yerevan

FALL, 2008 ISSUE (2)

A MAGAZINE WITH AN ACCENT



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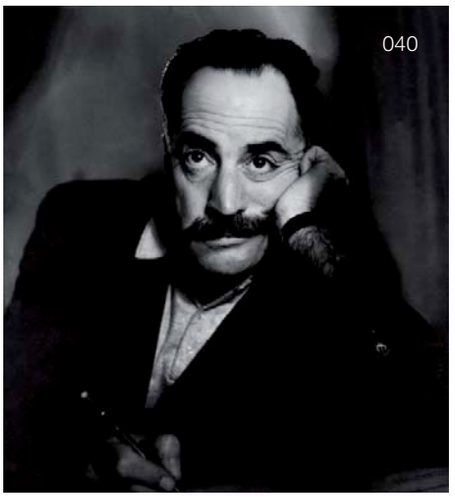







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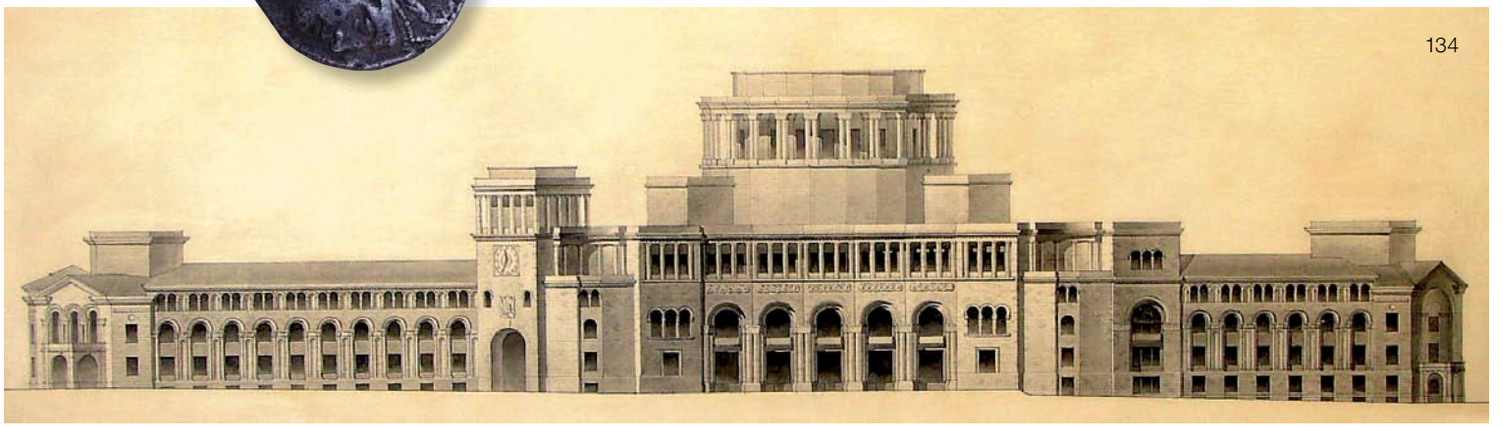

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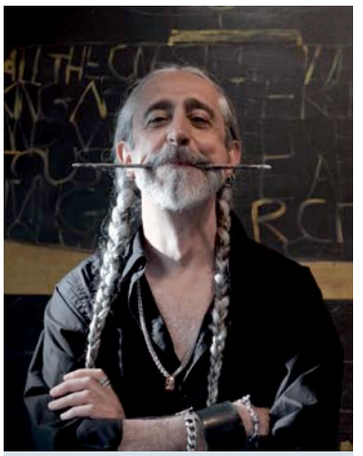

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Amos Martirosyan

It is said that autumn is the time to reflect on one's life, maybe because of its history as the harvest season. In ancient times - all of life's cycles and rhythms were determined by nature. Nowadays, nature has become just a place we travel to on weekends or during vacation, if we are lucky.

Maybe the next generation will think that nature is just something related to ecology and resource conservation.

Today, when most of us hear the word "ecology", the word "problem" is often the first association, and we all know how much we love to create problems. We define problems, and our problems, in turn, define us. This phenomenon, just like any other, has both negative and positive aspects – solving problems advances humanity, even if something may be lost in the process of finding solutions…

Various problems Armenia has encountered over the course of many centuries have led to the loss of a solid state system, human casualties beyond enumeration, and have surely contributed to the "scattered nature" of our nation. However, in our attempts to resolve all these problems we have acquired a strong national government and identity, preserved our religion, and created one of most effective diasporas in the world. In addition, many of us, living outside Armenia, have not only earned fame and recognition, but have also contributed to making Armenia itself famous, even in the times when the word "Armenia" was disappearing from political maps.

Well, it looks like I have summed it up – even though we have not yet regained power like that of Tigran the Great's Empire, we have to be thankful to God, to be broken free from the grip of our nation's seemingly endless problems.

The rest, my friends, is in our hands!

IDA MARTIROSYAN, *editor-in-chief*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Summer 2008



DEAR READERS,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTERS. THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE IS TO CREATE A PLATFORM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS. SO WE WILL BE WAITING FOR FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE.

YEREVAN MAGAZINE TEAM

I just wanted to compliment you on a wonderful article "The Altar of the Owl". It was so rewarding to read! The name of Haig Patigian was sadly unfamiliar to me. The story of his life was interesting. I have been living in San Fransisco for the last 15 years, but never knew of "famous" Armenian sculptor. His statues are in fact an essential part of the city's image. Thank you for doing a great job!

ELINA JACOBS-GEVORKIAN, San Francisco, California

Thank you for the article "The Great Secret of Ayrudzi". This article interested me so much that I did my own research on the subject. You see, the article does not explain why the Ayrudzi disappeared. The article states that "after the defeat of the Byzantine army at Manazkert by the Turks in 1071, the Armenian cavalry divisions moved to the East." Unfortunately this event had the most serious consequence for the whole Armenian history. Manazkert was an ancient city of Armenia (now in Turkey). In 1071, the Armenians of the 100 thousandth Byzantine army under Romanus IV Diogenes and the Seljuk Turks under Alp-Aslan met in battle. The Christian army was routed, and the Emperor was imprisoned. The battle of Manazkert had the most tragic consequences as the Turks took control over all of Armenia. That was the main reason why Ayrudzi moved to other countries. I thought that it might be an interesting addition to your article.

