



## AI IS TEN YEARS OLD

**T**en years ago is both yesterday and a century ago. It is, of course, pre-9/11, pre-Facebook, and so on. The world is different. And yet, many things remain much the same. When a group of friends met together to begin the Armenian Institute, we believed that in spite of the many important Armenian organisations active in London, there was a need for something that could blend the quirky and the serious, target adults and children, and appeal to non-Armenians as well as Armenians of all shades, creeds and distinctions. This crazy idea has led to ten years of events (averaging 25 – 30 annually), adult language classes, a choir, publications, conferences, linked projects and two major exhibitions at the Brunei Gallery. One original goal was to provide a forum for new ideas, discussion and debate. Another was to bring artists, intellectuals, community members together to collaborate on new pieces of work which others could enjoy and participate in. Our mission has been to “make Armenian history and culture come alive” and we are all still working out just what we mean by that – but the struggle itself is an interesting and productive one.

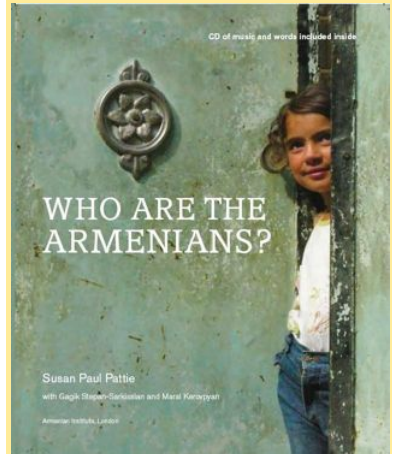
The early group of friends included some who have since moved away from London, including Pamela Young, Razmik Panossian, Lynn Cadwallader, Sossie Kasbarian, Gigi Young. They are sorely missed, though their influences remain with us. Nearly all the others have remained close to the core of activity propelling AI over the ten years. At the same time, new people have joined and others continue to discover AI. Today it is crucial that new and younger people become part of the fabric of the Institute. Many already attend events but leadership roles must pass to the next generation. We are very grateful to the many Friends, Patrons and Benefactors who have been our backbone these ten years. Thank you for your support and encouragement as we found our feet and began this journey. For the next steps and transformations, we need more people, more volunteers, more funding. Do contact us with your ideas and thoughts on how to approach this next decade. And we are grateful for any special donations you can make to enable us to go forward in this anniversary year.

**Dr Susan Pattie**  
Director



## Who Are the Armenians?

Many years ago Maja Tahta approached us asking if we couldn't please find some attractive material about Armenians that her daughters could take to school and show their teachers and fellow students. “Everyone else” has resource materials, she said, and her daughters were feeling badly that their teachers had really not



even heard of Armenians. Certain that there must be something appropriate if we just looked hard enough, we began the search only to discover that she was right, especially as one looked at the ever-increasing mountain of materials in the multi-cultural genre. Initial funding was given by the Benlian Trust and later also by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The project grew, the project slid to a back burner, the project eventually re-emerged and with new talents adding to the texts and images, we finally finished in November 2010.

*Who Are the Armenians?* has been received with excellent reviews and much enthusiasm. Designed to take its readers beyond the tragedy of the genocide and into the many other aspects of culture that add up to being Armenian, the book includes texts and images about language, religion, stories, dance, music, games, food, as well as history and information about the Republic of Armenia and the Diaspora. Young people are encouraged to think about the things that bring Armenians together and also to be comfortable with the differences

*Continued on p. 8.*



## MY DEAR BROTHER

### Armenians in Turkey 100 Years Ago

## TREASURED OBJECTS

### Armenian Life in the Ottoman Empire 100 Years Ago



The second exhibition organised by the Armenian Institute at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS, opened its doors on May 1, 2010 and some 10,000 people visited before it closed on July 24. *My Dear Brother* had been granted a spot in 2012 but in late October, the Armenian Institute was offered this much earlier date, due to a cancellation. Conceived and created by Osman Köker, based on his book of similar name, *My Dear Brother: Armenians in Turkey 100 Years Ago* had already opened to great acclaim in Istanbul, Yerevan, Geneva, Munich, Paris and other cities. Both book and exhibition are based on postcards from the collection of Orlando Carlo Calumeno. We were fortunate that generous funders quickly backed the postcard exhibition. The Heritage Lottery Fund supported the accompanying lectures, film, storytelling, workshops and, most importantly an oral history-based second exhibition,

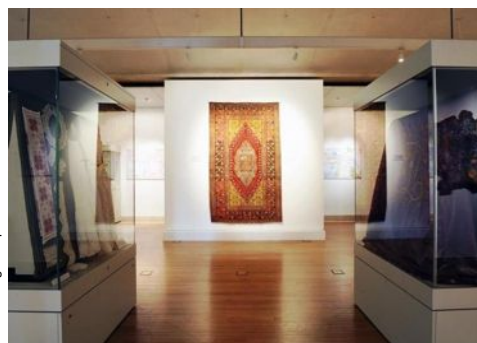
*“enthraling and captivating”*  
*“We heard growing up, how it used to be in the old country. Now we actually could see!”*  
*“A moving and very important exhibition.”*  
*“This is the closest picture I have ever had of my ancestors whose name I bear. Thank you.”*  
 (quotes from the Visitors’ Book of the exhibitions)

the collection of related oral histories and the creation of a short video, shown during the exhibition, of the lenders talking about the stories of their objects.

The enlarged postcards on over 100 panels bore intriguing messages including one addressed to “*My Dear Brother*”, giving a name to the exhibition. From Istanbul to Van and Kars, Erzurum to Mersin, the images showed



View from *My Dear Brother* exhibition.



View from *Treasured Objects* exhibition.



Tour of *My Dear Brother* with Osman Köker.

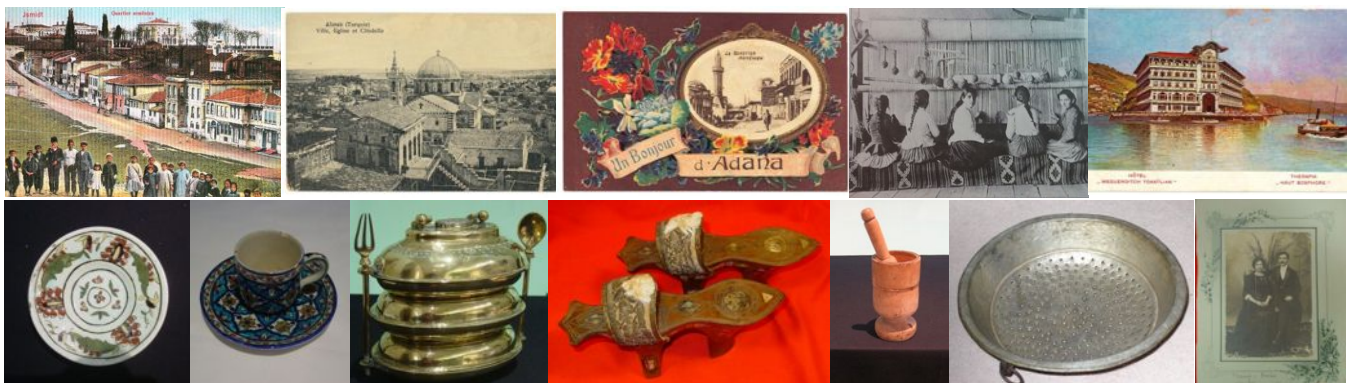
*Treasured Objects*, in a separate room at the Brunei. We sent out a request to London Armenians to lend objects from their households from the same period and region as the postcard exhibition and had a wonderful response, gathering fascinating and beautiful pieces, both every-day items and unusual ones. The two exhibitions complemented each other in very striking ways, bringing out different dimensions for the viewers. HLF also funded

Armenian men, women and children at work and play. Some showed churches and schools, others factories and homes, countryside and city views, sports clubs, musicians and craftsmen. Many visitors mentioned how moved they were to learn about the breadth of experience and geographic reach that Armenians had during the Ottoman Empire. The images showed a people truly integrated into society, making a wide variety of positive contributions to

#### Postcards and objects from the exhibitions at the Brunei Gallery.

Photos: Rouben Galichian, Osman Köker, Mark Grigoryan & Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian

*Continued on p. 15*





## DONATIONS TO THE LIBRARY

Friends of Armenian Institute Library continue to make donations, further enriching our holdings. The reputation of the Library as an important Armenian resource centre continues to grow with more and more visitors using our collections for a variety of kinds of research.

