

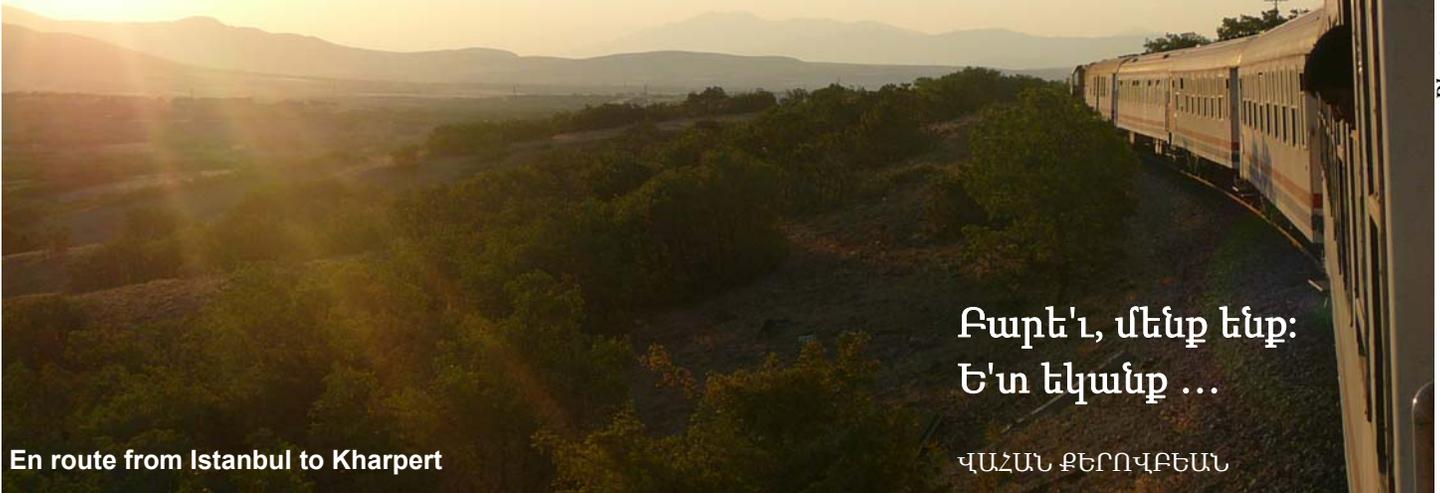


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Armenian Institute NEWS

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Photo courtesy of Shushan Keropyan



Բարե՛ւ, մենք ենք:
Ե՛տ եկանք ...

ՎԱՀԱՆ ՔԵՐՈՎԲԵԱՆ

En route from Istanbul to Kharpert

Note from the Director

The first article requested for this Newsletter was the “Letter from Rome”, written by Prof. Theo van Lint, Chair of the AI Board of Trustees, then on sabbatical. Theo is now back in Oxford and I have begun a sabbatical from AI work for the autumn term. This break promises to be a very stimulating one as I will be teaching two courses at the University of Michigan, shared by the Anthropology department and the Armenian Studies Program. The University of Michigan Program is an active one with Profs. Kevork Bardakjian, Girair Libaridian, Ronald Suny, visiting scholars, post-doctoral positions and an active connection with the greater Detroit area Armenian communities. The two courses, one undergraduate, the other post-graduate, are designed to encourage students to do further research into the evolving Armenian diaspora and relations with the Republic of Armenia. While I am away, Dr. Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian will continue to organise the library as well as being in charge of administration, with the help of Shogher Margossian. Originally from Beirut, Shogher has taught language classes for AI while working on her MA from Roehampton University. The autumn season will be filled with more exciting events and lectures which Gagik and Shogher will supervise and I look forward to seeing everyone again in January.

In this issue we welcome articles and reviews by several new, young contributors, spanning a variety of topics. Two articles are ostensibly travel pieces but each is part of a larger, internal journey made by the authors from their birthplaces in Europe to the land of their ancestors. **Anna Delaney**, whose mother is Iranian Armenian, began studying Armenian at the Armenian Institute. She is a graduate in Modern Languages from UCL and is an active volunteer at AI.

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Առաջին տպաւորութիւնները գիշերը կը յայտնուին երբ թրէնը կուղղուի դէպի Երկիր: Աստղալից երկինքը, թրէնին արագութիւնն ու աղմուկը, մթութեան մէջ լեռներու, ծառերու ստուերները, երեւակայութիւնդ կ'արթնցնեն: Կանցնիս երազային հայրենիքի մը մէջէն, որ կը ճանչնաս մտքով միայն, լսած ես անոր մասին բայց պատկերացում մը չունիս: Առտուան լոյսին սակայն կանդրադառնաս թէ իրականութիւնը երազէդ շատ հեռու է: Ժամերով կանցնիս չորցած, լքուած տարածութիւններէ, աղքատ, իրաւէն ալ անապատ դարձած: Մէջդ արդէն կը սկսի տեղաւորուիլ խառն հոգեվիճակ մը, ուր սպասումներդ եւ տեսածներդ մերթ իրար կը հակասեն, մերթ իրար կը հաստատեն: Տեսածներդ կը պղտորեն երեւակայած պատկերդ եւ կը բացայայտեն նոր մը, ա յ ս օ ր ու ա ն ը : Չ ե ս կ ր ն ա ր նախապաշարումներէդ անկախ դիմագրաւել տեսածներդ, բայց ի վերջոյ ստիպուած ես: Վերլուծելը, կարծիքտալը հիմակ ու հիմա անտեղի է: Պիտի ձգես որ տեղի ունենայ կարծածիդ եւ ապրածիդ միջեւ բախումը: Արդէն ունեցած լայնամտութիւնդ հազիւ պիտի բաւէ: Պիտի անջատուիս սորվածներէդ, ծայրէն պիտի սկսիս, նո՛ր պիտի ծանօթանաս: Այս հողերուն Երկիր ըլլալու նիւթն անգամ առկալի

Շար. էջ 2

Born in Paris, **Vahan Kerovpyan** (BA History, Paris IV Sorbonne) was part of a group of friends journeying across Turkey in the summer of 2008, stopping to catalogue Armenian language books at a public library in Elazig. A professional musician, Vahan is finishing his degree in Armenian studies at the French National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations (INALCO) and helps to organise events on the *Anako* barge in Paris. "It's Us..." has already appeared in *Haratch* and *Agos*. His translation is provided by fellow INALCO student **Laure Astourian**. Laure (BA U.C. Berkeley) will begin a PhD in Comparative Literature at Columbia University in September. **Elif Kalaycioğlu**, BA Vassar College and currently an MSc student in European Studies at the LSE, has worked for Istanbul-based think tank TESEV and contributed articles and translations to *Agos*. This abridged version of her interview with **Levon Abrahamian** appeared earlier this year in *Agos* and points to an important ongoing discussion within and between Armenia and the diaspora about issues of identity, memory and a collective future. Readers will also find interesting connections between this interview and the piece by Kerovpyan.

Dr. Susan Pattie

Բարե՛ւ, մենք ենք: Ե՛տ եկանք ...

շարունակում առաջին էջին

պիտի ձգես. Փոխումս է ան, դուն փոխումս ես. Իրարմէ անջատ ապրած էք, իրարու օտարացած: Հոն անկապ մէկն ես: Ժողովուրդն ալ քեզի իբրեւ օտար կընդունի: Երբեմն ա՛լ աւելի անկապ կը զգաս ինքզինքդ երբ տեղացի մը քեզի կը բացատրէ թէ այստեղ հայկական հող էր, այս շէնքը ժամանակին եկեղեցի էր, անիկա տէրտէրի մը տունն էր, այդ թաղը հայ վաճառականներ կային: Ուրեմն գիտե՛ անցեալը եւ առանց բարդոյթի կը պատմէ: Դուն գիտէիր որ այս երկիրը իր անցեալը կը ժխտէ. ամբողջ իրականութիւնը կը ծածկէ դրօշակով: Բայց կը տեսնես որ պետութեան ամենահաւատարիմ քաղաքացիին կողքին, ուրիշ տեղացի մը առանց որեւէ անհանգստութեան քեզի կը պատմէ անցեալին մասին: Այս երեւոյթը աւելի քեզի՛ կանհանգստացնէ: Այսչափ տարիէ ի վեր լսած էիր թէ Սփիւքին պայքարը Թուրքիոյ կողմէն ճանաչում պահանջէին էր, եւ ահա՛ առջեւ գիւղացին,

Ruined church in the region of Kharpert.



