Armenian Weekly*, October 4, 2008)

## Azat Yeghiazaryan Speaks on the Armenian National Epic *Daredevils of Sasun*

On Oct. 22, Prof. Azat Yeghiazaryan, Director of the Manouk Abeghyan Institute of Literature at the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, spoke at NAASR on the topic of “*The Daredevils of Sasun: The Poetics of the Armenian National Epic*.”

He prefaced his remarks by saying, “If you want to understand the Armenian mentality you must understand the history of the epic of Sasun.”

Yeghiazaryan explained, “We know only fragments of Armenian pagan epic cycles,” while on the other hand “the Greeks preserved all their [pagan] culture. But Armenians were very fanatical Christians and much of the pagan period [historical material, structures, and artifacts] was lost.”

Talking about the uniqueness of the Armenian epic of Sasun, he said, “Armenians produced a new epic cycle during the 9th to 11th centuries. This is unusual because most cultures create their cycles very early in their culture. It means that Armenians created a new epic from an already existing body of literature.”

Yeghiazaryan stated, “You can’t find any notion or mention of daredevils [Yeghiazaryan’s definition of the crazy, brave, and staunchly chivalrous moral hero protagonist archetype created within the epic of Sasun and its cycles] in Armenian medieval books [chronicled by clergy or court scribes].”

He added, “Armenian medieval monks were not much interested in popular epics and songs, or in writing them down.”

Speaking about the epic’s historical progression, Yeghiazaryan said, “It has reached us through those storytellers and narrators who continued to tell the stories over numerous generations.”

Of the reciters, Yeghiazaryan explained, “They strongly distinguished when telling these stories between fairy tales and the epics,

because for them, the epics were absolute truth.”

He noted that, “we must also consider the influence the Bible had on these [Armenian] epics,” since, for example, David is not an Armenian name, it’s a Jewish name that comes from the Bible, and other aspects of the epic have roots in the Bible, especially the Old Testament.

Yeghiazaryan detailed the life and past contributions of Armenian philologist Manouk Abeghyan, as one of the first scholars to record and properly analyze the *Daredevils of Sasun* epic.

He added, “The influence of one’s elders in the epic is greater than those in authority. I think that is important to the shaping of Armenian identity.” Yeghiazaryan also noted the similarities and differences between the values in the Sasun epic and those of the chivalric code prevalent in Western Europe at the time.

Speaking about the moral ethos of the Armenian Sasun epic, Yeghiazaryan said, “In epics like the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, how a hero succeeded was not important, so long as he succeeded. But for medieval heroes, the highest value was on the morality of the victory, therefore creating a separation from the values of ancient history. In the medieval period, they had to be men of strong moral principles.”

He emphasized this aspect in Armenian epics and in Sasun, saying, “Christianity, which put the greatest emphasis on the morality of heroes, changed the evolution of protagonists in medieval epics.”

Yeghiazaryan concluded, “One can look at the epic of Sasun as an encyclopedia of medieval Armenian folk life.”

(By Andy Turpin, *The Armenian Weekly*, November 8, 2008)

## Dr. Helen Evans Looks at “The Larger Picture” of Armenia and Byzantium

Dr. Helen Evans, Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, presented an illustrated lecture entitled “Armenia and Byzantium: The Larger Picture” on October 30, at the NAASR Center. The lecture was co-sponsored by the Ararat Lodge of the Knights of Vartan and NAASR.

NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian introduced Dr. Evans and expressed NAASR’s gratitude for the participation of the Knights of Vartan and in particular the assistance of Nigoghos Atinizian in making the evening possible.

Evans’ lecture was organized around the magnificent medieval *khachkar* (stone) cross from the Lori region of Armenia that is on long-term loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art from the Republic of Armenia.

Evans stated at the outset that she was “going to consider [the *khachkar*’s] role as a gospel in stone, and through that ask how its images open windows into the character of Armenian art” and the “larger world picture that often relates Armenia to Byzantium.” Noting that *khachkar*s are a distinctive Armenian art form “that we consider without parallels in Byzantium,” she proceeded to explain why she relates it to a gospel book—and that it is “the gospels rather than icons which are generally venerated in Armenia.”