Since our last report (*Armenian Institute News*, 7) nearly 600 books, over 150 serials as well as a number of maps and sound and image recordings have been received, donated by the following: **Berj & Suzy Aprahamian, Christopher & Angela Arratoon, Tamara Assatourian, Tatiana Astvatsaturova, Karen Babayan, Rev Fr Shnork Baghdassarian, Levon Chilingirian, OBE & Dr Susan Pattie, Krikor Didonian, Gigi Dunaian Young, Rouben Galichian, Joan George, Jacquie & Paul Gulbenkian, Assadour Guzelian, Aida Harutounian, Naneh Hovhannisyan, Vartkes Kazandjian, Silva Keondjian, Aida Kunter, Anna Mkhitarian, Dr Razmik Sayadian, Helen Sheehan, Sotheby's of London, Professor Ronald Suny & Armena Marderosian** (Ann Arbor, Michigan), **Dr Hratch Tchilingirian, Alice Terian** (Fullerton, California), **Dr Zaven Yegavian** (Lisbon), **Christopher Young, Dr Andreas Zoulikian**.

In addition authors **Clare Freestone** (National Portrait Gallery), **Rouben Galichian, Joan George, Assadour Guzelian, Robert Haddejian** (Istanbul), **Very Rev Dr Vahan Hovhanessian, Janet Lazarian** (Teheran) **Dr Claire Mouradian** (Paris), **Nouneh Sarkissian, Astrig Tchamkerten** (Lisbon), **Richard H Tertessian** (Mahopac, New York) & **Dr Alan Whitehorn** (Kingston, Ontario) have donated copies of their own publications.

The Armenian Institute is grateful to all donors in this country and abroad who continue to enrich our library resources.

**Dr Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian**  
Librarian



## POSTCARDS COME ALIVE

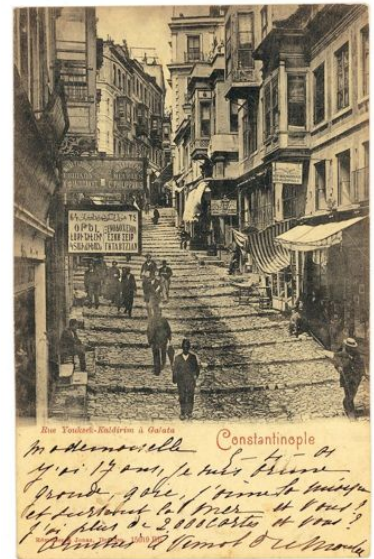
By Seta White

Being asked to come up with a response to the exhibition *My Dear Brother*, and a response that could be presented, was an exciting brief and one open to endless possibilities. As an actor, my job involves taking the words of a character on a page and bringing this to life, so my immediate response to this exhibition lay in doing the same for the people behind the pictures and the postcards, and going some way towards bringing their voices to life.

As I read the postcards, all of which had been posted between 1900 and 1910, I was fascinated by the insights they provided into the daily life and preoccupations for Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire during this time. It seemed imperative to me to capture these insights in the response. Steven Ounanian, Nairy Afrikyan and Louisa Gummer and I set about selecting extracts from the postcards that stood out for us, choosing material that would allow for variety in both its revelation of information and delivery of performance. The idea was for one of us to stand in each of four corners of the darkened exhibition space, lit by torchlight, and in a myriad of ways deliver the text across the room to each other, sending the words across the space as if we were sending the postcards.

As well as the postcards from the exhibition we also had a selection of postcards that had been written by the artist Karen Babayan to Dr Susan Pattie. Karen had written these daily, over a three week period, as her response to the exhibition. Including these additional extracts in the performance enabled us effortlessly to build a bridge between the past and the present, and to draw similarities in our lives from then to now, highlighting how in essence the normal and mundane aspects of life do not change.

In darkness, surrounded by the exhibition, a haunting quality loomed, and as our whispers crescendoed so our voices and thus the voices of the ghosts of the postcards became the focus of the performance. Text was read in English, translated line by line into Armenian, and vice versa. Text was broken up so a line from one postcard could be quickly followed by a line from another, and then another. Lines and words were repeated, sometimes in different orders, each time with a different emphasis. Words were spoken, whispered, thrown across the room. Some text we spoke in unison. At times lines and words overlapped one another, other times silence hung around them giving them the emphasis they required and demanded. We played with, enjoyed, and breathed life into the words as we delivered the postcards to each other and to the audience. And at the end, each handing out our own postcards upon which we had written our scripts, we asked the audience to "Please preserve memories with this card".



## LEON TUTUNDJIAN

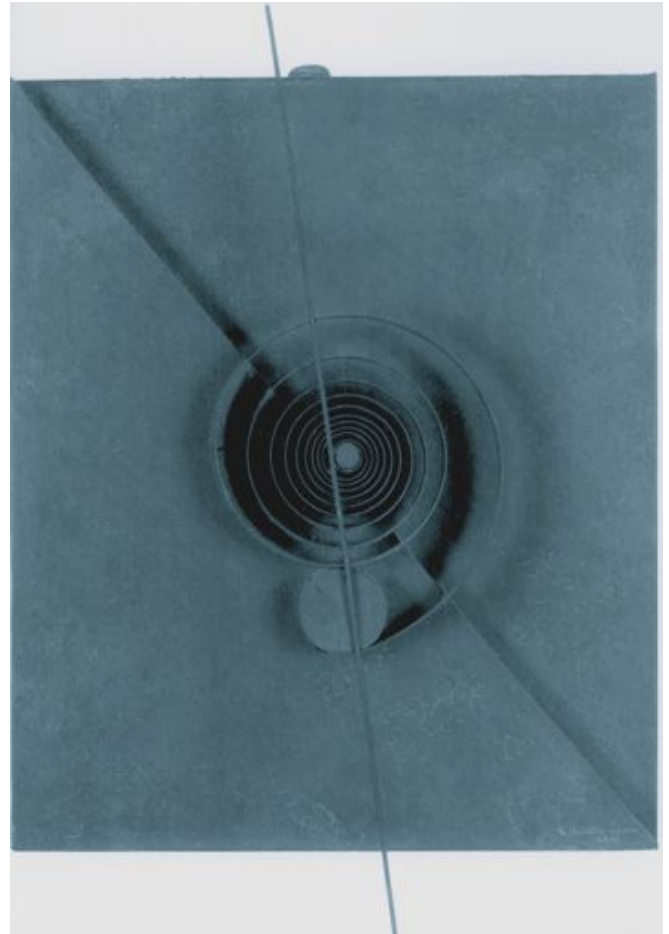
### An Armenian Modernist at the Tate Modern

By Vazken K Davidian

From an art historical perspective 2010 was an extraordinary year for Armenian Londoners. We have had a chance to experience the art of the best-known 20th century Armenian artist, Arshile Gorky, through a blockbuster exhibition at the Tate Modern (*Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective*, 10 February – 3 May). Secondly, a double exhibition at the Brunei Gallery at SOAS, University of London (*My Dear Brother & Treasured Objects*, 1 May – 24 July) recreated the mostly vanished world of the Ottoman Armenians through an extraordinary collection of postcards and added a physical dimension, and further insight, into that world through the display of rarely seen items, some of artistic value and others which were purely domestic, functional and utilitarian. In the light of these two events the showing of 5 works by a highly regarded 20th century European-Armenian artist, Leon Tutundjian (1905-1968), within the context of the *Van Doesburg and the International Avant-Garde: Constructing a New World* exhibition (4 February – 16 May 2010) could have very easily been missed.