սրճարանի տէրը, քեզի կը պատմէ անցեալին այստեղ ապրած հայերուն մասին, անոնց ունեցած չունեցածին մասին: Ինչո՞ւ կը պատմէ. չես գիտեր թէ պետք ուրախանա՞ս, թէ անպայման յետին նպատակ մը ունենալու է: Արդեօք կանդրադառնա՞յ թէ ուղղակի քու մասիդ կը խօսի, եւ որ դիրտութեամբ արտասանած

խօսքերը կամ լռութիւնը, քեզի հանդէպ բնական կամ անբնական կեցուածքները. բայց նաեւ հայ մեծ մայր մը ունեցողներու ամբոխը, յուշարձաններու, տուներու մնացորդները, շատ անգամ փլած, երբեմն դէռ կանգուն... Եւ կը զարմանաս թէ ի՞նչպէս մինչեւ այսօր ոտքի մնացած է: Ինչպէ՞ս պետութիւնը նոյնիսկ



Photo courtesy of Shushan Kerovpian

իր խօսքերը չեն կրնար քեզ անտարբեր ձգել: Գիւղացի մը կը բացատրէ որ իր ապրած տունը (որ հայկական էր) փլելու վտանգի մէջ է, եւ թերեւս դուն կարենաս օգնութիւն հասցնել որ փրկուի: Ուրիշ մը կը պատմէ որ անցեալին հայու մը պատկանած պարտեզի մը տէր է, եւ կը սպասէ որ հայեր ետ գան որպէսզի պարտեզի բանալին իրենց վերադարձնէ: Չես գիտեր ինչին հաւատաս, ինչին չհաւատաս: Միայն գիտես որ տեղացին բացակայութեան մը հետ կապրի, եւ դուն ես այդ բացակայութիւնը, բայց դիմացինդ չի կրնար տեսնել այդ: Թերեւս ալ շատ չուզեր տեսնել... թերեւս դուն ալ զինքիբերես ներկայութիւն տեսնել շատ չես ուզեր: Ճամբան դէռ շատ երկար է:

Այս հողերուն վրայ կեանքկայ, մարդ կայ, կենցաղներ կան. դուն այս բոլորին մէջ բան մը չես, բայց ամեն տեղ կը խօսուի քու մասիդ: Ամեն տեղ բան մը, մէկը կը յիշեցնէ որ հայը հոն կապրէր: Մարդոց

նորոգեց ամենաշքեղ եկեղեցիներէդ մէկը, թէկուզ թանգարանի վերածելով զայն եւ վրան խաչ չդնելով, բայց կը հիանաս որ հոն կեցեր է, չէ կորսուած, ո՞վ գիտէ թերեւս օր մը նորէն պիտի ապրի: Իսկ երբ կը հանդիպիս դէռ հոն ապրող պատաւի մը որ հետդ Խարբերդի բարբառով հայերէն կը խօսի... Ինքնութիւնդ է, մշակոյթդ է որ ինքզինքը կը գտնէ հոն. այդ հողերուն հետ կապ ունիս: Կը զգաս որ Երկիրը շօշափելի է եւ դէռ կենդանի: Գիտցած երգերուդ Մեղրագետը, Մոկաց սարերը, Վանայ ծովը այլեւս իրական են:

Աղբիւրի քարին վրայի փորագրութիւնը զինք կարդացող մը կը գտնէ: “Տէր ողորմեա” մը կեանք կու տայ լքուած եկեղեցիին: Երկիրը հիմա իրականութիւն մը դարձած է: Յաւալի, չմարսուելիք, բայց աշխատանքի, խնամքի, եղբայրութեան կարօտ իրականութիւն մը: Այդ իրականութիւնը տեղ մը ունի

ներկային եւ ապագային մէջ: Կապը հաստատուած է, կը մնայ զայն մշակել: Ի՞նչ տեսակ ապագայ կարելի է երեւակայել այդ հողերուն հետ կապուած. եթէ մէկը քեզի հարցնէ, ի՞նչպէս պիտի կարենաս պատասխանել: Իմաստ ունի՞ պատասխանել այդ հարցումին: Հիմակ ու հիմա կը բաւարարուիս այն իրողութեամբ, թէ Երկրին կապուած ես, կուզես աւելի լաւ ճանչնալ զայն, թեթևօրէն, առանց բարոյոյթի: Մէկ խօսքով՝ կրկին մտերմանալ: Բարե՛ւ, մենք ենք: Ե՛տ եկանք...

Hello, It's us. We've Come Back.

VAHAN KEROVPYAN

The first impressions appear at night, as the train heads towards the *Yergir* ("old country"). The sky full of stars, the speed and noise of the train, and the shadows of the mountains and trees in the darkness awaken your imagination. You pass through an imaginary homeland, one that you know intellectually, one that you have heard of, but which you cannot visualise. With the morning's light, however, you realise that the reality is far from what you imagined. Hour after hour, you pass by dried-up, abandoned spreads of impoverished, deserted land. An ambivalent feeling has already settled within you; your expectations are at times contradicted, and confirmed at others. What you see blurs your former image and brings into focus a new one, today's. You find it hard to let go of your preconceptions as you take in what you see, but in the end, you will have no other choice. Analysis and judgment will have to be put aside for a while. You must let the conflict between what you have believed and what you are experiencing take place. This will be a challenge for you, however open-minded you may be. You will need to separate yourself from what you have learned until now; you will need to start afresh in your acquaintance with the land. Even the idea that these lands constitute the *Yergir* should be put aside. The land has changed; you too have changed. You have lived apart, you have become estranged from one another.

You find it hard to fit in. The people you meet treat you as a foreigner. You feel disoriented when a local explains to you that this was once Armenian land, that building was once a church, this was the priest's house, and Armenian merchants lived in that neighbourhood. That means he knows about the past and speaks of it without any complex. All that you knew was that this country denies its past, that it hides its whole reality behind its flag. But you see that alongside those most faithful to the state, there are those who tell you of the past without the least bit of discomfort. This revelation makes you all the more uncomfortable. For so many years you have heard that the Diaspora's struggle is to demand recognition from Turkey, and

here you have the villager, the teacher, the owner of the coffee shop telling you about the past, about the Armenians who once lived here, about what was once theirs. Why are they telling you these stories? You do not know whether to be happy or suspicious. Does he realise that he is speaking of you, and that these casually articulated words will inevitably affect you? A villager explains that the house he lives in (that was once an Armenian house) is in danger of falling into ruin, and that maybe you could help to save it from its demise. Another villager divulges that he is the guardian of a garden that once belonged to an Armenian, and that he is waiting for Armenians to come back so that he may return the key to them. You do not know what to believe, and what to mistrust. What you know for sure is that the locals are living with an absence, that you *are* that absence, but that they cannot see it. Perhaps they do not really want to see it... Perhaps you yourself do not really want to see them as a presence. There is still a long way to go.

On these lands, there is life, there are people, there is a lifestyle. In all of this, you are nothing, and yet there is talk of you everywhere. Everywhere you go, something or someone reminds you that Armenians lived there once: people's words or their silence, their comfort or discomfort in relating to you, but also the sheer number of those who have an Armenian grandmother, the remains of monuments, houses, often in ruins, sometimes still standing. You wonder how they remain standing to this day. And how the government even renovated one of the most magnificent churches, despite having transformed it into a museum and depriving it of its cross. And yet, it still stands there, it is not lost, perhaps one day it will live again. And when you meet an old lady who speaks to you in the Kharpert dialect... It is your identity, your culture that you find there. You have a connection to these lands. You feel that the *Yergir* is palpable and still alive. The Meghraked river, the Mogk mountains, the Van Lake from the songs you knew have now become a reality. The engraving on a fountain finds someone to read it. A "*Der voghormya*" (Armenian Kyrie Eleison) gives life to an abandoned church.

The *Yergir* has now become a reality. A painful and bitter reality, one that yearns for work, care, and brotherhood, but a reality nonetheless, one that has its place in the present and in the future. The bond has been made, it must now be cultivated. What kind of future can you imagine in relation to these lands? If someone asks you, how will you be able to answer? Does it even make sense to answer that question? For the present, you are contented by the fact that you are now tied to the *Yergir*; you want to know it better, with simplicity, without any complex. In other words, to become close again. *Parev, menk enk. Yed yegank...* Hello, it's us. We've come back.

Translated by Laure Astourian

Sossie Kasbarian Moves on

In December 2008 one of our founding members left the UK for sunnier climes in Corfu. Sossie Kasbarian was an important part of the building of the Armenian Institute as one of our founding members, then working as staff and continuing afterwards for several years as moderator of the SOAS/Armenian Institute Armenian Studies Group. Sossie was awarded her PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London in 2006



from the Department of Politics and International Studies. Her thesis, entitled "Rooted and Routed: the Contemporary Armenian Diaspora in Cyprus and Lebanon", involved research and interviews in Cyprus, Lebanon and Armenia. She has taught courses at SOAS including Political Theory, Comparative and International Politics, Transnational Communities and Diasporic Media. While in London, Sossie was also a co-convenor of the Project for Armenian and Turkish Studies (PATS) and is currently a Visiting Lecturer in Comparative Politics at the Graduate Institute of Geneva. While in Corfu, she is working on several publications and we look forward to seeing her at future events in London when visiting.

EK - In Turkey when we think of Armenian identity, we tend to think of three groups: Armenians in Turkey, Armenians in Armenia and the Armenian diaspora. But you locate Armenian identity in the demarcation of east and west and say that historically Armenians have found themselves in the shifting boundaries between the two. What is the meaning of this boundary and its recent changes for the Armenian identity?