GREG PARISHIAN, San Diego, CA

I have read the "Stars, Stripes, and Bucks" article. I was indeed fascinated. Who would think? Strangely enough I have never heard that our nation contributed to creation of these great symbols of the United States. It sure makes one proud! And the facts on the American flag and the whole story about the silk production were also pleasantly surprising. Thank you for bringing this valuable piece of information into my life. Now I can tell my friends the story!

NICK ATANESOV, Tucson, Arizona

The reason I decided to write this letter is one of the short articles dedicated to the "Kafesjian Art Center". Being an architect and a witness of times when the "Cascade" was getting born on the drafting table of the great architect Jim Torosyan as a compliment and dedication to the city plan developed by "founder" of Yerevan and modern Armenian architecture – Alexander Tamanyan – this article especially interested me. Since the project of new Art Center is being financed by the Kafesjian Foundation which resides in the United States, the decision to assign the design to a New York based architect seems logical and understandable. I welcome the decision to invite foreign and world-renown architects to create their works in Armenia – that is a very positive and a common worldwide practice. But perhaps, taking into account the significance of the Cascade with its very distinct and unique design by the Architectural school of Jim Torosyan, as one of the main axis of the city and its downtown, it would be more architecturally beneficial if it was completed by the same author and his school, considering the fact that there are still quite a few talented architects from his studio.

Another concern is "His Majesty, the Scale" to which we architects pray and which is the most important principle when it comes to the feeling of the environment, the placement of the design. My first impression of the Glass Tower – the scale is too big and overwhelming in relation to the rest of the Cascade and its surroundings. Quite possibly, this was done intentionally – but I am not sure if it's preferable for this particular location. Perhaps having glass as the main material chosen for the building - the mass of it will soften (especially at night time) with appropriate lighting, creating a more airy feeling. My other comment (and it is not my intention to be judgmental here) would be in regards to composition, which again seems "neglecting" the design of the existing structures. Even though I like the principle of the contrast in architecture, which is evident in the design of the new Center, I would prefer a structure that fitted in already established distinct "Armenian" architectural environment. But after all - there are no rights or wrongs in architecture – it is more about the ultimate feeling of the space where people live, walk, and get entertained. The new design of David Hutson will provide quite comfortably all of it, thus I welcome and wish all the best to the creators of it. I am sure their building ultimately will become a new landmark of Yerevan.

SUREN SUMIAN (HAMBARTSUMIAN), Pasadena, California

I am very glad that we have an Armenian forum in English such as this one. I was very interested by your *Top Ten of the Armenian Cinematographers'* article. I discovered many interesting facts about the contribution of the Armenians in the world cinematography. However, most of these individuals were not Armenians who lived and created their films in their homeland or who gave their creative input to the Armenian cinema. I wish you had included an additional Top Ten list (as a reference, possibly) with names of cinematographers who worked in Armenia. We have names that should be recognized: people like Mher Mkrtchyan, Hamo Beknazarian, and many others.

KAREN JANOYAN, Fresno, CA

The article featured in your Summer issue "The Enemy of Time" was very interesting. I had enjoyed reading it and finding out about the Armenian community of Egypt. However, an idea came to my mind – instead of having an Armenian travel to Egypt and write about it, why don't you guys send an Egyptian to Armenia and have him/her talk about our beautiful country? I mean, to think that most of my Armenian friends have never visited Armenia! I think that would be a great idea… Just a suggestion that I hope will be considered. Thank you.

ALEX AVETIS, New York, New York

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BETWEEN FLAGS

The series «Our Folk» are presented by
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Based on materials for a television project «**MERONK**»
BY RAFAEL HOVHANNISYAN

I was born and raised in Yerevan. At the age of 10, I started visiting the National Center of Aesthetics, founded by Henry Igityan and knew immediately I wanted to be a sculptor. After several failed attempts, I was accepted into the Yerevan State Theatre and Arts Institute. During my third year there, I decided I wanted to travel. In Poland, the first country I visited, I attended and subsequently graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts. I then went to Florence. I could not speak Italian, had no place to live, no money, no acquaintances, but living here appeared to be my fate. Interestingly enough, I managed to do well enough in Florence - I was soon residing in the villa originally owned by the Medici, with 41 rooms.



Later in my career, I had the opportunity to participate in a symposium, a sort of sculpture competition. I collected my modest toolset, consisting of a chisel and hammer, and ordered a massive piece of stone to work with. Two days into the process, it was clear that I was insufficiently equipped to complete the task in the 7 days I was given.

When the other participants saw that I was not about to give up, they kindly offered me their spare tools. Soon, I had the same sophisticated equipment as everybody else, enabling me to finish the job in just 6 days. The result: I came in second place.

My life seems to be a succession of coincidences that have somehow coalesced into a logical sequence. An art exhibition in the jewelry district of the *Ponte Vecchio* in Florence is an example. I entered one of the shops there to purchase a cross, as I was supposed to christen a child in Yerevan. I met Jacomo Totti, the shop owner. He organized an exhibition of my work and invited all of his friends, some of whom were well known. My exhibition was a success. Jacomo presented me with a touching tribute on the opening day – he hung Italian and Armenian flags on his balcony and placed my sculpture between them.

One of my most important commissions to date involved designing a hotel located inside a Borghese castle in the center of Florence, next to Michelangelo's house-museum. I positioned so many sculptures and bas-reliefs in the interior that the hotel's owners decided to call it the Borghese Palace Art Hotel. This project became a kind of solo exhibition for me. Consequently, after that project many orders came my way – both from individuals and from the Italian state. I am planning to begin another major work in Novara city, near Milan, a plan for four sculptures and a fountain has already been approved.