The exhibition presented the Dutch Modernist artist Theo Van Doesburg's work within the context of his collaborations with key avant-garde European artists of the 1920s and 1930s. One of them was Leon Tutundjian, born in Amasia in the Vilayet of Sivas, Eastern Anatolia (Sepastia, Western Armenia) and a survivor of the Armenian Genocide. Tutundjian had made his way to Paris in 1923 via Armenian orphanages in Constantinople and Greece and the Mekhitarist Monastery in Venice. A prolific abstract artist (as well as ceramicist) he became prominent in

**Relief [1929]**



**Relief [1929]**

Parisian avant-garde circles and exhibited widely. Doesburg and Tutundjian met in 1929 at the *Salon des Indépendants* and by 1930 they had co-founded Art Concret, a short-lived movement that called for a specific type of abstract art entirely free of any basis in observed reality and without any symbolic implications. Their manifesto argued that nothing was more real or concrete than a line, a colour or a plane (a flat area of colour). Tutundjian's strongly abstract and sculptural works exhibited at the Tate Modern, (such as the two works entitled *Relief* from 1929) could very easily serve as embodiments of the movement's ethos. They also take those values to an extreme in a most individual way by forsaking all colour modulations indicating volume, all perspective and the reduction of geometric relief to a minimalist form.<sup>(1)</sup>

By 1933 Art Concret was dead and Tutundjian had moved to Surrealism. It is his Surrealist works that have been examined in the light of his experiences of the Armenian Genocide. While Tutundjian is not known to

*Continued on p. 5*



## Leon Tutundjian

Continued from p. 4



**Self-Portrait [1929]**

have discussed his experiences of exile and genocide neither did he conceal his Armenian identity – unlike other artist survivors he did not change his surname. The art historian Jean Murachanian has published a fascinating analysis and interpretation of what she considers to be his self-portraits (see *Self-Portrait [1929]*) rendered in a Surrealist but at the same time highly personal language, which she reads through the application of Freudian trauma and memory theory.<sup>(2)</sup> She argues convincingly that Surrealism could prove particularly attractive to an artist in search of a mode to express his internal misery and trauma. By 1960 Tutundjian had already returned to abstraction, albeit one that imbued a certain lyricism absent from his earlier Art Concret works.

Interest in the work of this relatively unknown but highly individual and fascinating artist has been increasing since his death. He certainly deserves a far higher profile among both Armenian art lovers and the art world in general. An exhibition dedicated to his extraordinary artistic legacy is long overdue.

(1) Fabre, Gladys *Towards a Spatio-Temporality in Painting* from Fabre, Gladys & Wintgens Hotte, Doris *Van Doesburg and the International Avant-Garde: Constructing a New World* (2010, Tate Publishing, London) p. 62.

(2) Murachanian, Jean *Léon Tutundjian: TRauma in ART* from Hovannisian, Richard (Editor) *The Armenian Genocide Cultural and Ethical Legacies* (2007, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey) p. 121.

## ARSHILE GORKY AND GOURGEN MAHARI Exiles from the Burning Orchards

By Vazken K Davidian

The recent Arshile Gorky retrospective at the Tate Modern (*Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective*, 10 February – 3 May) gave Londoners a unique opportunity to re-acquaint themselves with this mostly abstract artist's work. Gorky's rightful place in the history of twentieth century art has been disputed since his tragic suicide in 1948. Since then, debates have raged whether he was a Surrealist artist or a prototypical Abstract Expressionist. Questions of identity have complicated things further. Different biographers, each with their own agendas, have put forward their own 'Gorky', attempting, unfortunately, to pigeonhole this complex artist into a single narrative.

Of special interest to Armenians is that Gorky's oeuvre has recently begun to be examined in relation to memory: his experience as a child survivor of the Armenian Genocide of 1915, and the traumas of his mother's death, displacement and exile.<sup>(1)</sup> His works however have not yet been analysed in relation to other memory works produced in different genres by survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

One such work is Gourgen Mahari's banned first edition of his 1966 novel, *Burning Orchards* (Այրվող այգեստաններ),<sup>(2)</sup> which Marc Nichanian describes as the most important literary work of memory about Van, and the Genocide, to have emerged in Eastern Armenian.<sup>(3)</sup>

Continued on p. 6



**The Artist and His Mother [1926-1936]**

## Arshile Gorky and Gourgen Mahari

*Continued from p. 5*

*Burning Orchards*, Mahari's only novel, took decades to write. Much of his prose is autobiographical. In 1928 he had already published *Childhood*, a very personal rendering of his childhood in Van. Over the next few decades he rewrote and republished his story. His obsessive revisions to his homage to Van and his ghosts evoke Gorky's endless sketching for *The Artist and His Mother*. In his own words:

'Day and night, heedless of Sundays and rest times, for at least four if not five decades, they never ceased knocking at my door, asking, demanding, ordering, arranging everything so that I could write about them, write down their names and their deeds in the Book of Glories. . . . thus they followed me for years and decades and they are still following me, up to the present time, when I am possessed by the will to finally settle my accounts with them.'<sup>(4)</sup>

This singular possession by the past, explains Cathy Caruth, is a central characteristic of the survivor experience. Yet what is striking in this singular experience is that its insistent re-enactments of the past do not simply serve as testimony to an event, but may also paradoxically enough, bear witness to a past that was never fully experienced as it occurred. Trauma, that is, does not simply serve as record of the past but precisely registers the force of an experience that is not yet fully owned.<sup>(5)</sup> In Mahari's wife's, Antonina's words:

'Gurgen began writing his historical book on Van, the city of his childhood while he was ill . . . he was in a hurry. Let me finish this book before I die. I wish to do something for my beloved town in memory of the victims of the Catastrophe . . . while he was writing the *Burning Orchards* Mahari was reliving his memories. At night he was disturbed by nightmares. In his dreams he saw the horrors of the massacres. These horrible memories increased his pain such that he would cry out 'Mother dear, I am dying.'<sup>(6)</sup>

Parallels are apparent with Gorky's own obsession with *The Artist and His Mother* theme especially when one considers firstly, the countless versions and renditions of the scene that Gorky produced, and secondly in the way he worked and reworked the surface of the paintings. Harry Rand rightly describes this image as 'the pivotal image in [Gorky's] life, the visual channel through which he could revive the tranquillity of his youth'.<sup>(7)</sup> De Kooning has compared the surface of the Whitney version of the painting to that of a mirror.<sup>(8)</sup> Saul Schary, a lifelong friend, and the last to see Gorky alive, described Gorky working on the painting:

'He achieved that smooth quality. There's hardly a bump of paint that sticks up. It's all very fine and done with very soft sable or camel brushes. This picture took a hell of a long time, you know. Gorky decided that the way to get that smooth quality was

to scrape the surface. So he'd paint and then let it dry good and hard. Then he'd take it into the bathroom and he'd scrape over the surface very carefully with a razor. Scrape the paint down until it got as smooth as though it was painted on ivory. You look at that picture next time and you won't be able to tell how he did it, because there are no brush strokes. Because he scraped it and he scraped it and wiped off, with a damp rag, all the excess dust and paint. Then he'd go back and paint over it again and then scrape it. And that's how he got that wonderful surface'.<sup>(9)</sup>

The themes that connect *The Artist and His Mother* and *Burning Orchards* are many and profound. Both artist and poet had a deep attachment to their city. Mahari's prose is a testament to that deep love. He asks: 'What is the *Vanetsi* without Van? Nothingness, oblivion. A round zero'.<sup>(10)</sup> Raoul Hague, Gorky's friend, remembered that when Gorky spoke about Van 'tears came to his eyes because he had Van in him. He actually cried about Van'.<sup>(11)</sup>

The attempts to come to terms with their respective ghosts and their obsession with the past when faced with an impossibility of mourning create profound commonalities between artwork and novel. Mahari confessed his need to bring back to life those who 'do not belong to history, those who are outside history'.<sup>(12)</sup>

Gorky's mother too was outside history. The only tangible proof that she had ever existed lay in a photograph hidden away in a drawer for years after her death. In Nouritza Matossian's words he had snatched her 'out of the pile of corpses to place her on a pedestal'.<sup>(13)</sup> He was atoning for abandoning her in an unmarked grave, painting her back to life.

Mahari wrote: 'Accept my modest literary creations as a monument to your mother'.<sup>(14)</sup> Perhaps an impossibility to mourn explains why *Burning Orchards* was in reality a memorial for both his parents: a father whom Mahari had never been able to mourn before, due to the uncertainty surrounding his death and also why he needed forty years to erect it; and a mother who had died alone when he was in exile. Nichanian explains, for the poet (and the artist), at the heart of the great catastrophic event, there was always a paternal, and maternal, catastrophe.<sup>(15)</sup>

David Anfam believes that as Gorky was scrutinising the image from his childhood 'he was looking homeward to a life, a time, a parent, and a homeland that had been lost forever'.<sup>(16)</sup> I agree with his view that Gorky's decision 'to base a canvas on a photograph taken in Van speaks volumes as to who Gorky was'. It is no wonder that Gorky took a decade and a half to bring the composition, at once



*Continued on p. 7*



## Arshile Gorky and Gourgen Mahari

Continued from p. 6

icon and *memento mori*, to its definitive state of incompleteness. The sheer obsessiveness intimates what must have been his mental state during much of that period, and indeed his adult life. No-one can know what Gorky would have painted, written or said had he lived longer. Perhaps a greater period of 'latency' was necessary for him to confront his ghosts in a more public and direct way, in the way Mahari did. That too is part of the survivor experience.