LA - Modern Turkey is becoming more democratic and tolerant, so people are not hiding their roots as much anymore. I think this is a new challenge for Armenian identity. There's just the opposite opinion in Armenia, expressed by some people. A recent article in Azg [stated] that Muslim Armenians are not Armenians (referring to groups Islamicised in the late Middle Ages, for instance the Hemşin originally from the Trebizond region). [According to Azg] those Hemşin don't have an Armenian identity.

The reason I begin with them is a case that happened in the late 1970s. During World War II Hemşins [were exiled to] Kyrgyzstan, a common practice in the USSR. [Later] they were allowed to go back, but chose not to. [A Mullah who knew they were Armenian] wrote to the Council of Ministers of Soviet Armenia and the letter was passed to the Institute where I still work. He proposed that they come and live in Armenia, because of this hidden Armenian identity, on the condition that a mosque be built for them. We replied to the Council of Ministers, saying that it is a very reasonable thing they are asking for and that we should use this opportunity. We said that people are slowly losing their religious identity and national identities are surfacing. Unfortunately the mullah died and the move never happened.

This group had Armenian roots but not an Armenian identity. Only the leader had this identity and it was a learned identity rather than a natural one. A colleague of mine has come across Muslims, who are not fundamentalists, who are discovering their Armenian roots and learning about them. So you have such opportunities and possibilities. I am saying that we should not exclude anybody from Armenian identity. We can also have Muslim Armenians joining the family of identities. I don't think this is a negative thing but rather a multicultural moment. Maybe religion will not play as important a part in the future Armenian identity. This is why I object when people say that one must be a member of the Armenian Apostolic church or speak Armenian and do a whole range of things to be considered Armenian. I think identity is becoming broader and more transnational, especially considering the situation with diaspora, which is an unfortunate but objective condition. The third and fourth generations are losing the language. This does not mean that we should reject them. By rejecting them, we will lose this model of "in-betweenness" that I am trying to suggest.

Little Dissidents, Great Citizens*

ELIF KALAYCIOĞLU

Dr. Levon Abrahamian spoke in London for the first time in March this year at the invitation of the Armenian Institute. Abrahamian is an ethnographer whose areas of interest span contemporary and traditional Armenian anthropology, comparative mythology and political anthropology. He teaches at the Anthropology and Ethnography Institute of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences and chairs the Contemporary Ethnographic Studies Department. Abrahamian is also a cartoonist who has won prizes in international competitions.

In our interview, Abrahamian spoke about the evolution of Armenian identity, the new relationships between Armenianness and a democratising Turkey, as well as the importance of "little dissidents" in countries like Turkey and Armenia. When it comes to cartoons, just like the unprofessional "little dissidents—great citizens" he mentions, Abrahamian likes drawing political ones only when they are prohibited.

EK – You contrast this model with the historical model of nation-building through the nationalisation of foreign roots and purification of language. How are some of the groups you mentioned engaged with this process?

LA – Today many Turks are saying that their grandmother was an Armenian. It is a very popular thing in Turkey and shows the democratisation of the society in a sense. ...It is not that these people are saying “we are Armenians.” It means that identity is a much more complicated thing than we think. In this case, to have Armenian roots does not mean being an Armenian. Perhaps it is good for Armenian culture to be an “in-between” culture and [this way] some people can understand both sides better. And the people of the future might have many such roots.

EK – In the formation of Armenian identity, this interaction of the past and present (a common very painful past experience and the multiplicity of present experiences and contexts) presents a tension. How do you think one can reconcile the two?

LA – That is really the most difficult question... The part of diaspora that is called *spyurk* in Armenian is different from Armenians who went to live abroad and are becoming a part of the diaspora. *Spyurk* is mainly the part of the nation that was uprooted as a result of the genocide. In their identity genocide plays a very important role and you cannot eliminate it because it is like [what

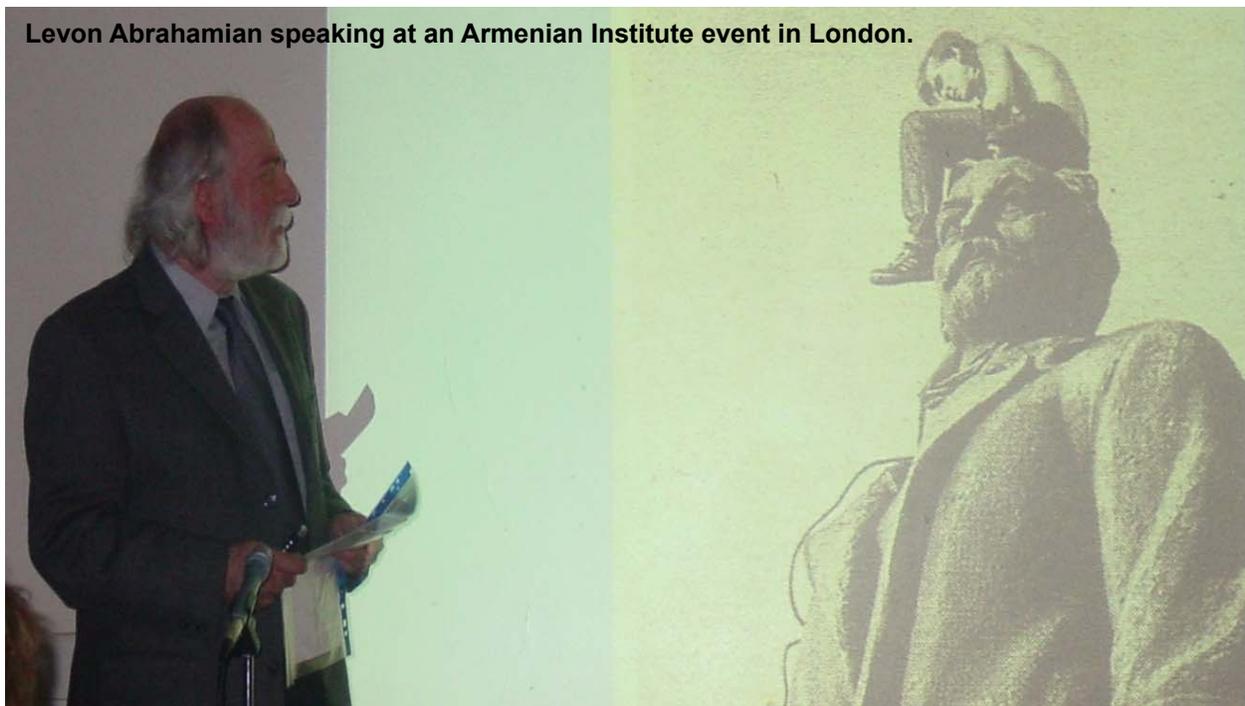
is called] in anthropological literature, the “myth of the beginning.” Of course not because it is a myth but because in many cultures this is what forms the main part of the identity. For diaspora Armenians, who originated because of the genocide, this is the main story. But for Armenians in Armenia this is an important part of the nation's history, but it is not the only one. For the others, it is who they are.

EK – How do you see the more recent developments in Turkey? You talked about Turkey becoming more democratic. How do you think these more recent developments feed into deeper trends of identity formation?

LA – When [a colleague] Hrag Varzhabedian returned from Turkey, he said he thought that everybody in Turkey knows that there were Armenians living in Turkey and that they left Turkey against their own will. Officially, this is not spoken of, but people speak about this in quite another context, asking every Armenian who visits Turkey: ‘Where is your gold?’ I recently went to Turkey as well. We were a group of three, photographing Armenian and Seljuk monuments, discovering historical Armenia, historical Turkey and modern Turkey. But everybody was asking, what are you doing here? We know that you have maps of the treasures. On the popular level, it is very well known.

I think in Turkey the government will not say ... “we did it and it was good” or “we did it and we are sorry.” It will be presented as a historical point, for which I think the population in Turkey is ready.

EK – We are not used to academics who also use cartoons as a medium of communication. What is the com-



Levon Abrahamian speaking at an Armenian Institute event in London.

Photo courtesy of Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian

municative value of cartoons, and especially political cartoons?

LA – I do very few political cartoons but, on the other hand, my last academic book is illustrated by cartoons. I was interested in political cartoons when they were prohibited. If you are not a professional dissident and if you are an intellectual, you must always see the difficulties. You should be a dissident, but not a professional dissident. The Russian historian and cultural critic Yuri Lotman, wrote about medieval poetry and “little dissidents”. For instance, poetry must not just be hymns; it must include criticism but not only criticism. Lotman calls people who can do this “little dissidents.” Sometimes this can work even better than professional dissidence. When political cartoons were forbidden, with many colleagues of mine all over the Soviet Union, we sent each other New Year's cards with our cartoons on them. In a sense it was a communication but it also enabled us to do some anti-mainstream political things. I am not a political cartoonist, but when they were forbidden, I tried to articulate some things through hints in my cartoons.

EK – “Little dissidents” is a very meaningful concept in fact. Where would you locate the little dissidents of Turks and Armenians?