I try to visit Yerevan often. Sometimes I believe it is possible that I would have accomplished more in my native city; but as it happened, it was in Florence that I found myself as an artist. ■

VIGEN AVETIS

Vigen Avetis was born on January 25th, 1968, in Yerevan city.
In 1977, was admitted to the National Center of Aesthetics, first as a major in painting, later, in sculpture.
In 1989, was admitted to the Yerevan State Theatre and Arts Institute.
In 1993, departed for Poland and started a solo exhibition in Poznan.
In 1997, graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan (Poland). In the same year moved to Marseille (France).
In 1998, was admitted to the Academy of Fine Arts (Florence).
In 2005, started teaching at the Academy of Fine Arts (Florence).
As of 2007, an Associate Professor at the Palazzo Spinelli Restoration Institute (Florence).
Participated in many international sculptor symposiums. Featured in solo exhibitions and a participant in various group exhibitions in Italy.



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Roads of the Diaspora: Côte D'Azur

According to a famous song, every coastline and every seashore is unique. There are the shores we'd like to forget, such as the Turkish Shore. There are foreign shores, such as the Ivory Coast in West Africa or Bondi Beach in Australia. Finally, there is the Côte D'Azur: the most gorgeous and the most familiar of all European shores.

text : **RAFAEL HOVHANNISYAN**
photo : **MAX SIVASLYAN**



Max Skladyan







Max Sivaslyan

The Château d'If, where one of Alexander Dumas' most renowned characters, Edmond Dantès, the Count of Monte Cristo, languished in captivity.

A Very "Armenian" City

Real places and real things rarely live up to our imaginations. Marseille, however, does just that – it is a dazzling city by the sea, festive, cheerful, ethnically and culturally diverse and more than a little bit adventurous, depending on what the visitor has in mind. "Only 50% of people who live here are native citizens – all the rest are new immigrants," lamented an Armenian from Marseille who, like most of the diaspora there, considers himself a Marseille native. The most recent immigrants come from former French colonies - the Congo, Senegal, Morocco and Algeria as well as other developing countries.

One can find newly arrived residents at the local port – one of the most beautiful in the world. On the quayside, they sell souvenirs, steamboat tickets and fresh seafood on the colorful street lined with vendors and peddlers. White motor boats and yachts, an imposing fort and a "crew" of two swimmers crossing the bay complete the picture. Something isn't right though… why bother to swim across? It takes only five minutes to go around the bay the "the long way". But that's Marseille for you, always offering what one least expects!

The beautiful Notre Dame de la Gard Cathedral, visible throughout the city, sits atop one of the highest hills that encircle Marseille. There are few Armenian churches among the large number of houses of worship located in Marseille. Overall, it is a very "Armenian" city. After all, ships first brought our countrymen here in 1915, as they were fleeing the Genocide. There are many Armenian establishments in the city, among

SEVERAL STREET NAMES REFER TO ARMENIA: RUE ARMENIE, BOULEVARD ARARAT, BOULEVARD CHARLES ZEYTOUNTSIAN, AVENUE DU 24 AVRIL 1915.

them a monument to Misak Manushian – a hero of the French Resistance. One can also see several street names that refer to Armenia: Rue Armenie, Boulevard Ararat, Boulevard Charles Zeytountsian, Avenue du 24 Avril 1915. Armenians are greatly respected here and thought of as natives. The city government and citizens alike hold Armenians in high esteem.

It was in Marseille that the Armenian director, Henri Verneuil, shot his great film *Mayrig*. By the way, in Marseille and throughout France, for that matter, it is widely known that Verneuil is Armenian. It is also common knowledge here that the late, great author Henri Troyat was an Armenian, although for some reason in Russia he is considered to be a Russian writer. Café Mayrig is located on the street where the motion picture of the same name was filmed and is patronized by Armenian and non-Armenians alike.

Various Armenian organizations ensure that events such as concerts, festivals, conferences and meetings take place in the city throughout the year. For example, during our stay the first All-Armenian Youth Convention, organized by JAF (Jeunesse Armenienne de France, "Young Armenians of France"), met in Marseille and young Armenians from 20 countries flew in for the convention.

Marseille is the largest port and second largest city in all of France. However, despite its size, the city does not seem big, but compact and cozy. Furthermore, one can always expect to feel warm, regardless of the season, thanks to its fortunate location on the coast, sheltered from the Continental weather patterns. In addition to the sights mentioned above, Marseille has wonderful museums worth visiting, devoted to city's history, French fashion, fine arts and so on. However, unlike Paris or Lyons, one does not feel obligated to go to the museums here. It must be the natural offerings - the sea, the sun and the fresh salty air that are to blame. Nevertheless, I decided to visit the museum devoted to the ancient Roman docks. After this experience, I decided that it might be better to see Roman docks in Rome itself. In Marseille it seems to make more sense to take long walks and have leisurely visits with good friends at the many local cafes.

The Château d'If

Marseille is the setting of one of the most famous stories in all of Western literature. Here, on a small island close to the port, stands the mighty Château d'If, where one of Alexandre Dumas' most renowned characters, Edmond Dantès, the Count of Monte Cristo, languished in captivity. This heart-wrenching story has enchanted millions of readers all over the world. They dream of visiting the château, to experience firsthand what this unfortunate sailor underwent. Everything inside the château is authentic – cells that once imprisoned royalty, criminals as well as the intriguing Abbé Faria (a genuine historical figure) whose cell was adjacent to the fictional one of Edmond Dantès. Once inside, one forgets that Dumas' masterpiece is a work of fiction, the product of the imagination of a great French romantic novelist.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that while visiting this fabled city, I became part of another story, itself suitable for a work of fiction. I was part of the television crew working on the Roads of Diaspora, a documentary dealing with Provence and the Côte D'Azur. Having taped everything



Max Shirelyan



Armenian Marseille, the cultural center of JAF (Jeunesse Armenienne de France, "Young Armenians of France"), the Cathedral du Prado and a shop in Beaumont residential area.