I believe the time has come for historians to evaluate the parallels between the underlying concerns of works produced by Armenian Genocide survivors across lines of discipline. Such explorations would make an enormous contribution to our understanding of such works and place the experience of the survivor-creator within the wider context.

(1) Theriault, Kim *Rethinking Arshile Gorky* (2010, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania). Taylor, Michael (Editor) *Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective* (2009, Philadelphia Museum of Art/Yale University Press, New Haven and London); also Tashjian, Dickran *A Boatload of Madmen: Surrealism and the American Avant-garde 1920-1950* (2001, Thames and Hudson, London).

(2) Mahari, Gourgen (Գուրգեն Մահարի) *Burning Orchards* (Այրվող այգեստաններ) (1966, Hayastan, Yerevan).

(3) Nichanian, Marc *Writers of Disaster: Armenian Literature in the Twentieth Century* (2002, Gomidas Institute, London, Princeton).

(4) Mahari, Antonina *My Odyssey* (2008, AIWA Press, Boston, Massachusetts) p. 116.

(5) Caruth, Cathy *Introduction to Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London) p. 151.

(6) Mahari (2008) p. 116.

(7) Rand, Harry *Arshile Gorky: The Implications of Symbols* (1980, Allanheld Schram, Montclair, London) p. 19.

(8) Matossian, Nouritza *Black Angel: A Life of Arshile Gorky* (1998, Chatto & Windus, London) p. 217.

(9) Interview with Saul Scharly. Mooradian (1980) 205-206.

(10) Mahari (1966) 339.

(11) Interview with Raoul Hague. Mooradian (1980) p. 148.

(12) Nichanian (2002) pp. 125-126.

(14) Mahari (2008) p. 174.

(15) Nichanian (2002) p. 168.

(16) Anfam, David *Arshile Gorky's Portraits: Look Homeward Angel* (2002, Gagosian, New York) p. 10.

## ARMENIANS IN UNUSUAL PLACES

### The Pilgrim and the Grower in Provence

The life and work of Hovhannes Altonian – or under his Gallicised name Jean Althen – is relatively well known. He was the man who introduced the culture of madder in the southern French *département de Vaucluse* and thus made a major contribution to the economy of the region in the 18th century and beyond. The grateful people of Vaucluse erected Jean Althen's statue in Avignon and also named a village – Althen-des-Paluds – in the *département* after him. During the Second World War the German occupiers took down and melted Jean Althen's statue to use for arms manufacturing. A replacement statue was re-erected in 1998.

There is also evidence of the presence of Armenian pilgrims in the region. Avignon, the principal city in Provence was on the Way of St James, the pilgrimage route to the shrine of the saint at Santiago de Compostela in Spain. In fact the famous bridge of the city was built to accommodate the droves of pilgrims crossing the Rhone.

The little known vestige of the passage of an Armenian pilgrim is found on the external wall of a church in Tarascon, a mediaeval partially walled town on the banks of the Rhone. The Royal Collegiate Church of Saint Martha, whose foundations go back to the early Middle Ages, is almost opposite the imposing fort and castle of King René. To the left of the main door of the church is a porch with an imposing door leading directly to the crypt. On the right wall of the porch a small stone-encrusted plaque bears an inscription in Latin. Underneath this inscription, someone, believed to be an Armenian pilgrim, has immortalised his passage by carving a graffito in the form of the Armenian alphabet. In all likelihood, the carving was made before the 13th century because the last two letters of the alphabet, 'o' and 'f', which were added around that date are missing from the string of letters.

#### Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian

#### Armenian graffito under the Latin inscription in Tarascon.

Photo: René Paillet.





Photo: Caroline Miller

## DAVID IVEY MILLER

David Ivey Miller, OBE (b. 26.3.1937), Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, July 1995 - March 1997 and great friend to Armenian people, died of cancer, aged 73 on November 30, 2010.

Following Russian Studies during National Service and classics at Oxford, David Miller joined the Foreign Office in 1964 as a research analyst. He later returned to Oxford for a DPhil in Russian Literature, alongside working for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, NATO and again for the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Taking on the post of first resident Ambassador to Armenia, David Miller developed a passion for all things Armenian and maintained this until his death. Following his retirement, he was a frequent visitor at Armenian events in London and a long-time Friend of the Armenian Institute, taking Armenian lessons for several terms. David Miller was also passionate about Russian literature, Third Division English football club grounds post-1945, and British railways. On a more sombre note, David was also concerned about the need for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, speaking out publicly and writing on the subject whenever possible. He is survived by his wife Caroline and two daughters, Rosalind and Harriet.

## Who Are the Armenians?

*Continued from p. 1*

we find between Armenians from varied backgrounds and regions. A CD comes with the book and provides music for listening and dancing, spoken word for learning a few words of conversation, song, the Lord's Prayer in Armenian and a poem. Photographs and illustrations are abundant and were created by many different people, young and old(er). We are grateful to our funders and to our creative contributors and hope that many more people will soon discover *Who Are the Armenians?* The book can be ordered from the Armenian Institute website.

## HEAR MY SONG

### Debut Concert of the Armenian Institute Choir

Under the baton of Music Director Aris Nadirian, the Armenian Institute Choir gave their first concert on October 3, 2010. With pieces by Komitas, Tigranian, Hovhannissyan and Aristakesyan, the choir gave lively renditions of a number of well-loved songs. Pianist Richard Black accompanied the choir and many of the members had solo parts, especially in the Hampartsoum Yayla where villagers, Anoush and Saro join the festivities. A large crowd at St Yeghiche Church was very appreciative and many mentioned how glad they were to have a secular Armenian choir starting again after a long hiatus. The choir also sang at the Opening Reception for the *My Dear Brother* and *Treasured Objects* exhibitions at the Brunei Gallery. In 2011 the choir is continuing to meet weekly, now under the



Photo: Gagik Stepan-Sarkisian

direction of Yerchanig Missirian and looking forward to future concerts. Mr Missirian brings experience of both English and Armenian choirs and the choir is enjoying his coaching. Lydia Kazarians has been very active in helping the choir to grow and continues to play a vital supporting role. We welcome new members. One does not need to speak or be Armenian, but must be eager to learn new and beautiful songs. Baritones and tenors are especially encouraged to join.

**The Armenian Institute Choir performing at the opening of Brunei Gallery exhibitions.**



Photo: Gagik Stepan-Sarkisian

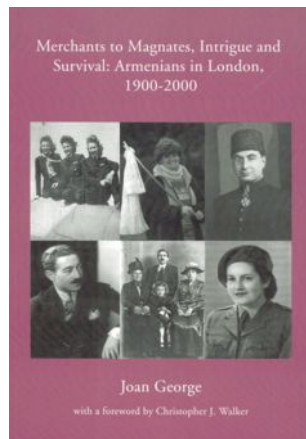


## RECENT BOOKS BY BRITISH-BASED AUTHORS

### ***Merchants to Magnates, Intrigue and Survival: Armenians in London 1900-2000*** by Joan George.

London: Gomidas Institute, 2009.

Following her first book on Manchester Armenians, Joan George was persuaded that the next step should be to examine the continuation of British Armenian life in London. Still far down the list of important diaspora cities, London is shown here to be very revealing of the larger picture – both for Armenians around the world and in terms of how Armenians fit into local and global politics and social life. The cover photographs demonstrate this, including Armenian women in the British armed services during WWII, Nubar Gulbenkian in the uniform of the Persian Legation, author Michael Arlen (Kouyoumdjian) and Baroness Caroline Cox “entering Azerbaijan in 1992”. The photos also show the wide variety of subjects and personalities covered within the book, picking up on issues of concern, one of which is well-illustrated by the sixth photo in the cover montage. Armenian immigrant Stepan Berhoular with his English wife, their daughter and his mother (newly arrived from Constantinople). Berhoular changed his name to Stephens as later Dikran Kouyoumdjian changed his more radically to Michael Arlen. This quest for acceptance in a new and complex society was pursued in very different ways by most of the newcomers. While London provided a secure space for economic ventures and even political activism (as now) its society was also protected by a complicated code of behaviour and speech which rather puzzled and sometimes frustrated the newcomers. George’s many appendices and her encyclopaedic approach make this book very useful for anyone interested in pursuing further research on the Armenians of London.