LA – I think they are the people who now have the courage to say that their grandmother is Armenian. And of course the people who attended the fantastic action after Hrant Dink's killing. They were not just dissidents, in other words, it was dissidence around a single event. They were not struggling against the Turkish government, but they were fighting for human rights, not just for Armenians but for a humane existence, for minorities in Turkey. In this sense, these people who are examples of little dissidents are also great citizens of Turkey. In Armenia also one can find a similar feature but not in the national sphere since Armenia is mostly monoethnic. It is the poorness of Armenia or rather the wealth and the poorness at the same time that has led to such dissidence. But in the political sphere, there are times when you must be the dissident, for instance when human rights are violated. These little dissidents are always organised around events; you never know when you will become one. [On] March 1 of the last year, all the little dissidents of Armenia became real citizens when they fought for their rights. What happened in Turkey is of a much higher level because at that moment people were really thinking as a citizen of future Turkey, or so I hope.

*A version of this interview was originally published in Agos on 17 April 2009

Armenian Linguistic Resources on the World Wide Web – Dictionaries and Text Collections

MICHELE SIGLER

As the director of the *Armenian Lexicon and Library Online Project (ALLO)*, I am constantly looking for digital linguistic resources for Armenian, in all of its variants. This article reports on the results of my search so far.



For those looking for an Armenian-English dictionary online, resources are under construction. Researchers in linguistics and many other fields will find the increasing number of corpus-related projects (collections of text) very helpful. The best way to understand a corpus is to imagine taking all the documents on one's computer and making one huge document. This would allow a single search for a word or expression in all the text on that computer. Corpora collect text from a variety of sources: literature, newspapers or transcribed speech. In much the same way that Google™ allows the user to search all web sites, a good corpus has an interface that lets the user to do complex searches easily.

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Armenian Lexicon and Library Online (ALLO) **<http://www.ArmenianLexiconProject.org>**

This site presents the beginning stages of an online Western Armenian-English bilingual dictionary – a lexicon – and an online library of Western Armenian texts. Based at the Centre for Computing in the Humanities at King's College, University of London, the project aims to create a resource that will be comprehensive, detailed, accessible and free. Funding for the project comes from donations by Armenian and non-Armenian organisations and individuals. The Gulbenkian Foundation has recently given a generous grant to support the work.

Entries in the lexicon explain in English what the Armenian word or expression means – rather than simply listing English words. Example sentences show how to use the word in context. Entries also explain the “register” of the word — formal, slang, archaic, offensive, etc. If a word or expression is typically regional or local, this information will be presented.

Sound files will let users hear a native speaker pronouncing the word, on its own and in a sentence. Synonyms and antonyms will also feature, as will pronunciation and part of speech information — is it a noun, adjective, article, postposition? The lexicon will also contain entries for affixes which will be explained and illustrated with examples. Multiword entries and idioms will help users understand expressions such as գլուխ արդուկել to iron head, meaning "to bore or annoy".

The online library will serve two purposes. An online collection of text, it will allow users to download written works – a story, poem, article or novel. Lexicographers will use it to find out how writers used words and expressions in their works, accessing this information directly using a search interface specifically for the collection.

The goal, then, is to create a dictionary that is as close to having a native speaker at your side as possible, but at the same time to create a dictionary based on a collection of Western Armenian writings. Having information about both the living spoken language as well as the literary language, ALLO will be useful to learners, translators and scholars alike.

The site uses internationally accepted standards such as Unicode fonts.

Other sites

Eastern Armenian National Corpus (EANC)

<http://www.eanc.net>

EANC is a comprehensive linguistic database of annotated texts in Standard Eastern Armenian (SEA). It can also be used to find the meanings of Armenian words. Words are labelled according to their type. For example, a word might be a place name, a personal name, an adverb, a profanity, and so on. If a text is annotated, it allows the user to do things like look up a word that is used in a certain way. So, in English, the word *store* can be a place where one buys things, as in *we bought the coffee at the store*. Or it can be a verb, as in *they store their coffee in the freezer*. If the corpus is annotated to indicate whether something is a verb or a noun, the user can search for 'store' the verb or 'store' the noun.

The corpus is large and all-inclusive rather than representative. According to the homepage, it contains 90 million tokens. Token means an instance of a word, so the sentence 'the black cat sat on the black mat' has eight tokens, but only six different words. EANC is a diachronic corpus, containing texts from various time periods – from the mid-19th century to the present. Written and transcribed oral discourse are included. This is significant, as the written and oral versions of a language differ in significant ways. It is open-ended, that is, new texts are added continually.

An electronic library of 104 works is available for users to download from the site. According to the web page, these texts have been digitised but not

proofread. The interface is available in English, Armenian and Russian, and is clear and easy to use.

Leiden Armenian Lexical Textbase

<http://www.sd-editions.com/LALT/home>

The site is the work of Professor Jos Weitenberg and his colleagues at the University of Leiden. It is a superb resource for those interested in classical or medieval Armenian. The site contains digital versions of the major dictionaries and texts, and a straightforward interface that allows the user to search in a particular text, or across all of the texts at the site. One of the dictionaries (Bedrossian, Venice 1879) documents classical Armenian, with a small number of words from the spoken language of the time as well as some 19th century words from the realm of the natural sciences. The database is available for a subscription fee of £45/\$90 for two years.

Nayiri - Western Armenian Online Dictionary

<http://www.nayiri.com>

This site contains a 17,600-word modern Western Armenian dictionary, a digital version of Antranig Geranian's (Անդրանիկ Վրդ. Կռանեան) dictionary published by Shirag Press in Beirut. The interface is identical to Google™'s – colourful, simple and easy to use. The user searches for a word in Armenian and finds an entry that gives the part of speech, an explanation and/or list of synonyms. A useful feature displays words that are written similarly so that the user who cannot remember whether արդէն is spelled with a է or a ե, can still look up the word. Since արթեն is also a word, Nayiri further alerts the user to the fact that the verb արթել *to cause, to affect* exists, so that արթեն (the third-person plural form, *they cause*) might be what the user is looking for. Typed English letters are automatically transformed into Armenian letters, eliminating the need to download fonts and keyboard layouts. The entire site is in Armenian and uses standard Unicode fonts. The developer, Serouj Ourishian, created Nayiri.com for a class project while studying computer science at University of California, Berkeley.

<http://dictionary.hayastan.com/index.php>

This is an online bilingual dictionary of Eastern Armenian and English. According to the home page it contains 9,355 terms, the most recent terms were added in 2005. The interface is straightforward, it uses Unicode fonts, and the user can look up words without needing to type in the Armenian word. The drawback is that the user needs to know the correct spelling of the word. Entries contain one or two words without further information. For example the user finds խրել - 'to stick', but no explanation or example sentence to indicate whether it means to stick, as in "I stuck a stamp on the envelope" [attach] or "She stuck the needle in his arm" [pierce] or "You can stick your things in

here" [put]. (pierce is correct). As such, it is of limited use for learning Armenian and of no use for research.

Editor's note: Another useful resource is the English-Armenian glossary on the website of Council of Europe's Yerevan Office (<http://www.coe.am/glossary.php>)

Dr. Michele Sigler, the director of the Armenian Lexicon Project, has a BA from Princeton University and a PhD in linguistics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She was introduced to the Armenian language by a physics graduate student from Beirut, whom she met at MIT. Since this chance encounter she has spent her research time developing the Armenian Lexicon Project, and writing articles about interesting aspects of Armenian syntax.

Community Newsmakers: Tamar Haytayan Holds A Mirror to the Armenian World. *Hye-eli*

SUSAN PATTIE

The following is an email interview with Tamar Haytayan, a Londoner now living in Vancouver with her young family. As she explains below, Tamar has built up a fascinating podcast which regularly explores the work of a wide variety of Armenians living around the world. A recent Hye-eli interview was with Armenian rap artist R-Mean (Armin Hariri) while earlier ones have included London's Ara Steven Bozadjian, Nouritza Matossian – and from farther afield, Vahe Berberian, Arto Tunçboyacıyan and many others. Hye-eli means "mirror" in Armenian and we thought we'd turn the mirror back on her and find out more about this wonderful project.

SP – Tell us about your family background -- what drives what you do this? Who inspired you?

TH – I was born in Lebanon and my family moved to England when I was 11. I moved to Vancouver 5 years ago after meeting my husband, Haig Armen. We now have two children, Jivan (nearly 4) and Ani (8 months). I was raised in a family that loves Armenian culture. The most important Armenian influence was my late grandmother, Armenouhi Mahdessian. She represented all the characteristics that a woman must have - strength, intelligence, perseverance, patience, love, passion. She was left a widow at a very young age with four children and became an Armenian kindergarten teacher at Tekeyan School in Lebanon, remaining there for 45 years! When I was a teenager she always attempted to read out loud to us from Armenian newspapers in the hope that our interest in our culture would get stronger. Even though we fought against it then, my sister, brother and I thank her for that now.

SP – Hye-eli is a great name – is there a story about how that evolved?

TH – Haig is an award-winning multi-media designer and we wanted to create an Armenian online magazine with a state of the art design. However, that really is a full time job in itself and so Haig suggested producing a podcast that would be free and downloadable via iTunes. I spent a year in Armenia prior to my move to Vancouver and produced the first English language show at Vem Radio called 'Armenian Perspectives', interviewing individuals making positive changes in Armenia. It was a lot of fun, so I didn't think twice about starting a new radio show. As for the name Hye-eli, with more than one meaning. We both liked Hay-eli because it means mirror in Armenian, which speaks to the radio show's purpose to reflect Armenians back to Armenians. We also liked that hye-eli is also a way of saying, "hey man, I am Armenian" - as 'eli' is a commonly used slang in Armenia.