Max Shirelyan



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Soccer star Zinedine Zidane, a favorite among Marseille residents, pictured here on a billboard covering a three-story building.

Max Skvalyan

that we needed within Marseille, we headed to the Château d'If. We hardly dared to hope for a chance at filming the Château's interior because we were warned even before setting sail to the island that cameras are not allowed.

When the security guard noticed tourists with a video camera approaching the Château, he politely but firmly stated that videotaping was not allowed. Nevertheless, we asked him to tell the museum director about our visit because we had come a long way from Armenia specifically to videotape this marvelous chateau. But our "Armenian wiles" had no effect on the vigilant guard. He repeated that videotaping the interior of the chateau is forbidden, but decided to call the director anyway.

"Where did you say you were from?" The guard asked. We replied, "From Armenia." "From Armenia," he repeated into the phone. And then his facial expression underwent three dramatic changes – surprise, then perplexity, succeeded by deep anxiety. He turned to us and said: "Please, go ahead. The director said you can videotape." Then he mumbled to himself: "From Armenia…"

Unable to believe our ears, we began shooting everything in sight, fearing that the misunderstanding would be cleared up at any moment and the video camera and tape confiscated. Fortunately, nothing of the kind happened; all went well and we thoroughly enjoyed our brief immersion in the marvelous world of Dumas.

An administrator waited for us at the Château's exit. We expressed our gratitude, saying that we did not expect such kind treatment. "It is very simple," the Frenchman said, "you can videotape anything you want." We asked why. He responded, "Because you are Armenians. Like Peleshian. Peleshian is a genius. And you are from the same country. And that means that everything you do deserves respect."

VIDEOTAPE ANYTHING YOU WANT. BECAUSE YOU ARE ARMENIANS. LIKE PELESHIAN. HE IS A GENIUS. AND YOU ARE FROM THE SAME COUNTRY. AND EVERYTHING YOU DO DESERVES RESPECT.

He told us that he recently saw a few of Peleshian's documentaries and that they completely changed his perspective on cinematography; then he added that an individual capable of something like that undoubtedly represents a great nation. The pride we felt when we heard these words is almost impossible to describe.

We came out to the pier, awaiting the arrival of the next motor boat and watching the Marseille port, where the disconsolate Edmond Dantès' beloved, the beautiful Mercedes, once stood. Standing there, I remembered the Count's words, with which Dumas concluded his immortal novel: "To wait and to hope". In the meantime, one should endeavor to do something useful, of course. One day, with enough work, one might hope to leave a legacy as enduring as that of the Frenchman, Dumas or the Armenian, Peleshian.

The City of My Dreams

One day as a child I discovered a city named Saint-Raphael on the map. I thought it was named in my honor and promised myself that I would visit it one day. Not far from it while visiting Marseille, I decided to take the opportunity to transform my childhood dream into reality.

Saint-Raphael is a small gem of a city. A French tourist guide describes it this way: "Conveniently located, Saint-Raphael is a charming resort on the Côte D'Azur, with modern style architecture and allées of Palm. Aside from the beaches, there is a marina, a casino, Roman ruins, a 12th century church and museums displaying Roman treasures, discovered by Jacques Cousteau." Frankly, I don't have much to add except that I was happy to be there and not only because I succeeded in turning my childhood fantasy into reality, but, oddly enough, because of my name. It differs from most other Armenian names, it seems – after all, a French city and I share it. There is no Saint-Varazdat, Saint-Armen, or Saint-Khachatur in France, but there is a Saint-Raphael, and for some reason, this brought me pleasure. ►

NICE IS SPECTACULAR, ESPECIALLY WHEN OBSERVED FROM A CONVENIENT VERANDA DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A SWEEPING VIEW FEATURING THE MAGNIFICENT BAY.

It's just My Jealousy Talking…

Nice is one of the biggest resort towns of the Mediterranean. Actually, it was the British who turned the city into a resort. The mild climate and other pleasant aspects of the city attracted British aristocrats, as well as Queen Victoria herself. She apparently loved to stroll around Le Boulevard des Anglais, built in 1830 with funds supplied by England herself. I do not know how to explain it, but when in this city (also by the sea and with a port), one *is* inclined to visit the museums. That is perhaps because the local museums are one-of-a-kind, featuring works of Matthias, Chagall, important Asian artists and many others.

Of course one should not leave Nice without first seeing the Roman ruins. In this case, the ruins are of a number of thermae, or bathhouses. It is possible that ancient Roman dock-workers came here to bathe and to socialize. Nice is not simply beautiful, it is spectacular, especially when observed from a convenient veranda designed to provide a sweeping view featuring the magnificent bay with fabulous yachts and motor boats, the well-groomed green hills surrounding the city, the stunning buildings and Boulevard des Anglais promenade filled with sauntering tourists, apparently without a care in the world. Don't mind my envious tone, it's just my jealousy talking…

"Le Petit Juge Déshabillé"

According to reports, there are a number of Armenians in Cannes. That said, having taken a walk along the main street of this city, Croisette Avenue, I started to wonder if that is really the case. Maybe the reports of a significant Armenian population were due to the presence of a large Armenian restaurant, Le Restaurant Armenien, right at the seafront, which immediately caught my eye.

Another reason might be that one often encounters our brethren in Cannes, walking about grandly, speaking fluent French that is occasionally enriched with an Armenian word or two. First and foremost, the reports of an Armenian community in Cannes must be due to the impressive monument to the victims of the Amenian Genocide located near one of the main streets of the principal park of Cannes.



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Nice, Old Port, Le Boulevard des' Anglais, one of the best hotels on the coast - Hotel Negresco, and the National Drama Center.