At the base of the *khachkar* are visual representations of the four gospels: the symbols of the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John: that is, an angel’s head for Matthew, a lion’s head for Mark, an ox for Luke, and an eagle for John. Evans then compared these representations to other depictions in Armenian illuminated manuscripts as well as in sculptures adorning churches of roughly the same



Prof. Azat Yeghiazaryan in discussion with NAASR’s Marc Mamigonian

period. It is significant, as Evans observed, that the cross at the center of the *khachkar* “rises directly from the crown of the angel, making explicit the gospels’ role in the revelation of salvation.”

Above the cross on the *khachkar* is “a large arch and to its sides on the upper edges ... are small pairs of birds facing what must be fountains.” The birds are strongly reminiscent of similarly-placed birds in the elaborately-decorated canon tables of Armenian and Byzantine illuminated manuscripts. The bird imagery is by no means unique to Armenian tradition, but Evans then posed the question, “What, if anything, do birds mean in an Armenian religious context?”

By way of an answer, she showed and discussed a famous and important example: a mosaic floor of an Armenian funerary chapel in Jerusalem from the 5th or 6th century A.D. that preserves not only one of the earliest preserved examples of Armenian writing but also an elaborate decorative program of grapevines and birds. The writing dedicates the chapel “to the memory and salvation of all Armenians whose name the Lord knows.” Evans explained that in “early



Detail of *khachkar* showing symbols of the four evangelists



Dr. Helen Evans with Prof. Lucy Der Manuelian and NAASR Board Chairman Nancy Kolligian

Armenian texts, birds are clearly identified as symbols of the resurrected, those who were good in life,” a concept inherited from Armenia’s Zoroastrian past.

Evans then discussed some of the political interconnections between Armenia and Byzantium that accompanied the artistic ones. For example, around the same time the mosaic was made, on Golgotha in

Jerusalem stood a jeweled cross containing part of the True Cross. In the early 7th century, Jerusalem was sacked by the Persians and the cross was taken away. In the 620s it was rescued by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius, whose father was Armenian.

She also examined in detail “the only image of a Byzantine general in military dress that survives” from the medieval period, in the *Adrianople Gospels*, produced in Armenian by the scribe Krikor in 1007. Evans explained that the general who owned the gospel and who is depicted “must have taken an oath of loyalty to the Orthodox Church of the empire” or else he could not have achieved such a high rank. Thus, “the work is an expression of a duality that needs further study. The general, whose gospel book is written in Armenian, served an emperor who was a descendant of the half Armenian Byzantine emperor Basil I and a duke whose family is also thought to have been of Armenian origin.” The gospel book, therefore, “should be understood...as representing a bridge between two cultures—that of the Armenian world from which the emperor and the general emerged and that of the empire which they served.”

In the course of her lecture, Evans provided numerous additional striking examples of the intersection of the two cultures. She summed up, saying that “In studying Armenian and Byzantine art, we should understand the importance of identifying what is unique to those cultures, but we should also seek to understand the interweaving between peoples that reach across the world.” Too often the emphasis has been on viewing the one to the exclusion of the other—a practice that, fortunately, has fallen out of favor. Evans’ lecture and her work as a curator at the Metropolitan Museum stand as a strong statement in favor of the integrative approach.

Evans is a specialist in Byzantine and Armenian art who has been a member of the Department of Medieval Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art since 1991. She curated the exhibition “Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts” at the Morgan Library in 1994 and at the Metropolitan Museum her major exhibitions have been the acclaimed “The Glory of Byzantium (843-1261)” in 1997 and “Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)” in 2004. She installed the museum’s Mary and Michael Jaharis Galleries of Byzantine Art in 2000 and recently completed its expansion and reinstallation this year.



12th century *khachkar* from Lori now on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

# Author Antonia Arslan Speaks at University of RI

Author Antonia Arslan described the massacre of her extended family in Turkey to a crowded auditorium at the University of Rhode Island on Monday, October 20, as part of a two-day event sponsored by the URI Center for the Humanities, the department of modern and classical languages and literatures, the Italian section, the English department, the Italian student organization CIAO, and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research.