### ***A History of Armenian Women's Writing, 1880-1922*** by Victoria Rowe.

London: Gomidas Institute, 2009.

296 pages with index.

In a short preface to the second edition of *A History of Armenian Women's Writing, 1880 – 1922*, Victoria Rowe

notes that she has taken the opportunity to bring in a more comparative approach, putting Armenian women's writing in a broader context. Thus throughout the book one learns about not only the leading female Armenian writers themselves but how they fit into a global spectrum of writers, men and women, and the literary and philosophical conversations of their time. From the early debates about grammar and spelling to the forms of the novel itself, Rowe shows how Armenian women engaged in these discussions, using (and creating) different platforms in a variety of ways. Literary and social influences are explored, including those that these women had on each other, those extracted from the almost hegemonic European models of the time, and others which Rowe shows are clearly linked with their readings of the classics of Armenian history, such as Eghishe. In this way, Rowe contributes to our understanding of one of the ways in which values and identity are passed on: She writes, “Indeed there are



**Zabel Yesayan**

striking similarities between Yesayan's description of Armenian women's resistance and their suffering in 1915 and Eghishe's portrayal of fifth century Armenian women's stoicism in the face of hardship.” (50). This latter is with regard to the participation of women in the resistance movement of Vartan Mamigonian, a theme to which Rowe returns, for example, in a discussion of male and female intellectuals' attempts to uncover “an indigenous model” of Armenian womanhood”, “bonding gender to ethnic/national identity” (59).

Transformations in attitudes towards institutions such as education, marriage, the church are all explored and tied to the writers' lives and works. Rowe points out that these changes were not unique to the Armenian community/millet, quoting historian of Iran Afsaneh Najmabadi, “The envisaging of the family as the foundation of the nation, ..., also meant re-envisaging relationships within it. Ignorant women were not only

**Shushanik Kurghinian**



*Continued on p. 10*

## Recent Books

*Continued from p. 9*

unsuitable as mothers but also unfit as spouses... “ (167). In some cases, such as that of Marie Beylerian’s writing, comparisons of men’s and women’s roles proposed women as superior. This early awareness of issues of equality (or reversal of perceived superiority) is another theme running through Rowe’s careful dissection of the writing of the period. Very accessibly written, Rowe’s work is a fascinating contribution to our knowledge of the period, Armenian literature generally, not just that written by women, and the issues that enlivened debate then and continue today.

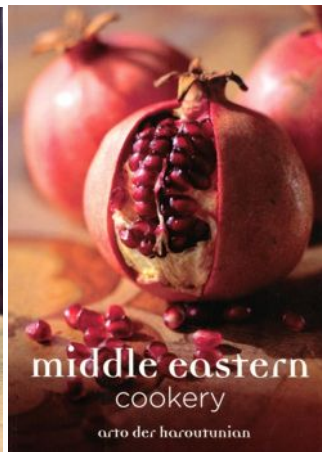
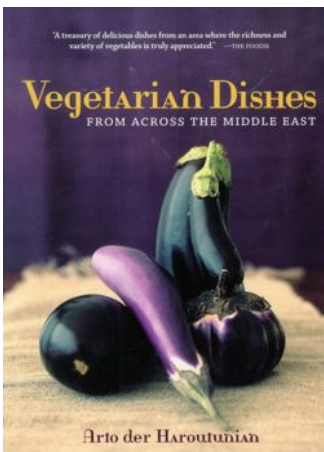
### ***Vegetarian Dishes from Across the Middle East* (1983)**

### ***Middle Eastern Cookery* (1982)**

### ***The Yogurt Cookbook* (1983)**

**by Arto der Haroutunian.**

Reprinted in London: Grub Street, 2008, 2010.



These beautiful new editions of Arto der Haroutunian’s classic cookbooks are a welcome way to introduce friends and a new generation of cooks to the simplicity and fine tastes of der Haroutunian’s recipes. Long out of print, and now in a much more crowded market place, the books still stand out, showing the breadth of der Haroutunian’s expertise and his knack for finding or creating complex tastes from simple ingredients. Der Haroutunian always combines information about the food and the region along with the recipes, often spicing them up with anecdotes, poetry and jokes. Bucking the current trend of glossy photographs taking up more space than recipes, the publisher has decided to ration these and to rely instead on the quality of the recipes. If the cook can use his or her own imagination, there will be rich rewards as der Haroutunian can be relied upon to serve up delicious results each time. Armenian recipes are included in each of the books and of course many of the dishes attributed to neighbouring peoples will also taste very familiar. Highly recommended.

**Susan Pattie**

Author Mark Mustian spoke about his recent book, **The Gendarme**, as part of the Armenian Institute series of author talks. Mustian, a lawyer, is an elected City Commissioner of Tallahassee, Florida, but also finds time to write. *The Gendarme* is his second novel and has already been translated into 8 languages, including French, Spanish, Hebrew and Bulgarian.

## BACKWARD IN TIME

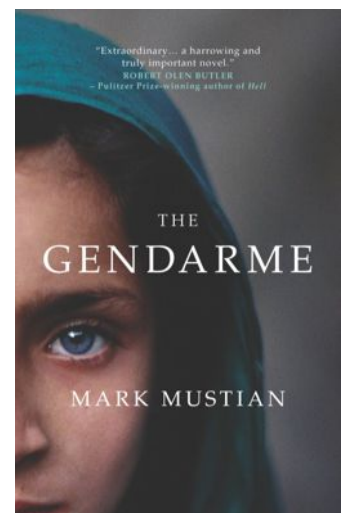
**By Mark T Mustian**

I’m an anomaly, at least in terms of the Armenian diaspora, given that I can trace my paternal ancestors back 200-plus years in the U.S. I have no direct ancestors that suffered in the Genocide. In fact, until recently, I knew very little about it. All my life, people have asked me if I’m Armenian. I’ve always responded that I am, but that it’s way back there. One day someone asked me if I’d read Peter Balakian’s *Black Dog of Fate*. I hadn’t, and did, and only then began to come to grips with what happened in 1915 to the Armenians. I read more—survivor accounts, eyewitness stories—everything I could get my hands on. Eventually I started on this idea to write a novel about it, World War I and the Armenians.

Every novelist tries to find a unique way to approach his or her subject. In reading accounts of the Genocide, I kept thinking: How did this happen? What were the Turkish people thinking? I couldn’t fathom it, still can’t quite fathom it. I decided to write my novel from the point of view of a Turk, to probe the issue.

In *The Gendarme*, the main character is a 92-year old man who fought for the Ottomans, was injured in the war and lost much of his memory, and only late in life, and after emigrating to America, does he start to remember some of the things that happened at the beginning of the war. At first he denies he was a part of it. Then he tries to rationalize it. Has he not suffered too? He realizes, as his dreams and memories continue, that he has lost more than he thought—he’s lost love, if not his life.

I wrote the novel without ever venturing to Anatolia. Before it was published, I went to Turkey and Syria. I wanted to see for myself the areas that I’d written about, to follow the paths of the caravans, to enter Aleppo from the desert as those did that made it. There are Armenian heritage tours in Turkey today, but none I could find that went where I wished to go. So I designed my own tour, hiring drivers and guides, all of whom



*Continued on p. 11*



## Backward in Time

*Continued from p. 10*

were quite knowledgeable about Turkish history, none of whom wanted to talk about the events of 1915.

Today, most people can't tell you where Armenia is or was, and know even less of the events of 1915. The number one comment I receive from people who have read my book is "I had no idea these things happened". But they did. Over one million people—husbands, brothers, families—are gone. I take it as my charge to let people know, to expose denial and hypocrisy.

**The books listed above are available for purchase through the Armenian Institute.**

## OTTOMAN PERIOD BOOKS IN THE ARMENIAN INSTITUTE LIBRARY

### The Library

The core of the Armenian Institute Library is the vast collection of the late Charles Dowsett who was the first Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies at Oxford. Dowsett had an eclectic taste in books but his core interests were Armenian studies, philology, myth and folklore. Over the years numerous gifts of books have come to the Library, enhancing the original collection greatly. A conservative estimate would put the current total number of books at around 6,500, alongside over 2000 serials in Armenian and on Armenian studies. The Library also houses an important collection of archival material belonging to Dowsett, Mischa Kudian, George Kurkjian and Joan George.