THE CÔTE D'AZUR

It is widely believed that Greeks from Hellas were the first to arrive at the Côte D'Azur in 6 B.C. The first city they built there was Antipolis, which later became a Roman fortress, Antibes. The translation of "Antipolis" is "opposite;" the Greeks gave it that name because it was located across from modern day Corsica, which they had conquered. The Greeks built both Massalia (modern Marseille) and Nikaia (modern Nice). Later they relinquished these cities to the Romans, who contributed greatly to the prosperity of Southern France by improving on the wine-making techniques they inherited from the Greeks. After the fall of the Roman Empire, some of this territory became a part of Provence. In the Eighteenth Century, The English were the first to visit the Côte D'Azur as tourists, happy to leave behind their cold, wet island to visit this warm, welcoming land.



We must be an indestructible nation. One piece of evidence: this monument to the genocide victims – a khachkar in the midst of the glamorous city that is Cannes – seems somehow extraordinary. "We absolutely had to place a monument here", confessed one of those who conceived the idea for the monument. He elaborated: "One cannot do without it. It is Cannes after all!" Well, maybe he is right.

People all over the world know everything about Cannes - the famous Film Festival held annually in this small French city on the Côte D'Azur has made it famous for over half a century now.

Many people dream of ascending Cannes' legendary red stairs. These are mostly cinematographers and film lovers, striving to learn more about this great art form.

Although I was not here during the festival and have nothing to do with cinematography, I must


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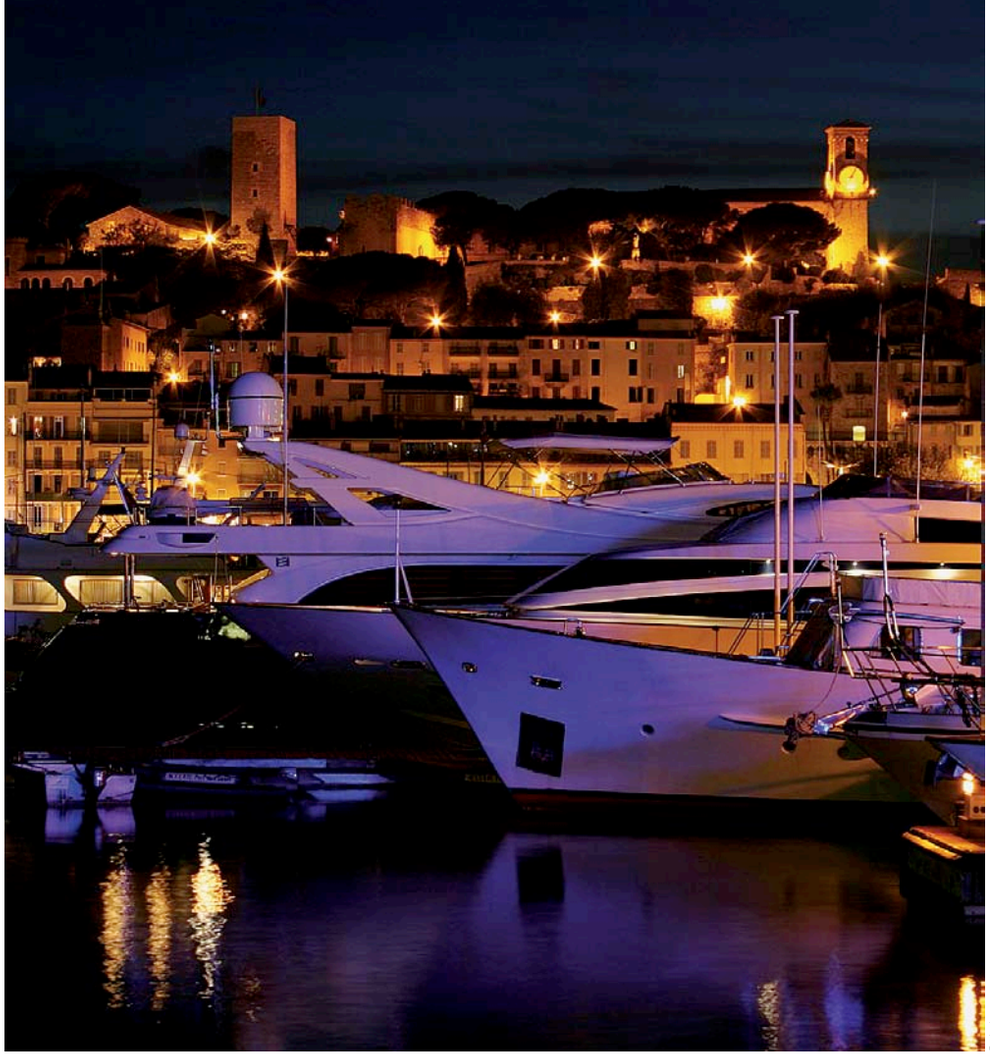
confess to a desire to climb the stairs myself. But as luck would have it, a conference of some kind was being held that very day at the Festival Hall and a pass was required to enter. I was disappointed at first, but then realized that I could make a persuasive case for being allowed to climb the stairs. I could say that quite recently, another Armenian had ascended those stairs – Atom Yegoyan, the first Armenian to be honored at Cannes and that I felt obligated to videotape them for the benefit of the Armenian nation. The combination of a professional video camera, the presence of my "stylish" cameraman, my fancy suit and sunglasses must have distracted the security guard, who listlessly asked for a pass as I walked by him. I muttered, "Le petit juge déshabillé", (the first French phrase that came to mind) and jauntily walked towards the stairs. As I was videotaped walking up the Cannes Festival red stairs the stunned security guard looked on. And when I said "Bonsoir" as we returned, he froze.

It was only later I discovered that the phrase, "Le petit juge déshabillé" loosely translates as "the little nude judge". There can be no doubt that following my reference to naked official with a friendly "bonsoir" (French for "good night") at 2 in the afternoon made quite the impression on the guard. ■



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The Manuscripts Don't Burn

The village of Shrushkan is located in the Paria Province which is part of the Isfahan region of Iran. It is inhabited predominantly by Armenians. At the turn of 16th and 17th centuries they were forcibly relocated here by Shah Abbas I. Before that time, this mountainous region was inhabited by the Persians. The oldest Armenian records found in Shrushkan are dated from the year 1631.