SP – How did the Hye-eli project evolve?

TH –What we set out to do is simply present our Armenian culture in a positive way. Hye-eli is a way for Armenians to get to know about each other and be proud of the many varying accomplished Armenians that extend beyond the stereotypes. There are so many different forms of being Armenian and we must learn to accept and support them all. The only thing that Hye-eli does not set out to do is take political sides. Haig and I are not inclined that way, at least in Armenian politics. We were both brought up in households where simply being Armenian came first and that was that. We believe that recognition of the Armenian genocide is extremely important, we also believe that being Armenian is so much more than the genocide - we have a rich culture filled with talented and promising individuals who will bring Armenian culture forward in a positive way. Also, we believe that a culture must be organic and ever evolving, respectful of its heritage and offer new ideas for it to be relevant for future generations.



Photo courtesy of Tamar Haytayan



December 1903 issue of *Hnchak*, Sagouni (left) and Aram Grigorian are shown on the front page.

tions in America and Europe.

The fourth party congress was held in London in the autumn of 1903. Some 65 Hunchakian delegates had gathered in London for the occasion. On October 26, one of their prominent leaders, Saghatel Aghasian Gevorgian, known by his *nom de guerre* Sagouni, was assassinated as he was about to enter his lodgings in Nunhead. Sagouni had earlier in the day returned from Switzerland, where in all likelihood he had gone on party business. The assassin, described by eyewitnesses as a small dark man, shot Sagouni three times before disappearing down the road, leaving behind his hat and revolver. Sagouni was taken to Camberwell Infirmary where he died soon after. For *The Times*,

there was "every reason to believe" that the killing was an act of political settling of scores. The paper reported that the Armenian revolutionaries, previously based in Athens were expelled by the Greek government and moved to London, settling first at Shepherd's Bush before moving to Peckham Rye.

Sagouni was born in the district of Shamakhi in the province of Baku and was 37 at the time of his murder. He worked in the nascent Caspian Sea oil industry as a promising mining engineer, but that career was cut short in 1896 when he was briefly imprisoned by the Tsarist authorities for his political activities. His brief but successful career had enabled him to accumulate sufficient means to allow early retirement and devote his time to the advancement of his party's ideals. In 1901 at the third congress of the party he was elected a member of the Central Committee and the following year he moved to England from New York. He took lodgings with the Winslow family at 29 Nunhead Grove at Peckham, described as an "unpretentious little suburb of London" by the *New York Times*. He was on friendly terms with them, teaching one of the sons Russian. Mrs Winslow had a high opinion of her lodger, who always paid his board and lodgings in advance. "No finer gentleman ever drew the breath of life," said Clara Winslow, mourning Sagouni's death.

Sagouni was interred at the cemetery on Forest Hill Road (now Camberwell Old Cemetery) on Saturday, 31 October. *The Times* reported that the funeral was held according to the rites of the Armenian Church. A Rev Isaac Theodore, described as a minister of the Armenian Church, officiated. Reversing the clergyman's name order, the *Daily Mirror* styled the priest as the Rev Theodore Isaac of Manchester, 'the only ordained Armenian priest in England'. He blessed the body wearing a black silk gown and, surprisingly, 'a skull cap'. An unexpectedly large crowd, some 5000 people, attended the interment which the *Daily Mail* compared to the funeral of Garibaldi. Possibly many of the mourners were Russian and Balkan revolutionaries 'resident' then in London. Two days after a report of Sagouni's funeral was published in *The Times*, the wardens of the Armenian Church in Manchester wrote to the newspaper to dissociate themselves from the officiating priest and stating that the present incumbent is Rev M Gurdjikian, "who alone represents the community".

The murderer of Sagouni was still on the loose when a certain Vahtan (Vartan?) Krikorian was arrested on arrival in Boston on 30 October at the request of Scotland Yard. The charge was that he was an accessory to planning the murder of Sagouni. Due to lack of evidence, the British withdrew their charge a few days later, but Reuters reported that the US authorities intended to deport him under the Immigration Law which stipulated then that every passenger arriving in the United States must have at least \$60 (then £12). Krikorian had only \$5 when he was arrested.

The uproar had barely subsided, when on 4 .

November 1903, two more leading Hunchakians were murdered in Peckham Rye, not far from the spot that had seen Sagouni's murder a few days earlier. The double murder acquired an even more sensational aspect by the suicide of the perpetrator. In the early 1900s Nunhead and Peckham Rye were neighbourhoods where most Armenians and the Hunchakians in particular chose to live. The party organ *Hnchak* gave its address at 85, Peckham Rye, under the name of a Mr Bellart, almost certainly a pseudonym incorporating the English word for *Hnchak* (Bell). The ordinary dwelling house was rented by the party and also served as their clubhouse.

The fourth party congress, which was briefly interrupted because of Sagouni's murder, had resumed its sittings in the clubhouse. After the conclusion of the days' proceedings, eight delegates left the house and went for a walk. Amongst the group there were Aram Grigorian, known as Hamr (Mute) and Tigran Izmirlian, known as Vorsord (Hunter), both party activists from Russia. On their return at 3:45 pm, before the group reached the house, a man emerged from a nearby coal yard and fired at Grigorian shooting him in the head. Grigorian's death was instantaneous. Before the others could realise what was happening, the assassin fired again and Izmirlian fell dead at the gateway of 47, Peckham Rye. The third shot was aimed at another delegate, Karapetian, but the bullet missed him. Karapetian gave chase to the murderer who had made a dash to escape across the Rye. The fugitive on the run collided with a builder called Jarvis and was knocked down. Jarvis seized his revolver, but the murderer produced another revolver and pointing that to

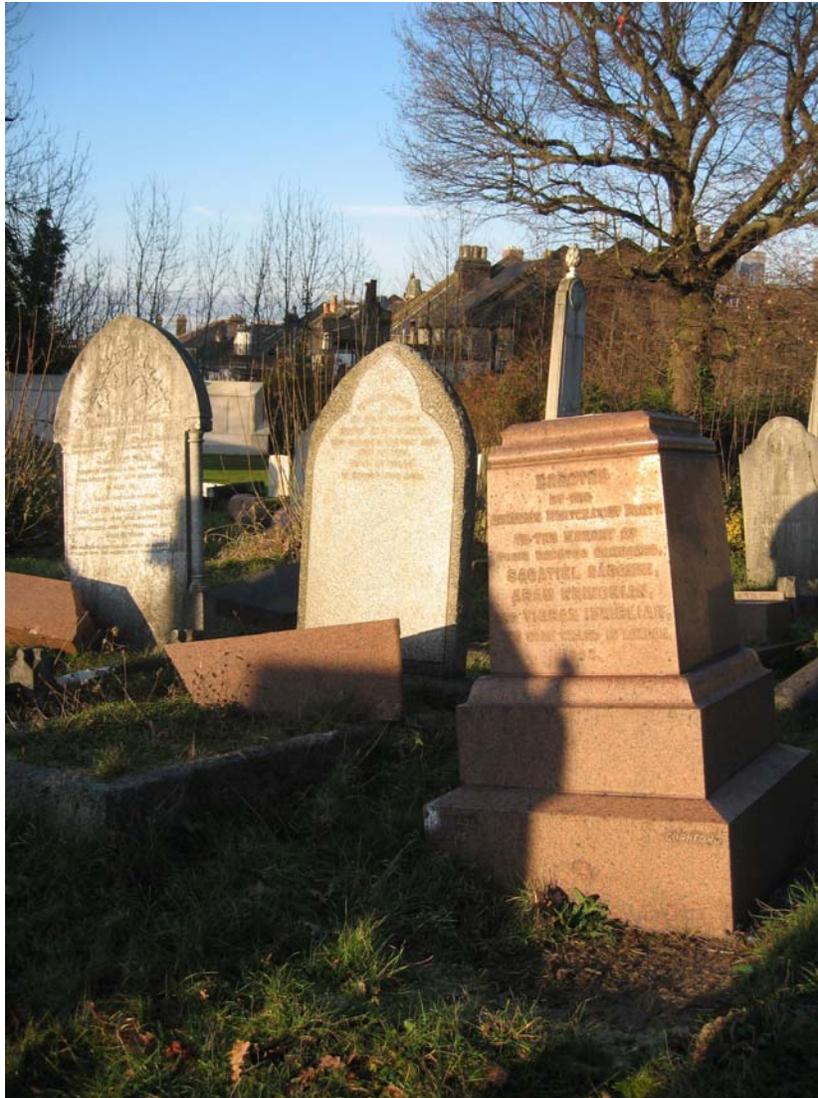
the back of his ear, shot himself. Newspaper reports suggested that the murderer who committed suicide at the scene of his crime was also responsible for the assassination of Sagouni. Witnesses reported that the man held his revolver in his left hand, a significant fact because Sagouni's assassin was also left-handed. An inquest held in London on 9 November identified the person who committed suicide as Dickran Derakian (Tigran Tiryakian), aka Jorgie Yangie, previously working at a shoe factory in

Middleborough, Massachusetts. He had arrived from the United States on 17 October and had rented a room at Moncrieff Street in Peckham. His landlady judged him to be quiet and polite. The principal Armenian witness at the inquest was Karapetian, who had narrowly escaped death. The coroner 'professed himself unable to pronounce' the witness's name, who had to write it down on a piece of paper.