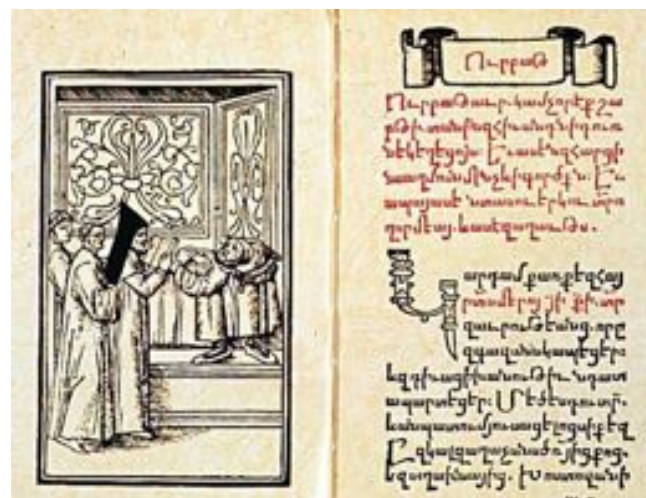
### Armenian Printing

The first Armenian book was printed in Venice in 1511 or 1512 by someone who, displaying an exaggerated devotional humility, styled himself as Hakob Meghapart, which loosely translates as Jacob or James the Sinner. Between 1511 and 1513 Hakob printed five books. The first was a little book called *Urbat'agirk'* or the *Book of Friday*. Friday was considered to be – and still is today by some – an unlucky day. This book was a collection of prayers and magic texts to protect the reader against evil curses. Hakob printed this book and the subsequent ones for the use of Armenian merchants who, towards the end of the Middle Ages, were present in all major Mediterranean ports, such as Marseilles, Leghorn and Venice. A limited facsimile edition of Hakob's first publications is available at the Library.

For almost two centuries, most of Armenian printing had to remain in Europe because the Ottoman authorities did not look at this new invention favourably. Initially established within the Armenian merchant communities of Europe, Armenian printers had to face three major difficulties: (a) funding, (b) distance between Western Europe and the main centres of Armenian population in

Asia Minor and further east, making the books more costly and consequently restricting the market, and finally (c) the strict censorship that the Church of Rome sometimes applied to books printed in Armenian, considered to be schismatic. The first two issues were often resolved by Armenian merchants who not only funded the printing of books, but also transported them to Ottoman ports for distribution in the Empire. Censorship exercised by Rome often resulted either in the closure of the printing press or its transfer to Protestant lands, such as the Low Countries.

After Hakob, there was no printing activity for over half a century when Abgar of Tokhat set up a printing press in Venice in 1565 and published a calendar and Psalter. He



Pages from the *Book of Friday*

then transferred his press to Constantinople and between 1567 and 1569 printed another 6 titles, including the first Armenian printed textbook on grammar. This was indeed the beginning of Armenian printing in the Ottoman Empire but represented a short interlude only. While Armenian printing continued in Europe and in neighbouring Persia, there was a lull of over a century before Armenian printing resumed in Constantinople in 1677.

In order to flourish, Armenian printing needed a close-by Armenian environment where its potential customers lived. This place was undoubtedly Constantinople. The city was not far off from European centres and therefore it was not difficult to resolve issues – mostly technical – associated with printing presses and paper production. Some 300 titles were published in Constantinople in the 18th century with this number reaching thousands by the end of the

**Books by Krikor Zohrab at the Armenian Institute Library. Note the seal of author on the title page of the second book.**



*Continued on p. 12*

## Ottoman Period Books

Continued from p. 9

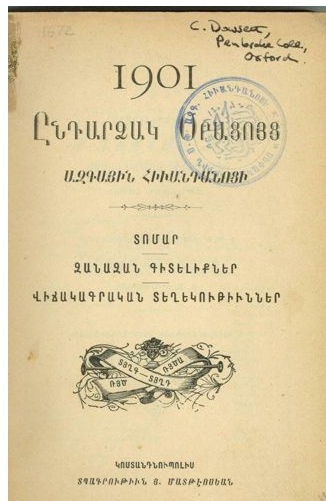
### Ottoman Empire.

From the beginning of the 18th century the Armenian Catholic Mekhitarist Order with its two branches in Venice and Vienna produced hundreds of volumes mainly destined for their main market, namely the major centres of Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire.

### Ottoman Publications at AI Library

The AI collection has over 60 Armenian books published in Constantinople and Venice in the Ottoman era. These books are by no means representative of the wide range of publications produced by these two centres, but rather reflect the preferences and interests of their former owners. There are a number of original literary works published during the lifetime of authors who flourished in the last decades of the Empire; most were among the intellectuals arrested on 24 April 1915 and sent to their deaths at the onset of the Armenian Genocide. Included in this group are three books of short stories by Krikor Zohrab (1861-1915), a prominent writer, lawyer and politician who was a member of the Ottoman parliament. Influenced by French realism, he was perhaps the best representative of that genre among the Armenians at that time, writing in a short, dense and highly expressive style. The three volumes in the collection are the novels *Լուռ ցաւեր* (Silent Pains), *Կեանքը ինչպէս որ է* (Life as It Is) and a collection of short stories. They were published between 1909 and 1911 and appear to be first editions with Zohrab's seal to indicate that they are not pirated copies.

The Library possesses the first edition of an ever-popular satirical work by Yervant Odian (1869-1926), an important representative of that genre in West Armenian literature. Odian created the famous, or infamous, character of Comrade Panchooni, a self-proclaimed political and revolutionary activist who sows havoc wherever he goes. Following the success of his work on the antics of Comrade Panchooni in a village near Kharpert in Western Armenia, Odian published the next volume placing the activist in the province of Vaspoorakan, which is in the region of Van. A copy of the first edition of this book is in the library collection.



Another publication worth highlighting is the almanac of the *Soorp Prgich* (Holy Saviour) Armenian hospital in Istanbul. The hospital was opened in 1834 and remains one of the major medical establishments in Istanbul. In 1883 the hospital began publishing an almanac containing practical information as well as considerable volume of data on Armenians in the

ԱՊԱՀՈՎԱԳՐՈՒԹԻՒՆ		ՀՐԻԵՀԻ ԵՒ ԿԵՆԱՑ	
Պատկերացրի	Անգլ. ակի	3,000,000	3,000,000
Պատկերացրի	Պատկերացրի	18,114,624	7,089,200
Հասցի 1907 արդյունք		4,136,159	1,805,700

ՀՐԻԵՀԻ ԵՒ ԿԵՆԱՑ	
Պատկերացրի	Անգլ. ակի
Պատկերացրի	500,000
Պատկերացրի	564,225

Advertisement for North British & Mercantile and Northern Assurance in the Armenian hospital almanac for 1901.

Ottoman Empire and the Empire itself. There are two copies of this almanac in the collection: one from 1901 when Sultan Abdulhamid II was reigning supreme and the other from 1909 when he had his wings clipped following the Young Turk revolution.

The 1901 almanac has interesting statistical information on Armenian educational institutions in Turkey at the turn of the last century. In Istanbul alone there were no fewer than 40 schools with over 5,300 pupils of both sexes and over 280 teachers giving an average teacher to student ratio of 1:19. There were a further 493 schools in the provinces with a total student body of over 55,000 and 1,400 teachers.

The 1909 almanac is significant, because it was published in the year of the Young Turk revolution of 1908. It contains a translation of the Ottoman Constitution of 1908 as well as interesting statistical data on Armenians in Turkey. One section, for example, lists hundreds of high-ranking Armenian officials and civil servants of the Empire, including two with the highest rank a vizier and two ambassadors representing the Empire at the Hague and Belgrade.

Both almanacs carry advertisements by foreign and local firms including two British companies: the North British and Mercantile Insurance Company and Northern Assurance both of which are predecessors of today's Aviva.

Armenian, Hebrew and Greek presses already functioning in the Ottoman Empire were not allowed to print books in Turkish and in Arabic script. The first Turkish printing press was not established until 1729. The Dowsett Collection

An early printing of *Ta'rikh-i Na'imā* by Mustafa Na'imā (1655-1716). Title page of the third volume.