Matenadaran

text : **SONA ALEXANYAN**

Even in the best of times the village had only 15-20 houses. The Surb Barsegh Church (presently converted to a mosque) towers over the town center. Two manuscripts – the Gospels of Sourb Barsegh and Toukh Manouk, were stored there. The residents of Shrushkan were particularly proud of the Gospel of Sourb Barsegh (1498) which supposedly had miraculous qualities. For this reason, for a long time the manuscript was a point of contention between the Church and the document's original owners. Eventually the dispute was settled in favor of the church, and in 1904 the holy relic was placed on the main altar of the Sourb Barsegh Church. The Shrushkan Gospel was known not only in Paria, but throughout Persia and as far away as India. Members of the Iranian nobility believed in its miraculous qualities, and many of them made the pilgrimage to Shrushkan in order to experience its effects. People in times of need asked the sacred book for healing, and, according to the oral accounts, sometimes received it. Others, for example from families that had no sons for many years, expressed their gratitude by dedicating their sons to the Church, "in servitude to the Gospels", and refraining from cutting their boys' hair until age seven. If there were epidemics or other calamities, the relics were taken to these areas, and crowds of people came out to meet them, many of them walking barefoot.

There are many legends surrounding the Shrushkan Gospel. Some of them are related to the periods of attacks on the villages of Paria. In spite of all their hardships, the residents of Shrushkan always rescued their holy books, hiding them along with their children. As legend says, once the residents hid the manuscript from bandits in the village well, and a tree that grew above it bent to cover the Gospel. Later, when people took the manuscript out of the water it emerged whole and undamaged.



Matenadaran

Persian Carpet "Shah Abbas", National Museum of Carpets, Teheran



However, the most mysterious story is related to the theft of the sacred book by a nomadic tribe of Lori Bakhtiary. During one of their attacks on the village, the Shrushkan Gospel was among their stolen goods. Knowing its miraculous attributes, the nomads hid the book securely. It so happened that wolves attacked the tribe's herd of sheep and killed all the sheep. Being left without any means of existence, the tribe considered the incident as an omen and retribution for the theft of the relic. Trying to avoid even worse punishment and to receive forgiveness for their sins, the tribe voluntarily returned the relic to the Armenians.

In 1907 the miraculous book was stolen again, this time by Armenian thieves. Looting the Shrushkan Church, the thieves, who were from the Province of Verin Akhor, grabbed the sacred book along with other valuables. The priest of Shrushkan, Archimandrite Yeznik expressed his protests to the Governor of the Paria Province. With a great sense of justice, the officials applied every effort in order to find and return the relic. However, just as in the story of the nomads, the stealing of the Gospel did not remain unpunished. Shortly after stealing the holy book, the young leader of the band of thieves, Ali Mirza-Khan, unexpectedly died of an unknown disease.

Presently, the miraculous Shrushkan Gospel is located in Yerevan, in Matenadaran. Many pilgrims from Iran come to pay their respects to the sacred book. ■

"FRIENDS OF THE MATENADARAN"

The first steps towards the creation of the charity foundation "Friends of the Matendaran" were initiated as early as 1960 by His Holiness Catolikos Vazgen I and Professor Levon Khachikian. Just recently, in 2001, their idea came to fruition. The honorary president of the foundation became His Holiness Garegin II, Catolikos of All Armenians. Thanks to the efforts of the Foundation, Matenadaran's collection has received 173 manuscripts and ancient printed books. More than twenty publications were released in recent years. Please visit www.matenadaran.am







Armenian Genocide Museum of America

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) in a unanimous vote gave concept approval for the Armenian Genocide Museum of America. The plans call for restoring the exterior of a historic bank building in Washington D.C., modifying the interior to accommodate the museum exhibits, and build a new adjacent glass structure which will be surfaced with native Armenian stone to complement the bank building located two blocks from the White House. The principal architect Gary Martinez and the Chairman of the Museum building and operations committee, Van Krikorian, made presentations to D.C. officials, who in response strongly endorsed the project. The architectural team was supported by the representatives from Gallagher & Associates, contracted as the exhibit design firm, the Armenian National Institute, serving as the research department of the museum project, and by the project management firm of Regan Associates.

ARTN and SHANT present National Singer

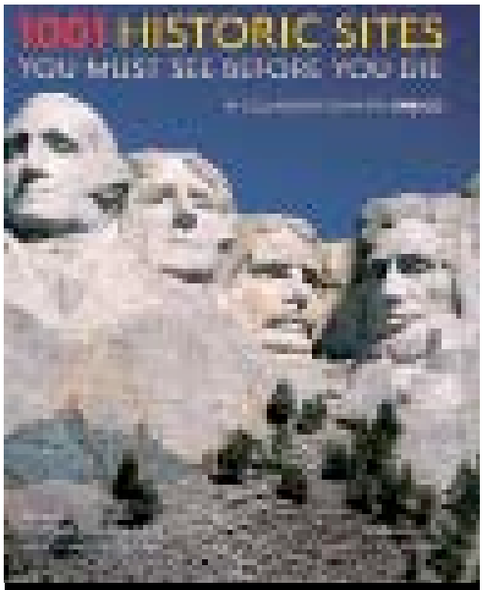
Armenian folk music lovers filled the Pasadena Civic Auditorium and Alex Theatre in Glendale, California in April of 2008. These events were the culmination concerts of the Armenian folk song version of the American Idol singing competition. The ARTN and Shant TV channels in Armenia began the project in August of 2007. Approximately four hundred aspiring folk singers aged seventeen to twenty-six from all corners of Armenia responded to the initial call. The positive reaction of TV viewers led to strong ratings for the show. The selection of the singers for each stage of the contest was done by live voting of the TV audience. The producer and originator of the project, Hakop Roubenian, told our reporters that after just one show he received so much encouragement and support that he immediately recognized the fact that there was a great need to develop and continue the old traditions of national music. It was particularly important to realize that the younger generation of Armenians love and keep the musical traditions of their ancestors.