Arslan's grandfather told her at a young age the story of his brother's family. In 1915, Turkish soldiers massacred the males of the family at the ancestral family farm. They sent the women and children on a forced march across the desert.

Two girls and a young boy, who survived because he had been dressed as a girl, were rescued and smuggled to Italy by friends. The children's mother died during the course of the march and their eldest sister was killed because they were of Armenian descent.

Arslan said she forgot about the story for many years, but continued to collect memories of the family and of Armenian culture. Eventually, she felt compelled to convey the story through a book that was later made into a movie. "At a certain point everything went together and I understood the story in the hearts of these souls," she said. "The bones abandoned in the desert of Syria were speaking to me, and I heard them."

From her grandfather's story, Arslan crafted a novel that has spread across the world and been translated into 16 languages. On Tuesday, she screened the Italian film *La Masseria Delle Allodole*, based on her novel of the same name. Shown through special permission, the 2007 movie, translated into English as *The Lark Farm*, was directed by internationally-respected Italian filmmakers Paolo and Vittorio Taviani. Arslan said the film, which has not been released in the United States, closely follows the plot of the novel and is true to her intentions.

Called "an Armenian *Schindler's List*" by critics, Arslan's novel follows her family's struggles during the 1915 Armenian Genocide. During World War I, Turkey's ruling ultra-nationalist Young Turk party sought to create an exclusively Turkish nation. The campaign against the civilian Armenian population, a Christian ethnic minority within the empire, ended in their virtual eradication within the country by 1923.

Arslan's lecture focused on her inspiration for the novel and the responsibility she felt to tell the story of the Armenian people. The project was initially daunting, she said. "It was like a duty to me, but I didn't dare to start," she said. But with the first word of her novel, Arslan said her hesitation vanished. "I found that I was able to very, very simply put together the story of my family and in this story of my family to tell the story of this tragedy of the Armenian people," she said.

Arslan was accompanied at the lecture by long-time friend Dr. Siobhan Nash-Marshall, an associate professor of Christian philosophy at Manhattanville College. Nash-Marshall prefaced Tuesday's lecture with a brief examination of the Armenian Genocide and of the term "genocide."

The Turkish government continues to deny the episode today, and it has not been officially recognized as an act of genocide by many countries, including the United States. Some refuse to accept that the term is applicable to the event, despite the fact that the word "geno-

cide" was created with the Armenians in mind, Nash-Marshall said.

"As world history has repeatedly shown, some events are forgotten and simply erased from the collective memory," she said. "And one of these events is, of course, the Armenian Genocide."

Despite the divisiveness of the subject, Arslan said she does not wish her book to foster hate. "Because I am of the third generation, I cannot put only hate in the book, I have to try to put light on memories, on truth, but not to transmit too much hate," Arslan said. "Hate is al-



Antonia Arslan signing books after her talk at URI.

ways poisonous for everyone."

The lecture opened the eyes of some students. "I thought it was great for us as students to have a writer of her stature come talk to us, and the subject isn't very well taught in schools, so it was important for us to know," senior Stephen Hewitt said.

Junior Alice Donabedian attended the lecture with friends Elyse Berberian, a sophomore, and Ida Krikorian, a freshman. "It was very informative. I mean, we're Armenian and we grew up learning the history, but just some of the things they mentioned I've never heard of," Donabedian said.

Arslan hopes that her book and the movie adaptation will help to spread awareness of the tragedy beyond Armenian circles. "It's very important to know the story of these unfortunate Armenians, also to avoid such tragedies happen[ing] again," Arslan said in an interview. "I hope that in the book of history the tragedy of the Armenians will have a correct part."

(By Chris Curtis, orig. printed in *The Good 5¢ Cigar*, the student newspaper of the Univ. of RI)

## NAASR Supports Rwandan Genocide Survivor/Activist

As we have for the past several years, NAASR provided funds for a qualified candidate to attend the Genocide and Human Rights University Program in Toronto, organized by the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights (a division of the Zoryan Institute) and the University of Minnesota.