Continued on p. 13

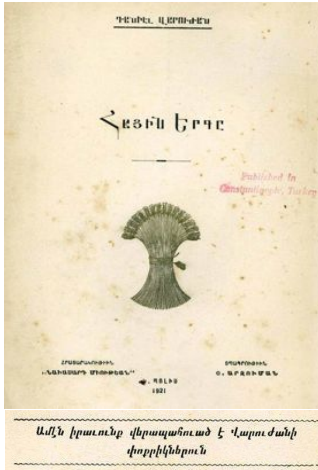


## Ottoman Period Books

*Continued from p. 12*

possesses over 100 titles in Ottoman Turkish script mainly on history, with a sizeable number of books on literature and geography. Most lack a title page and some detective work and recourse to outside resources is essential to find out their exact bibliographic details.

It is perhaps suitable to conclude this piece with a book which in a way marks the end of the Ottoman Armenian period. This is a work by Taniel Varuzhan (1884-1915), one of the greatest Armenian poets of the 20th century, also arrested on 24 April 1915 and brutally murdered in August of that year. He was married with two children. A third child was born around the time that he was killed. One of his great works, *The Song of Bread* (Hats'in yerke') was confiscated after his arrest but fortunately not destroyed. Recovered after the war, it was published posthumously in 1921. It is a masterpiece of poetry



**Title page of the first edition of *The Song of Bread* and the inscription on the back cover.**

celebrating the Armenian peasant of Anatolia and the simple majesty of village life. By the time the book was published, no Armenian village life was left in Anatolia. Equally poignant is a little phrase on the back cover that marks the tragedy of the author and also the people he belonged to. It reads: Ամէն իրաւունք վերապահուած է Վարուժանի փոքրիկներուն (All rights are reserved for the little ones – the children – of Varuzhan).

### Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian

Note: The Institute has been actively cataloguing the books and the detailed catalogue will eventually be put on the AI website together with a search facility. The collection is available to all those who wish to consult or read these books and its resources. The collection's breadth and quality has been drawing a steady flow of scholars as well as interested members of the public.

## HOKEY COKEY HITS YEREVAN

*Naneh Hovhannisyan is at the same time animated and thoughtful, a dedicated educator of young children. Her company, Brainy Beans, is working in London and in Yerevan and Naneh is finding a welcome reception in both these locales. She herself mixes ideas and traditions from both places to create a unique approach to education. The Armenian Institute is pleased that this project, presented in its children's programmes, continues to develop so successfully. Here Naneh describes her goals and experiences thus far.*

On what was a very hot Yerevan afternoon in September 2010, I found myself singing and acting out *The Hokey Cokey* – in English – with a bunch of very excited Armenian kids. The room was filled with sun, smiles and curiosity. I



knew then that this was going to be a very interesting adventure indeed. For the next four weeks, my company, Brainy Beans, founded in London in 2009, resided in downtown Yerevan. An activity-based programme where children learn through multisensory stimulation (yoga, discussion, story-reading and art), Brainy Beans had already been road-tested at different venues in London. But it was a successful one-off session in the Nevart Gulbenkian Hall with the Armenian Institute that allowed me to think outside the box, or in this case, outside the country.

Brainy Beans *International* became an offshoot, an English-as-a-foreign-language-teaching class, and the first destination was a few bus stops from where I spent my youth. Children in Armenia, I thought, equally deserve the relaxed atmosphere while being introduced to British culture and developing their English through play and fun. The turnout wildly exceeded our expectations. We needed to run three sessions a day, six days a week still having to turn some children away. Many mothers asked when we would be back and why we were there only one month.

I discovered that Armenia (or at least its capital) is changing in ways not immediately seen by the tourist. Mothers are far more informed about the various teaching methods and the latest research in educational psychology than they used to be. The emerging middle-class are determined to give the best of world-class ideas and goods to their children who are as busy with extracurricular activities as they are here in the UK (although many would argue that that is not a positive development anywhere in the world). The children surprised me with their high standard of English: twelve year-olds reading Harry Potter in its original language and making friends from all corners of the world on Facebook. What was genuinely moving was the sheer gratitude that we received. On the last day flowers flooded in, together with scores of relatives armed with cameras and food for our 'picnic on the floor'. Children told me about their dreams and dislikes, made things from recycled materials and sang 'The Wheels on the Bus' as if it was the national anthem. They left a mark on my heart with their enthusiasm and hunger for learning and friendship. Parents and children themselves said that, apart from improvements in their English, the classes helped their self-confidence and expanded their curiosity about languages and culture generally.

Brainy Beans will continue to hold new English classes in and around London. As for Armenia, we've just returned after running an intensive five-week course for 150 children, and are currently planning a further trip later in 2011 ([www.brainy-beans.com](http://www.brainy-beans.com); also on Facebook).

*Continued on p. 14*

*AI is very pleased to include an article by our first Work Experience student, Eliza Melkonyan who also provided the English summary. Eliza has spent a week working in the library of AI, doing research, discussing new ideas, writing, cataloguing books and helping with the database. We invited Eliza to contribute a short article on a subject that interested her. Born in Yerevan, Eliza reflects on the topical issue of emigration from Armenia. We welcome enquiries from other students looking for Work Experience placement.*



## ԱՐՏԱԳԱՂԹԸ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻՑ

### Էլիզա Մելքոնյան

Մաշեցուցիչ փաստ է, որ Հայաստանում բնակվում է շուրջ 3 միլիոն հայ, այն ժամանակ երբ արտասահմանում ապրում է գրեթե 2 անգամ շատ սփյուռքահայ: Այս փաստը բազմաթիվ գործոնների արդյունքն է, որոնցից ամենագլխավորը և ամենահայտնին 1915 թվականի Մեծ Եղեռնն է, երբ արտագաղթը զանգվածային բնույթ կրեց, իր գագաթնակետին հասավ և 2 միլիոն հայ հարկադրված էին հեռանալ հայրենիքից: Ամենացավալին այն է, որ այս 2 միլիոնի կեսից ավելին մահացան:

Արտագաղթի երկրորդ մեծ ալիքը առաջացավ 1980-ական թվականների վերջում, երբ տնտեսական աճը կանգ առավ և նույնիսկ սկսվեց անկում ԽՍՀՄ-ի տնտեսության ճգնաժամի հետևանքով: Այս ժամանակաշրջանում առաջացան արտագաղթի երկու տեսակ: Մեկը սեզոնային արտագաղթն է կամ խոսակցական հայերենով - խոպանը, երբ տղամարդիկ ժամանակավոր մեկնում էին արտերկիր, որտեղ նրանք ավելի շատ հնարավորություններ ունեին փող վաստակելու և իրենց ընտանիքը պահելու համար, իսկ ձմռանը վերադառնում էին տուն: Ըստ որոշ հետազոտությունների, ժամանակավորապես արտագաղթող տղամարդկանց թիվը տարեկան կազմում էր 150,000: Մյուսը տեսակը արտագաղթն է արտասահմանում մշտապես հաստատվելու մտադրությամբ, որը մինչև օրս էլ շարունակվում է:

Սպիտակի երկրաշարժը, Լեռնային Ղարաբաղի հակամարտությունը, 1991 թվականի անկախության հաջորդող «սովի տարիները», բոլորը գլխավոր գործոններ էին արտագաղթի աճման ընթացքում: Մակայն այժմ էլ, երբ կարծես թե Հայաստանը գտնվում է համեմատաբար լավ վիճակում, արտագաղթը շարունակվում է բավականին արագ թափով: Ըստ բազում տվյալների, ամեն տարի Հայաստանից արտագաղթում է տասնյակ հազարավոր մարդ:

Անհերքելի փաստ է, որ սա ունի բազմաթիվ դրական կողմեր: Առաջին հերթին արտագաղթողները ապահովում են իրենց համար բարեկեցիկ կյանք, որն ունի կրկին դրական հետևանքներ: Քանի որ արտագաղթողը չի կորցնում կապը բարեկամների, ընկերների և հայրենիքի հետ և քանի որ արտագաղթողների մեծ մասին հաջողվում է հաջող գործունեություն ծավալել, նրանք շատ փող են

ներդնում Հայաստանի մեջ: Ըստ հետազոտությունների, 2008 թվականին սփյուռքից Հայաստան փոխադրված գումարը կազմում էր 265 միլիոն դոլար: Երկրորդ հերթին, սա նպաստում է գործազրկության մակարդակի իջեցմանը, որը նվազեցնում է ճնշումը աշխատանքային շուկայի վրա:

Մակայն ինձ ավելի շատ հուզում են արտագաղթի բացասական կողմերը: Սրանցից ամենակարևորը այն է, որ արտագաղթողների 34%-ը բարձրագույն կրթություն ստացած աշխատուժն է: Սա է պատճառը, որ Հայաստանում գործող բազմաթիվ կազմակերպություններ դժվարանում են գտնել որակավորված աշխատողներ, որն էլ խոչընդոտում է Հայաստանի տնտեսության բարգավաճմանը: Բացի այդ, քանի որ գաղթողների մեծ մասը տղամարդիկ են արտագաղթը խախտում է սեռերի հավասարակշռությունը, որն ազդում է երկրի ժողովրդագրության վրա:

Արտագաղթի հիմնական պատճառներն աշխատատեղերի պակասն է, կյանքի զոհացուցիչ մակարդակ ապահովելու համար բավականաչափ բարձր աշխատավարձ ստանալու անհնարինությունը, Հայաստանի զարգացման հեռանկարների բացակայությունը և այլն... Բոլորը շատ կարևոր խնդիրներ են, որոնք պահանջում են շտապ լուծում, սակայն այս խնդիրները լուծելու փոխարեն որոշ հայեր հեռանում են հայրենիքից այս խնդիրներից խուսափելու նպատակով: Եվ ահա թե ինչու կոչ եմ անում հայերին նույնիսկ արտերկրում գտնվելով, չմոռանալ մեր հայրենիքը և գործածել նրանց արտասահմանում ձեռք բերված բոլոր գիտելիքները հանուն Հայաստանի բարգավաճման, առաջադիմության և ծաղկման:

## EMIGRATION FROM ARMENIA

By Eliza Melkonyan

The fact that under 3 million Armenians live in Armenia, while twice as many live abroad is astonishing. This is the result of many factors, especially the Genocide of 1915, when under a million surviving Armenians were forced to leave their homeland.

The second big wave of emigration hit Armenia in the late 1980s, when the economic growth became negative due to the crisis in the Soviet economy. This was the period when two types of emigration emerged – seasonal emigration and emigration with an intention of permanently settling abroad.

Other key factors in the rise of emigration from Armenia were the 1988 earthquake, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the recession after the independence in 1991. However, even now when Armenia seems to be in a comparatively good state the rate of emigration continues to be very high – tens of thousands emigrate annually.

Undoubtedly this has many advantages such as remittances and investments from the diaspora. Nevertheless, it also has many disadvantages, such as people with high education leaving and therefore employers being unable to find qualified workers, which stops the Armenian economy from prospering.

There are many reasons for emigration, such as lack of work placements, impossibility of earning enough money in to ensure a satisfactory standard of living and absence of perspectives of development. However, instead of trying to solve these serious problems some Armenians tend to avoid them by leaving the country, which is why I address Armenians asking them not to forget our homeland even if living abroad, and use all the knowledge and experience they obtained throughout the years of living abroad to help Armenia prosper, flourish and develop.



## My Dear Brother and Treasured Objects

*Continued from p. 2*

the fabric of everyday life, which, according to Osman Köker, is the purpose of the exhibition.

Two crowded receptions opened the exhibition. Those attending included Orlando Carlo Calumeno, owner of the postcard collection, Councillor Barbara Yerolemu, Mayor of Ealing and Director of SOAS Prof. Paul Webley. Guests were welcomed by Pro-Director of SOAS Prof. Graham Furniss and Dr Susan Pattie, Director of the Armenian Institute. Entertainment was provided by santour player Peyman Heydarian, violinist Levon Chilingirian, singers Virgina Kerovpyan, Vigen Shirvanyan, and poetry read by Nvard Stepanian, Anna Mkhitarian and Hagop Varoujian. The Armenian Institute Choir gave its first public performance with songs by Komitas and at each reception, Osman Köker, with interpreter Elif Kalaycioğlu, gave a moving talk about the background to his research and writing and how he came to organise the exhibition.

Events were organised to accompany the exhibitions ending with the first of what we hope will be a series of meetings and collaborations between Armenian and other artists in the UK. Responding to the two exhibitions, artists and musicians put together an exciting programme mixing varied media, music and performance. The work of several artists was hung with the collection of objects, bringing out themes of displacement, movement, memory. Nairy Afrikyan, Talar Aghbashian, Karen Babayan and Will Maw each contributed pieces along with an animation video by Maral Kerovpyan and a series of contemporary slides of the landscapes shown in the postcards, assembled by Anahide Pilibossian. A new theatre piece designed by Seta White had a vivid impact as actors spoke lines from the postcards across the darkened room (see article by White on p. 3). This piece, as with the concert by traditional music ensemble Kotchnak in the same room, moved some to tears as the images were brought alive.



**Collage by Will Maw.** Photo: Will Maw



**Levon Chilingirian, Nvard Stepanian, Vigen Shirvanyan & Virginia Kerovpyan, Anna Mkhitarian performing at the Opening reception.** Photos: Brunei Gallery, Susan Pattie, Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian



We wish to thank our funders: Bedo & Tania Eghian, Diana & Panos Katsouris, Katsouris Brothers Ltd, Heritage Lottery Fund, St Sarkis Charity Trust and SOAS. We also thank Director of Brunei Gallery John Hollingworth and all those who lent objects to the *Treasured Objects*. This was not an easy thing to do as the items are indeed "treasured" and to let them out of sight was a brave act. The objects themselves have lives of their own and their lenders have agreed that we can now create a book from the exhibition, detailing their narratives as they journeyed from their original homes to London. This book is scheduled for publication in 2011. For Final Reports with more information and images please visit our website.

**Susan Pattie**



**From left: Panos & Diana Katsouris with friends; Elif Kalaycioğlu & Osman Köker; guests at the Opening Reception. Above right: Display cabinet at Treasured Objects.** Photos: Brunei Gallery



## NAMUS IN LONDON

Sadler's Wells Kahn Theatre was the venue for an exciting event in March. A sold-out audience was wholly absorbed by a fascinating combination of clips from a classic silent film and a professional reading of the play *Namus*. A large cast of actors brought the words to life, stark in the staging but rich in emotions and imagery. The juxtaposition of the film scenes with the fresh reading brought out both the intensity of the narrative and the continuing relevance of the themes. In 2011 the text of *Namus* by Alexander Shirvanzadé turns 100 years old. This classic Armenian play, though ever popular among Armenian-speakers, has never been produced in English. Thanks to the determination of Seta White (producer/actor) and Veronica Wigg (director), the play has been translated and is ready for a new life in the 21st century. Many aspects of the play are of universal interest, from the tragic Shakespearean undertones to the ethnographic descriptions of a now



nearly forgotten past. Sadly, the theme of violence against women is as potent and pertinent as ever in Armenia as elsewhere. There are thus both artistic and practical reasons for wanting to produce this play.

The Armenian Institute is working with the Naregatsi Art Institute and the Armenian Centre for Contemporary Experimental Art (NPAK) of Yerevan on this important project. The project will establish creative partnerships between British and Armenian artists, initiating dialogue on an artistic as well as humanitarian level. We have managed to raise half the money needed to proceed with the next step of sending British-based artists to work with colleagues in Armenia, doing research and developing ideas about characters, music and staging. Seta and Veronica will also be running drama workshops with arts groups, schools and women's shelters. We continue to seek funding for this and soon will turn to the final aim of securing financial backing for a full production of *Namus* in London in 2012. The AI is grateful to all who have made a contribution and welcomes further donations to make this possible.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

BY EMAIL: [info@armenianinstitute.org.uk](mailto:info@armenianinstitute.org.uk)

BY POST: 7 Hollingbourne Road, London SE24 9NB

BY TELEPHONE: 020 7938 3336



View from *My Dear Brother* exhibition and visitors discussing a map of the Ottoman Empire. Photos: Brunel Gallery



## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

One of the main reasons we are able to host events, function as a resource centre and produce publications is our dedicated group of volunteer helpers.

Volunteers do a variety of jobs depending on the nature of an event, such as setting and clearing up, serving refreshments, selling tickets, the book stall, running equipment. The library, website and publications are also full of exciting opportunities. As we grow, we also need more volunteers. Ideally we should not rely on the same small group of kind souls at every event. If you are able and willing to occasionally help out in any of these practical ways, please contact the Institute.

## 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 2010-2011 **Benefactors** were: **Richard Anooshian, Krikor Didonian, Bedo & Tania Eghianyan, Diana & Panos Katsouris, Christina & John Kurkjian, Razmik & Violet Tatevossian.**