Aram Grigorian was barely 25 when he was killed. Born in Alexandropol (now Gyumri), he had been a teacher in Kars and Kaghzvan before seeking employment, like Sagouni, in the Caspian oil industry. Given the nickname 'Mute' for his paucity of speech, he represented Baku at the party congress. His fellow victim, Tigran Izmirlian was born into a well-to-do family in Smyrna and was 32. After a spate of armed skirmishes in Turkish Armenia, he moved to the port of Batumi, in the

Russian Caucasus and was elected a delegate there to attend the party congress in London. He was called the 'Hunter' because he had a reputation of being a marksman.

The succession of murders at Peckham had – not surprisingly – created an unusual excitement in the neighbourhood, prompting one outraged resident to write to *The Times* deploring the presence of revolutionaries in his suburb and enquiring from the Home Secretary if



The memorial to Hunchakian in Peckham.

Photo courtesy of Susan P. Patie

there was no law “by which they can be deported from the country, whereby we may be rid of ‘undesirables’ who have proved themselves unworthy of the asylum offered by Great Britain to the downtrodden of other lands?”

To prevent the gathering of unexpectedly large crowds as at Sagouni’s funeral and the resulting “unseemly and regrettable crush” according to *The Times*, the police ordered the funerals of Grigorian and Izmirlian to be brought forward from early afternoon of 12 November to 9 in the morning. The *Daily Mirror* however guessed that the reason for holding the funeral at the earlier time was to prevent further acts of vengeance on Hunchakian mourners. Despite this change of plans, the coffins, covered by a dozen wreaths, were attended by some 100 Armenian and British sympathisers at the cemetery. The Armenian priest in Manchester had refused to travel to London, citing health reasons and the Rev Theodore Isaacs was ‘unable’ to attend. The funeral service was therefore conducted by the parish priest of St Clement’s, East Dulwich. The victims of the double murder were buried in one grave next to Sagouni. The party later erected on their grave a memorial in red granite, topped by an obelisk and bearing the following inscription.

ERECTED
BY THE
ARMENIAN HENCHAKIST PARTY
TO THE MEMORY OF
THEIR DEVOTED COMRADES,
SAGATIEL SAGOUNI,
ARAM KRIKORIAN,
AND TIGRAN IZMIRLIAN,
WHO WERE KILLED IN LONDON,
1903

After a short service at the Nonconformist chapel of the Forest Hill Cemetery, the assassin was also buried at dawn, some two hours before the funeral of his victims, but in unconsecrated ground.

Over a century later, subsidence, that bane of funerary monuments, has caused the stone memorial structure to shift from its level position and lean to one side. The angle of leaning is such that the plinth could no longer support the tall obelisk which has toppled, crashing against the neighbouring, less grand, graves and has broken into two pieces. The collapsed monument presents a sad sight. Armenians in Britain, and more particularly members and sympathisers of the Hunchakian Party amongst them, might do well to consider restoring the fallen memorial. The final resting place of three young Armenian idealists who were among the pioneers of the Armenian liberation movement deserves it.

We are grateful to Mrs Hilary Rosser, Reader at St. Barnabas Church, Dulwich, for first informing us about the memorial in Camberwell Old Cemetery.

Letter from Rome

THEO MAARTEN VAN LINT

The Biblioteca of the Pontificio Istituto Orientale is a blessed environment, as one might expect – if one forgives the pun. Not entirely a pun: one of the greatest scholars of the Christian liturgy is sitting not five



metres on the left behind me, and the array of journals and other material is impressive. Indian nuns, Syrian clerics and students of Russian Orthodoxy quietly work away, as does a miniature and quite ancient lady professor to my left, who has a private bookcase filled with dusty tomes that form the *Trudy Otdel Drevnerusskoj Literatury*, the *Works of the Department of Ancient Rus-*

sian Literature, a venerated series issued by the Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg. She and Father Taft, SJ, whose brilliant comparative studies of the liturgy are an inspiration to generations of scholars and clerics alike, are clearly at the top of the pecking order: apart from the separate bookshelves with cabinets underneath holding their papers, they have their own private desks, on which are spread out the paraphernalia of research as it was common in the pre-computer era: a carton box that once held an electric ironing appliance, but now houses thick piles of learned note cards, envelopes, glue, a stapler, papers scribbled over in every which way, and such like. The lesser gods all work away on their laptops, with conspicuous visits to Yahoo and other windows onto the secular world, as wireless access is provided for free. The world outside isn’t far away in any case, and when I need to, I can get a real coffee in two minutes time, around the corner, with a view of deep blue sky, hectic traffic and the majestic Santa Maria Maggiore.

Why am I here? After six years of teaching and some administration, I have earned a sabbatical year, according to the rules in vigour at Oxford University. This is not, I hasten to add, a year of vacation, a holiday: one is expected to do research, and to report on it once the time is up – which will of course be far too soon. For me it is an occasion to finish work that has remained in its incipient stages, or left half done, when other, allegedly more urgent, matters required attention. My main field of research is medieval Armenian literature, and I hope to be able to get a good deal further with an article on the tenth or eleventh century Vardan Anec’i’s poem on the Vision of the Divine Chariot, which is a mystical con-

templation of the four living beings carrying the Throne-Chariot on which the Godhead resides. The vision is related in the opening chapters of the Old Testament book of the prophet Ezekiel, and has aroused great interest in the Jewish and Christian traditions, and also the Armenian one is rich in its echoes. The best known of these is perhaps, apart from the reinterpretation of the four living beings – man, lion, ox, and eagle – as the signs of the four evangelists, the seventh century wall painting in Surb Step'anos in Lmbat. But it appears also in the *Šaraknoc'* the Hymnal of the Armenian Church, and in various other poems, among those by Grigor Narekac'i, in many manuscript illuminations, and in exegetical material, as well. The poem contains a wealth of references to the Church Fathers, and the Pontifical Oriental Institute Library with its wealth of patristic texts from both Eastern and Western Christianity is an excellent place to chase them up.

Another reason to choose this place is the presence of a colleague, Dr Anna Sirinian, who teaches Armenian studies at the University of Bologna, but lives with her husband and three sons here in Rome. She is a specialist of Armenian translations from Greek and has worked extensively on the Armenian homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, the fourth century Church Father who in Armenian is often called by his other name, *Astuacaban*, the Theologian. We would like to start a project that I had decided upon several years ago: a critical edition with translation and study of the eighty-eight letters of Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni. An eleventh century layman, the most learned man in Armenia of his time, he was a poet, politician, theologian, folklorist, classical scholar, a master of many languages, among which Persian, Arabic and Syriac, and founder of schools. He was given the title Magistros by the Emperor of Byzantium and made governor of the heavily Armenian populated provinces of Mesopotamia and Taron. He was also the ancestor of the dynasty of Pahlawuni catholicoi, of whom his son Grigor II Vka-yasēer was the first; others were Nersēs Šnorhali and his elder brother Grigor III, and their nephew Grigor IV Tghay. An edition of his letters was published in 1910 by Kostaneanc' in Alexandropol, present day Gyumri, but is not a critical one as it does not take into consideration all relevant manuscripts. It also lacks both a translation in a widely accessible modern language, and a study of the letters, which were deliberately written in a difficult and mannered classical Armenian. We hope that we will be able to make a start with this project, which will involve specialists from several fields, in order to do right by this erudite Armenian of a millennium ago.

The Biblioteca is very quiet, silence reigns apart from the tapping on a keyboard by an inspired young scholar writing his theological dissertation, and

the birds, whose song wafts in through the open windows together with the bright, warm sunlight. It is silent, and no wonder, as it is time for *pranzo*, the midday meal, and that is what I must dedicate myself to next.

Dr. Theo M. van Lint is Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies and Fellow of Pembroke College at Oxford University. His main research interests include medieval Armenian literature as well as modern Armenian literature in its international context.

Book Review

We include a book review from an ambitious cultural newsletter *Bulletin de l'ACAM* (Association Culturelle Arménienne de Marne-la-Vallée) which regularly reviews numerous publications of interest to Armenians. Readers may wish to visit this website to find news, particularly of recent francophone publications (www.acam-france.org). Anahide Pilibossian, who has translated an original review by her mother, is studying for an MSc in Comparative Politics, Politics and Markets at the LSE.

Armenians in Asian Trade in the Early Modern Era, edited by Sushil Chaudhury and Kéram Kévonian, 2008, Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris.