In 2008, it was especially meaningful for us to provide the opportunity for Mr. Philibert Gakwenzire of Kigali, Rwanda, to attend the institute. Gakwenzire has a BA in History and a MA in Management of Cultural Heritage and currently teaches Comparative History of Genocide among other courses related to Contemporary History at the University of Kibungo (University of Agriculture, Technology and Education of Kibungo, UNATEK). A survivor of the Tutsi genocide and an intellectual, he is an active member and co-founder of several institutes and organizations combating the consequences of genocide and prevention.

We are grateful to Mr. Gakwenzire for his permission to print his very gracious letter to NAASR in the *Newsletter*.

Dear National Association for Armenian Studies and Research,

I am very pleased to take this time to address to you my sincere and deep thanks for the scholarship you provided me for the Genocide and Human Rights University Program, 2008 session.

I would like to share with you that I have gained a lot from the course, and in particular on the Armenian Genocide and its recent impact. Participation in the course was an excellent opportunity to find more explanations and material for my students, colleagues, and friends on that first modern genocide in human history.

Since my participation, I have been invited by the Rwandan National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide and the University of Kibungo (in which I am an academic member), to lecture on what I learned at the GHRUP.

With this course, which I was only able to attend with your support, I am newly motivated to facilitate a fruitful partnership be-



Mr. Philibert Gakwenzire of Rwanda

tween the Armenian institutions and Rwandan institutions concerned with genocide studies. I will use the intellectual tools and material I gained from the course in my activities. I took from this seminar a deep desire to continue expanding my knowledge in genocide studies.

**Philibert Gakwenzire**  
Kigali, Rwanda,

October 8, 2008

## Bournoutian Collection Finds New Home at NAASR

BOOKS, from page 1

NAASR's Director of Academic Affairs, Marc A. Mamigonian, noted that "there are individual books and complete sets of books that are nearly impossible to find in this area outside of Widener Library at Harvard. It sounds like a cliché, but the whole is even greater than the sum of its parts."

Prof. Bournoutian, for his part said, "I am approaching retirement age, and though I am retaining some books that I am currently using or planning to use in the near future, I thought it was time to give something back. I have always had a high regard for NAASR and what it has accomplished, and it has been very helpful to me in supporting several of my publications. I did not want to break up the collection

and I wanted it to stay intact. NAASR is a perfect location and I knew the books would be valued and taken care of. With the exception of Harvard, the libraries at the several schools in the Boston area where there are Armenian programs really do not have access to a lot of these materials."

A very few of the highlights of the Bournoutian Collection include the complete 10-vol. *Cambridge History of Iran*, 14-vol. *Cambridge Ancient History*, 9-vol. *Cambridge Medieval History*, 14-vol. *Cambridge Modern History*, the massive *Encyclopedia of Islam*, *Encyclopedia of Iran*, the *Index Islamicus*, the 50-volume *Loghat-Nameh* (Etymological Dictionary of the Persian Language), the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, the 20-vol. set of Vatican documents on the Armenians, and the extraordinary Pahlavi

Commemorative Reprint Series, a 50-volume set published in a limited edition on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the coronation of Reza Shah Pahlavi in the late 1970s and consisting of many rare source works on Persia. There are complete runs of several vital periodicals, including the *Journal of Iranian Studies* and *Patmabanasirakan Handes*.

Important and unusual individual titles include a signed first American edition of Franz Werfel's *Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, the first printed Armenian history book, the *History of Vardapet Arakel of Tabriz* (Amsterdam, 1669), the *Life and Adventures of Joseph Emin*, and first printed editions of numerous historical works produced in Venice.

The Bournoutian Collection will be open by appointment to researchers in the near future.



## Selected Necrology

While NAASR always strives to be forward looking, we are ever aware that all that we accomplish in the present and the future is built on a foundation prepared by members whose generosity, hard work, and active interest in the aims of this Association continue to inspire us. It is only fitting, then, to take note of a number of our members who have passed on since the last selected necrology several years ago. We have noted those who were Charter Members (i.e., members who joined after the initial founders group but before Dec. 1, 1955), Life Members (i.e., member of ten years or more who pay a sum equal to twenty-five times the amount of the regular annual dues), former members of the Board of Directors, members with more than 25 years of continuous membership, and major NAASR benefactors. We apologize for any omissions or errors and ask that you bring them to our attention.