Specialists from Cambridge, Massachusetts, will conduct master classes for the managers of ten Armenian theatres in June, 2008. The training is organized under the U.S. Government program "Community Connections." (Cambridge –Yerevan Sister City Association).



Just Two out of 1001

BARRON'S Educational Series, Inc. recently published a colorful and informative *1001 Historic Sites You Must See Before You Die* (General Editor – Richard Cavendish). It is remarkable that this book was created in collaboration with UNESCO (preface by Koichiro Matsuura, UNESCO Director-General). The sites of two Transcaucasian Republics are found in it: Georgia – Stalin's Birthplace (Gori, Georgia), Vardzia Cave City (near Aspindza, Georgia), Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (Mtskheta, Georgia). The listed historical sites in Armenia are - the Temple of the Sun God (Garni, Armenia), that was restored in the 1970s, and Echmiadzin Cathedral (Echmiadzin, Armenia) with the neighboring Church of St. Hripsimeh, the Church of St. Gayaneh, and the Zvartnots archeological site. It is to our great bewilderment that the extraordinary cave monastery of Geghart, as well as the monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin, each included in earlier lists of Unesco's protected historical sites (2000), are not listed in the current publication.



Like father, like son

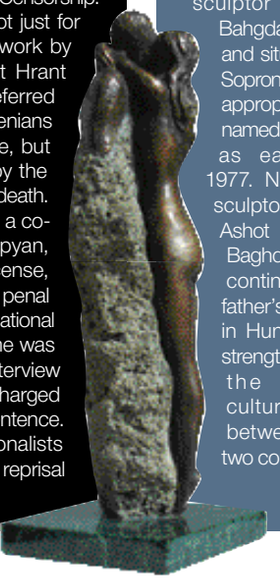
Arat Dink - executive director of Agos, an Armenian newspaper in Istanbul, and son of Hrant Dink assassinated on January 2007 - received the Guardian Journalism Award from the campaigning group Index on Censorship. The presented award was not just for commemorating his father's work by republishing an interview that Hrant gave to Reuters in which he referred to the 1915 massacre of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as Genocide, but for his own brave refusal to abide by the censorship laws that led to his father's death. Last year Arat was brought to trial as a co-defendant, along with Serkis Seropyan, holder of the weekly's publishing license, according to the article 301 of Turkey's penal code, which makes "insulting Turkish national dignity" a criminal offence. Their crime was to have republished Hrant Dink's interview to Reuters. Arat was convicted as charged and given a one-year probationary sentence. In the meantime, the extreme nationalists continue to impose threats of physical reprisal on the Agos' staff.

XVI AGE Wor Gam

The XVIII Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) World Games will be held in Montevideo, Uruguay in July, 2008. Armenian athletes from all over the globe will gather in Montevideo. The first games were held in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1955. Past host cities have included Buenos Aires, Sidney, Paris, and Los Angeles.

Yerevan in Sopron, Hungary

An exhibition presenting Armenian culture was staged in Sopron, Hungary. It was a combined display of works of two sculptors: the Hungarian, Yuhosh Laszlo, and the Armenian - Ashot Baghdasarian. The event, endorsed by the Organization of the Armenian Minority in Hungary and the City of Sopron, called for the restoration of the traditional Armenian - Hungarian cultural ties. A monument dedicated to Hungarian - Armenian friendship was created by the Armenian sculptor Sarkis Bahgdasarian and situated in Sopron's district appropriately named Yerevan, as early as 1977. Now the sculptor's son, Ashot Baghdasarian, continues his father's legacy in Hungary in strengthening the inter-cultural ties between the two countries.



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JOURNEY IS THE DESTINATION

Vahe Berberian, a modern day "Renaissance Man" - an artist, playwright, actor, and a man with a heap of creative ideas, the realization of which takes his whole existence, becomes a cultural icon of classic proportions, an Armenian Don Quixote - combination of nobility and desire to defend his beliefs.

interview : **GAYANE HAROUTYUNYAN**
photo : **LIKA BRUTYAN**

A recognized artist, writer, comedian, and (as if that was not overwhelming enough) - journalism major honors graduate, dear Vahe should have been intimidating, but was not. When two paint-covered hands gathered my entire being in a warm embrace and were accompanied by a big, gentle smile, I knew I was "home". His hospitality is grounded in more than impeccable manners, it is his philosophy. In Vahe, hospitality takes on a more elaborate form; he "welcomes" people, ideas, and concepts into his mind and heart. He assimilates and incorporates all of this into his art to produce something intangible and beyond definition, as art should not be defined, for it seeks no definition (and on this point, Vahe and I are in perfect agreement).

I entered his studio. A massive, dark brown canvas waiting to enter battle with the multidimensional, charismatic artist stood in a void, while everything around it screamed of life and art. A side room held Parajanov's photo; numerous ethnic nick-knacks, and a massive green statue of Buddha on the bureau caught my eye. The background was good old Rammstein.