This volume is an academic book in English and French, well-documented and illustrated, dealing with different aspects of the trade network shaped by Armenians between the East and the West during the 16th-18th centuries. The authors emphasise the commercial practices in use at those times and underline the unknown but strongly important role of Armenians of New Julfa (Iran) during the 17th century in the organisation of trade and the accumulation of capital. The book is the outcome of years of study on Euro-Asian trade relations and follows a previous edition on the same subject by the Bengali author Sushil Chaudhury. In this composite piece of work, fifteen specialists have collaborated; each of them points out a specific feature of the topic, such as accountability, finance, shipping, international trade, state policies and the questioning of nation. Kéram Kévonian, writing the Afterword, reminds us of the recent destruction in Nakhchivan (Azerbaijan) of a site of incalculable artistic and historical importance, which is the medieval Armenian cemetery of Old Julfa. 'The Azeri state has repeatedly and methodically destroyed every hint of Armenian presence and history there', writes Kévonian. The book aims at retrieving forgotten histories and makes us understand that beyond simple trade practices the Armenian merchants, with those of other nations, laid down the foundations of the modern era, namely the capitalist system.

This book has been edited by Sushil Chaudhury, Professor of Islamic History and Culture at the University of Calcutta, and Kéram Kevonian, research engineer at Groupe de Recherches d'Histoire d'Arménie of École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris, France) and founder of Land and Culture Organisation.

Anahide Pilibossian

Nicola Migliorino. *(Re)Constructing Armenia in Lebanon and Syria: Ethno-cultural Diversity and the State in the Aftermath of a Refugee Crisis*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2008. 242pp

Migliorino makes an important contribution both to Refugee Studies and to Armenian Studies with this densely packed survey of Armenian life in two neighbouring states. Based on a strong and varied array of resources and methodologies from interviews and unpublished dissertations to more commonly available books and journals in English, French and Armenian, the author achieves a careful and even-handed study of the structural integration of this minority group in Syria and Lebanon over the twentieth century. These two states are in many important ways much more than neighbours but Migliorino demonstrates clearly that the experiences and conceptions of identity construction, persistence and adjustment are not as similar as one might assume, given the proximity and historical ties.

The author begins with an overview of the Ottoman past, outlining the evolution of power relations, expectations and attitudes, internal and external. Migliorino traces the development of religious and civil dissent within the Armenian millet, the creation of new denominations (Catholic and Protestant) and political parties. Through this, he builds a solid foundation for the following chapters and, equally important, does so with clarity and dispassion. In discussing minority rights within the Ottoman Empire, Migliorino notes, for example, a comparison with other contemporary empires, a perspective which is helpful in imagining the experiences of the world at that time, rather than judging it by today's standards.

Throughout the book, Migliorino is careful to lay a very accurate research trail, allowing the reader to assess his sources and those who follow to pick up the trail and take it farther. The footnotes are extensive and serve to continue a parallel discussion in some cases. While the bibliography is extensive, there is much more available which could flesh out this very sturdy, well-constructed skeleton. One obvious example is the work of Maud Mandel (2003) in which she explores a variation on Migliorino's thesis by studying two minority groups (Armenians and Jews), comparing their experi-

ences of integration in one state, France, again in the twentieth century.

The book covers an extraordinary amount of ground in a short space, both in terms of chronology and breadth. A number of tables assist in presenting information more clearly and ably demonstrate many of the author's points. Major junctures over the twentieth century are wisely chosen and include sufficient detail to point the way towards further reading and research. For example, the inclusion of the years of "re-patriation" to Soviet Armenia is vital to the understanding of the evolution of these communities – and also to the way in which they were regarded by their fellow citizens of both Syria and Lebanon. This is not discussed, but when a large number of group members decide that their ultimate loyalty lies with another state and migrates, their fellow ethnics are left with quite a different reputation than they had before that migration. "Repatriation", the emergence of ASALA and the Justice Commandos, indeed the title of the book itself ("*(Re-)Constructing Armenia ...*"), all deserve further exploration and development and Migliorino has provided an excellent bibliography and foundation for the continuation of this research.

Susan Pattie, PhD. Senior Research Fellow, University College London

Cited work:

Mandel, Maud S. *In the Aftermath of Genocide: Armenians and Jews in Twentieth Century France*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003

Armine Ishkanian. *Democracy Building and Civil Society in Post-Soviet Armenia*. London: Routledge, 2008. 200 pp.

In this important book, Armine Ishkanian examines the concepts and practices of democracy-building in Armenia from the heady days of the Karabakh Movement to current times. She focuses on two specific groups of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) during that period. These two initiatives, training and monitoring campaigns connected to the 2003 presidential elections and the 2002-4 anti-domestic violence campaign, were selected in order to study contrasting examples of the interplay between macro-level programmes and micro-level action and practice of "ordinary" citizens.

Across the globe, the proliferation of NGOs carries on at great speed and, as Ishkanian notes, so too does an increasingly vocal critique and ambivalence about them, both at scholarly level and amongst those who are both recipients of the aid and targets of the policies. Ishkanian outlines the ongoing discussion

of the promotion of civil society and its meaning, both in Armenia and in wider academic and governmental circles. The impact of NGOs on local societies is of particular interest in Armenia, which as Ishkanian notes, is both the smallest of the former Soviet states and the “largest per capita foreign aid recipient in the region” (p.1) Ishkanian discusses the implication of this and the ways in which such aid is seen by some as a subtle form of neo-colonialism or at least operates to mould local thinking into pre-conceived boxes, limiting the ways in which people might conceive of new ways to transform their own society. The important discussion at the heart of the book, and one which makes it useful beyond the Armenian example, concerns the nature of democracy and civil society and whether the Western model so heavily promoted is appropriate across the globe – or indeed practised fully at home. Through her fieldwork, Ishkanian also gives voice to the local NGO workers’ frustrations and to the reactions of those people receiving help through these efforts. This is particularly poignant in the case of the anti-domestic violence campaign as it is clear that help is needed but in ways that make sense and are appropriate to those most vulnerable. Ishkanian discusses the global backlash against NGOs but also questions how the desired development of states in transition might take place unfettered by these dissident voices. For Armenia and other countries, Ishkanian suggests that it is not a particular model that is most important, nor is the achievement of a society of “apolitical” professionals but rather a safe space for participation in which “diversity and complexity” can struggle and develop more organically. Ishkanian concludes that the imposition of civil society from above is less likely to take root but rather requires both time and active participation at all levels of society. Sadly this book suffers from a common trend in academic publishing, putting the price beyond the level of most readers. It will be available in libraries but we also suggest that citizen activists begin to put pressure on these publishers to produce books that are accessible to all who are interested.

Susan Pattie, PhD. Senior Research Fellow, University College London

Donations to the Library

The already important collections of books, serials and archival materials at the Institute Library continue to be enriched by valuable donations from friends of the Library who believe in its mission as a dedicated Armenian resource centre in London. We receive enquiries and use the available resources.

Since our last report (*Armenian Institute News*, 2008) more generous gifts, and in particular three major

collections, have found a home at the Library.

Nancy Hocking and **Ara Nigogosian** donated over 200 valuable books and a similar number of periodicals from the library of the late **Yervant** and **Azniv Nigogosian**. Amongst general items on Armenian history, art and literature, the collection has a significant number of rare titles and pamphlets dealing with the history of Armenian General Benevolent Union.



The late **George S Kurkjian**, OBE, was a committed Benefactor of the Armenian Institute from its inception until his death in 2005. His daughter, **Laura Kensington**, donated several hundred titles on Armenian topics from his personal collection. Many books bear inscriptions by the late Catholicos of All Armenians Vazgen I and various authors. A wide range of Soviet Armenian and diasporan serials form part of the Kurkjian–Kensington donation. More importantly, this bequest includes an array of unique archival documents, reflecting decades of association between the Kurkjian family and the Mother See of Ejmiatsin. A rare item in the archive is an especially commissioned presentation album of mostly unpublished monochrome photographs, taken in 1955 by official Soviet photographers and providing a pictorial record of the election and enthronement of Vazgen I (1955–1994). George Kurkjian’s father, Sarkis Kurkjian, was a delegate at the Assembly which elected Vazgen I. The album has in-

inscribed on its front cover “1955 թ. Ազգային-Եկեղեցական Ժողովը” (The National-Ecclesiastical Assembly of 1955) and bears an inscription in the hand of Vazgen I addressed to Mr and Mrs S Kurkjian. We reproduce here a photograph from the album taken moments after the anointment of the Catholicos on the High Altar at Ejmiatsin Cathedral on 2 October 1955.

A loyal friend of the library, **Anahit Kazarians**, the former Headteacher of K Tahta Armenian Community Sunday School, continued to enrich holdings by donating several serial titles from Soviet Armenia and various diasporan centres.

The following friends of the Armenian Institute have also donated books and serials to the Library: **Rev. Fr. Shnork Baghdassarian, Levon Chilingirian, OBE, Felix Corley, Olivier & Laurence Djololian, Rouben & Mariette Galichian, Joan George, Dr Mark Grigorian**, the author **Robert Hal Tertessian** (Mahopac, New York), **Felicity Marrian, Dr Susan P Pattie**, the poet **Varand** (Teheran), **Harout Yeretjian** (Glendale, California), **Nerses & Sossi Yeretjian** and **Dr. Andreas Zoulikian**.

The Armenian Institute is grateful to all donors who help enrich the library collection.

Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian

Happy Birthday Helen Grout

The Armenian Institute congratulates Mrs. Helen Grout who will celebrate her 100th birthday on November 16th this year. Born in a small town on the Black Sea, she was only six years old when the deportations of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire began in her area. In her town many parents left their children with Turkish friends and business partners, hoping that they would thus survive. Helen and her 4 siblings were left with her father's business friend whom she remembers as a kind man who gave them a choice of remaining with him and his family when the war ended. Her uncle, however, was one of the first to return and he gathered the children into their old, now devastated home. Eventually Helen's father also returned and the family moved to Istanbul where Helen grew up, became a nurse and met her future husband Richard Grout, a British soldier. Moving to England, Helen then lived near Windsor where Richard worked for the Crown Estate at Windsor Great Park for some 50 years. Their son, teacher Leslie Grout, became Mastermind of Britain in 1981 and later also won Mastermind International in New Zealand with the subject of Windsor Castle. Helen Grout continues to be active, living in her own home and knitting items for charity.

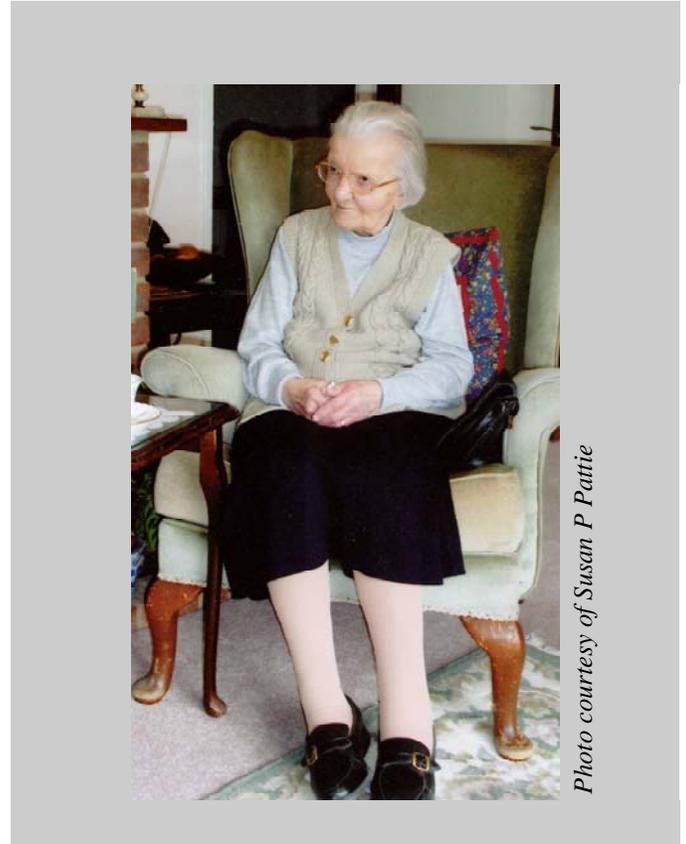


Photo courtesy of Susan P Pattie

Items of Interest from the Library

GAGIK STEPAN-SARKISSIAN

Mesrop Mashtots created an alphabet for the Armenians in the 5th century AD and since then the script and language have become inseparable. Or so it would seem.

The use of the Latin alphabet for a plethora of linguistically unrelated European languages is commonplace. However many people – Armenian and non-Armenian alike – who closely identify the Armenian language with its alphabet may not be aware that over the centuries an important body of literature in other languages has come to exist using Mesrop's script. The majority of these texts are in Turkic languages (Kipchak and Turkish) but there are also fragments in languages as diverse as Arabic and Hungarian. Some time after Armenians settled in the Crimea in the 11-12th centuries, they adopted the language of their neighbouring Kipchak people and produced texts in that language but written in Armenian script, even after moving from the Crimea to lands straddling the Polish-Ukrainian border.

However, by far the largest corpus of literature was produced in Ottoman Turkish. The first printed works in Armeno-Turkish began appearing in the 18th century, by which time a sizeable proportion of the

Armenian population in Anatolia was speaking in Turkish while retaining their traditions and religion. Publication of works in Armeno–Turkish continued well into the middle of the 20th century.

Apart from a large number of periodicals (over 50 titles in Constantinople alone during the 19th century), Armeno–Turkish produced more than 2000 titles in a variety of domains, including a manual published in 1882 for Singer sewing machines. There are numerous religious works but also works of fiction, both original and translations from European literatures (mostly French).



Thanks to a generous donation from Silva Keondjian, a long–standing Patron of the Armenian Institute, the Library has a significant number of Armeno–Turkish manuscript items, which deserve a separate specialist study. There are however only two printed Armeno–Turkish books in the Institute collections: a work of fiction by the French 19th century novelist Paul Féval and a Bible published in Vienna in 1930 (pictured).

We are pleased to include an unedited article by one of AI's language students. Anna has finished 3 terms of instruction.

Շիրազ

ԱՆՆԱ ԴԸԼԵՅՆԻ

Անցած աշնան ես գնացի Պարսկաստան երկու շաբաթվա համար: Շատ հատուկ ճամփորդություն էր ինձ համար, որովհետև կատարեցի իմ տարեդարձը իմ տատիկի և ընտանիքի հետ:

Ես մեծամասնությունը մնացի Թեհրանում

բայց ես էլ այցելեցի Շիրազ, մորս և իր ընկերուհու հետ միասին: Թեհրանից Շիրազ ինքնաթիռ ունեցանք: Մնացինք երեք օրվա համար ավանդական հյուրանոցը Շիրազի կենտրոնի մեջ: Շիրազը շատ ինձ դուր եկավ: Քաղաքը շատ գեղեցիկ է: Եղանակը շատ հաճելի էր իսկ գիշերները հով էին: Ճաշերը շատ համով էին: Միսի խորոված, մածուն, աղցան և թան, ճաշարանում իր ավանդական երաժիշտներով:

Այցելեցի նաև շուկա, մզկիթներ, բանաստեղծների գերեզմաններ և հրաշալի այգիներ: Շրոսաշրջիկի թիվը ինձ շատ զարմացրեց. մեծամասնությունը ֆրանսիացիներ և գերմանացիներ էին: Շիրազի ժողովուրդը շատ ընկերական էին և ժպտաղեմ: Բոլորը շատ հետաքրքրվում էին քաղաքականությունով և շատ ուզում էին իմանալ իմ կարծիքը իրենց երկիրի մասին: Ամենը հետաքրքիր մարդիկ թաքսի–վարորդ էին: Նրանք բոլորը շատ զվարճալի պատմություններ ունեին:

Ամեն գիշերները խմում էինք *բահար–նարինջ* և *բիսուեշկ* անուշահոտ թեյ: Ծառերի անուշ հոտերը գիշերվա ընթացքում ամենամեծ ազդեցությունն է որ հիշողությանս մեջ է մնացել:

The **Armenian Institute** is dedicated to making the millennia–rich Armenian culture and history a living experience in the United Kingdom, from children to youth, to young adults and the general public. It is dedicated to providing intellectual, educational, cultural and artistic fora, where Armenians and other nationalities engage in creative endeavours.

The Armenian Institute believes that the rich Armenian heritage has also great many things to offer to the wider world culture. As such, the Institute seeks to build multicultural bridges within Britain and beyond, and promotes interaction, collaboration and networking among various ethnic and cultural groups throughout Europe.

We invite you to be part of this new, multifaceted cultural and educational vision for the edification of the Armenian community in Britain and towards contributing to the lively process of cultural production in Europe. Your moral and financial contribution would mean a great deal to the Armenian Institute. And yes, your little contribution would create great riches that money cannot buy.

The Wool Bazaar in Shiraz



Photo courtesy of Anna Delaney

Shiraz

ANNA DELANEY

Last autumn I went to Iran for two weeks. This was a special trip for me, because I celebrated my birthday with my grandmother and my family.

I stayed mostly in Teheran, but also visited Shiraz with my mother and her friend. We flew to Shiraz from Teheran and stayed in a traditional hotel in the centre of Shiraz. I liked Shiraz very much. The town is very beautiful and the weather was pleasant with cool evenings. The food in restaurants with traditional musicians was very tasty: grilled meat, yoghurt, salads and *tan* (Arm. a yoghurt drink).

We visited the bazaar, mosques, tombs of po-

ets and wonderful gardens. The number of tourists surprised me. The majority were French and German. People in Shiraz were very friendly with smiling faces. Everyone was

very interested in politics and very much wanted to know my opinion about their country. Taxi drivers were the most interesting people and all had very funny tales to tell.

Every evening we drank aromatic *bahar narenj* (orange blossoms) and *bidmeshk* (willow flower) tea. The sweet scent of trees at nightfall is what I remember most.

Translated by Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian

THANK YOU

Thank you to all who have supported the Armenian Institute again this year; **Friends, Patrons** and **Benefactors**. We are very grateful for your continued encouragement and generosity. Our 2008-2009 **Benefactors** are **Richard Anooshian, Krikor Didonian, Panos and Diana Katsouris, John and Christina Kurkjian, Razmik and Violet Tatevossian.**

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This issue of Armenian Institute News was edited by Susan P Pattie and Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian. Design and artwork by Shogher Margossian. Please note that opinions expressed in articles within this issue are not necessarily those of the staff and Board of the Armenian Institute.