John G. Akillian, Lincoln, MA  
 Richard Ashton, Fresno, CA [Charter Member and Board Member]  
 Alice Husisian Assatourian, New York, NY [Life Member]  
 Georgia Avakian, Fresno, CA [Charter Member and Wife of Founder Arra S. Avakian]  
 Nerses Y. Aynilian, Fort Lee, NJ  
 Julia Bailey, San Francisco, CA  
 Dr. Barkev Bakamjian, Tulsa, OK [25+ year member]  
 John K. Baronian, Medford, MA  
 Maurice Bchakjian, Clifton, NJ  
 John S. Bogosian, Newtowne Square, PA [Charter Member]  
 Florence Chakerian, Albuquerque, NM [Regional Representative, 30+ year member]  
 Stella Chamian, Watertown, MA [Charter Member]  
 Mary Narsesian Cook, Litchfield, AZ [25+ year member]  
 Ethel J. Duffett, Casselberry, FL [45+ year member and NAASR Benefactor]  
 Richard Elbrecht, Davis, CA  
 Zarm Keljik Geisenhoff, St. Paul, MN [Charter Member]  
 Ara A. Gelenian, Mansfield, MA [35+ year member and Boston Chapter Exec. Comm. Member]  
 Dikran Y. Hadidian, San Jose, CA  
 Alice Jernazian Haig, Dana Point, CA [Board Member and 45+ year member]  
 Corinne Heditsian, Narragansett, RI  
 Rose Hovannesian, Winchester, MA [Charter Member]  
 Jirair S. Hovnanian, Mount Laurel, NJ  
 Kayane Jelal, Winchester, MA [45+ year member]

Ralph Kafesjian, Carefree, AZ  
 Alice Kalustian, Arlington, MA [Charter Member]  
 Dr. Edward Karian, Watertown, MA  
 Lucy Karian, Watertown, MA  
 Edward Keljik, Westwood, MA  
 Alice Keljikian, Arlington, MA [Charter Member]  
 Helen Maghakian, Wakefield, MA  
 Dr. Edward V. Malcom, Boothbay Harbor, ME  
 Taqui Manuelian, Belmont, MA  
 Arshag Merguerian, Wellesley, MA [45+ year member]  
 Lillian Moranian, Winchester, MA [Wife of Founder Thomas Moranian]  
 Sahag K. Nahabedian, Waltham, MA  
 Ann Nahigian, Belmont, MA [Life Member]  
 Dr. Hagop J. Nersoyan, Kettering, OH [Board Member and 45+ year member]  
 Varnum Paul, San Francisco, CA [Board Member and 40+ year member]  
 Sargis S. Safarian, Arvada, CO [25+ year member]  
 Arthur H. Sahagian, Skokie, IL [NAASR Benefactor]  
 Sahag Sahagian, Holden, MA [Charter Member]  
 Jean M. Sayian, Rockville, MD  
 Andrew Shahinian, Oradell, NJ [35+ year member]  
 Harry Sogigian, Worcester, MA [Board Member and Charter Member]  
 Mary D. Tateosian, Wilmington, MA [25+ year member]  
 Mena Topjian, Waltham, MA  
 Sarah Yagoobian, Newington, CT [Life Member]  
 Genevieve Yegeshian, Watertown, MA  
 Mrs. Vartouhi Garoian Yonge, Cambridge, MA

### Richard Hovannisian To Lead NAASR Armenian Heritage Tour To Cilicia

TOUR, from page 1

**Tues., May 26:** Korycos twin castles (KizKalesi—stronghold of the Lusignans), Tarsus, Dört Yol, Iskenderun, Antioch (2 nights)  
**Weds., May 27:** Musa Dagh villages, Antioch  
**Thurs., May 28:** Kirik-Han, Kilis, Antep (3 nights)  
**Fri., May 29:** Marash and Zeytun (Suleymanli)  
**Sat., May 30:** City Tour of Antep, boat ride to Hromgla Fortress  
**Sun., May 31:** Flight to Istanbul (1 night)  
**Mon., June 1:** Return Flight to the U.S.

#### OPTIONAL

#### TWO-DAY EXTENSION:

**Sun., May 31—Mon., June 1:** Bus from Antep to Kharpert; visit Malatia, Nemrut Dagh, Kharpert, Mezre, Husenig, Elazig (2 nights)  
**Tues., June 2:** Flight to Istanbul (1 night)  
**Weds., June 3:** Return flight to U.S. for travelers taking the Kharpert optional extension

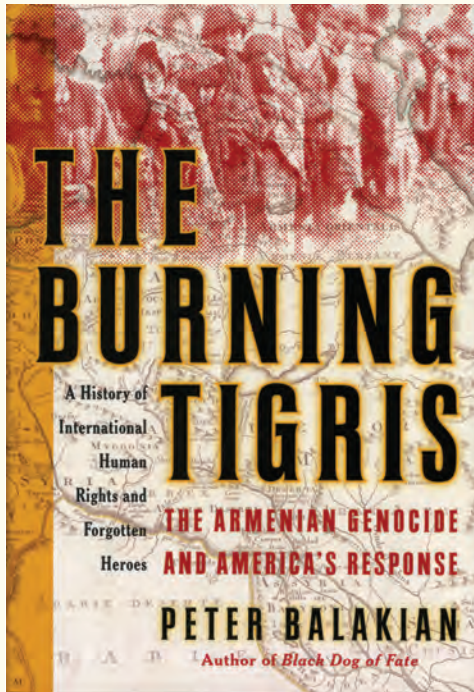
## Balakian's *Burning Tigris* Available at Special Price from NAASR

NAASR is very pleased to be able to offer through our Bookstore the out-of-print hardcover edition of Peter Balakian's *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response* (Harper Collins) at a special low price.

The *Burning Tigris* has a list price of \$26.95 but it is available for \$11.50 for NAASR members (\$13.50 for non-members) as long as supplies last.

In this national best-seller, critically acclaimed author Peter Balakian brings us a riveting narrative of the massacres of the Armenians in the 1890s and of the Armenian Genocide in 1915 at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. Using rarely seen archival documents and remarkable first-person accounts, Balakian presents the chilling history of how the Turkish government implemented the first modern genocide behind the cover of World War I. And in the telling, he resurrects an extraordinary lost chapter of American history.

The *Burning Tigris* was awarded the Raphael Lemkin Prize for the best scholarly book on genocide by the Institute for Genocide Studies at John Jay College of Criminal Justice/CUNY Graduate Center.



Available from the NAASR Bookstore

395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02478

Online at <http://naasr.org/store/home.php>

Call 617-489-1610 or e-mail [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org)



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Marc A. Mamigonian, Director of Academic Affairs

## Conversational Western Armenian Classes at NAASR in 2009

Beginning on January 21, 2009, Anahid Yacoubian of Arlington, MA, will teach a weekly class in conversational Western Armenian at NAASR. There will be ten sessions, each of which will be held on Wednesday evenings from 6:45 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

Yacoubian has taught Armenian language classes in the Watertown public schools for many years. The course will focus on conversation and communication skills in Western Armenian. Thematic dialogue will provide an opportunity for students to practice their newly acquired skills. The alphabet will be introduced to enable students to understand the structure of the language and to help students to differentiate the pronunciation of similar sounds.

Reading and writing will be incorporated based on the interest of the class. Class size will be limited to 15 with a minimum of 8. Tuition fees are as follows: \$150 (non-members), \$125 (NAASR members), \$75 (students). All handouts will be provided by the instructor.

## 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.

## SPACE AVAILABLE AT NAASR

NAASR has office space available on the second floor of its headquarters building at 395 Concord Avenue in Belmont, MA. If you know of an individual or organization in need of office space, please contact us at 617-489-1610 or [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org) to discuss availability and terms.