OVERVIEW OF PERSONALITY THEORY - ACRYLIC ON CANVAS (2008)

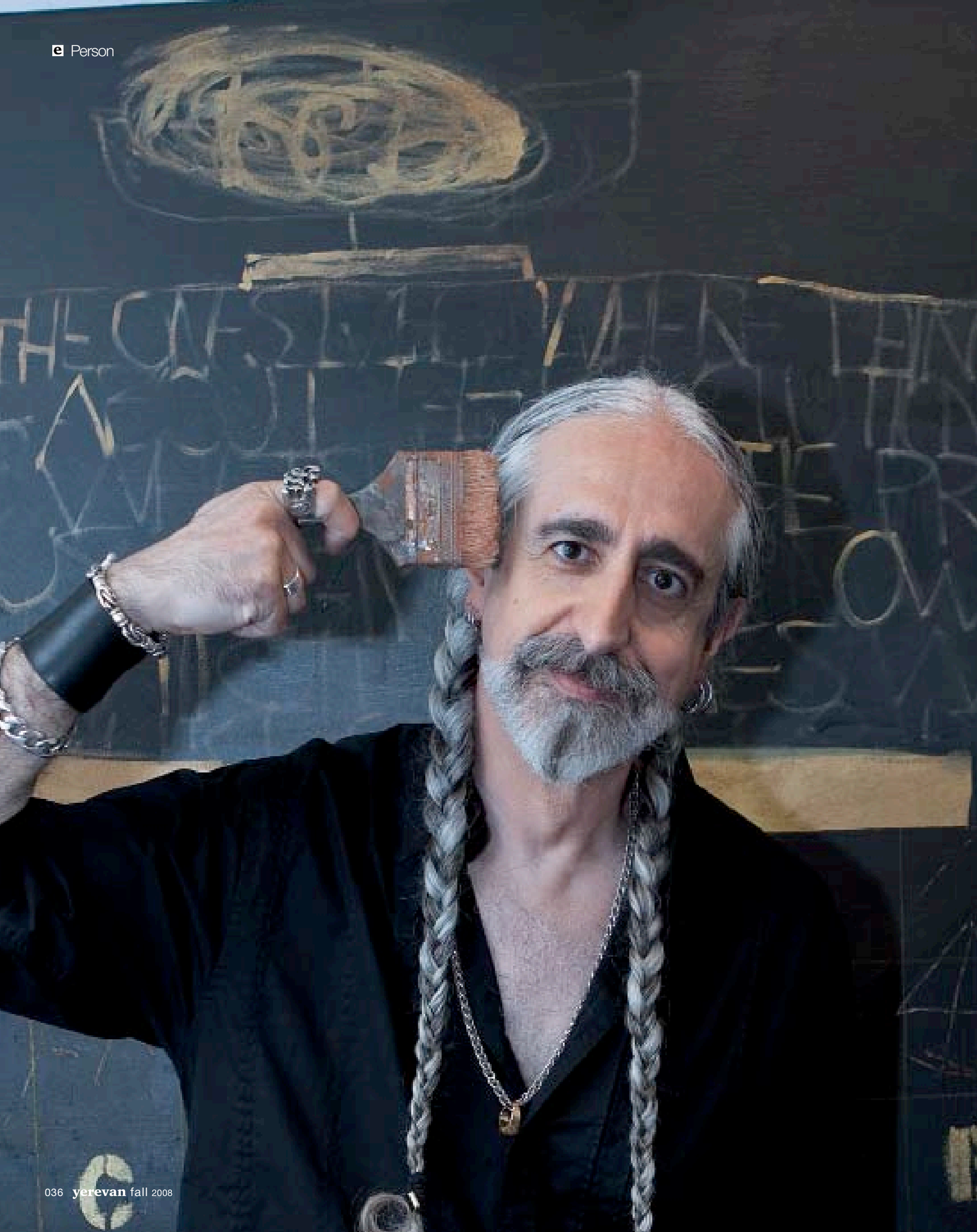
JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE AN ARMENIAN, IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO BE A CONSERVATIVE PERSON WHO LIVES WITHIN THE NORMS OF SOCIETY.

The imported Lebanese coffee, fetched by Vahe himself, and cigarettes followed. And as dear Vahe grew philosophical the foreseen "intellectual jousting" adventure took its course, and I realized that what I would learn there nobody could take away will be a treasure always. Charged with so much passion and anger, in this case without negative connotation, Vahe spoke.

Later I was welcomed into another room to watch a Serj Tankian video, "The Sky is Over" where Vahe "penetrates" the canvas transferring a blank into a sky that Saint-Exup ry's "little prince" reveled in. Among his many gifts, he is an entertainer…

The dialogue started when Vahe addressed me in beautiful western "barbar" and, as sad and ridiculous as it may be, I acknowledged that I speak Russian better than Armenian. That is to say the dialogue started with an answer to a question that had not yet been asked…

I think for me becoming an Armenian, it was a conscious decision. I decided to be an Armenian. As I traveled among hippies I realized that I have something – a cultural depth, a perspective that adds richness to my identity. My being Armenian adds certain dimension to my



personality. The more languages I speak the more dimensions I have as an individual.

But when you talk about hippies, isn't that about something universal? How did you maintain your national identity in that environment?

Not only did I maintain my identity, I discovered it. I realized that by sticking to my identity I have a "gate" that opens to particular knowledge, wisdom, and cultural treasures. This is transferred to me through my identity, and if I do not claim it, it will be lost. Being an Armenian never held me back. It doesn't mean you have to be a conservative person who lives within the norms of society. I think, I owe a lot to my cultural identity.

Tell me about Armenia, anything there is to say…

Very old nation, old history, and depth. One of the things that captures me about Armenia is the sense of history, especially for someone who lives in LA, which is completely devoid of history or sense of history. History is important to one's identity; you realize that you have a reference point. It is just as important as knowing your mother, it is a clue to who you are. You have to discover your own history to know who you are now, today.

Well, you are a writer, a performer, a playwright, a comedian, an artist, an Armenian, a husband, a brother, but there has to be a word that captures you.

I would say I am first and foremost a human being. All my life I have done three separate things that feed off each other – painting, writing, and entertainment. And I have been lucky that I have been able to pursue all three in a way where none of them lagged because of the other. My father always said that I cannot do all three things and still be successful, and, possibly, if I chose one direction I would have gotten to where I am lot sooner, but I think my art has the maturity that only comes from these three art forms working together.

You refer to the term "human being". It is the most beautiful term I know, but what does it represent to you?

I think a human being is an organism, and we share that organism with billions of others. Greeks have a word "persona" which means "a mask". We all wear different personas, create distinct identities in order to acknowledge our existence and in order to be acknowledged by the others. But deep down inside we are all one.



ANTILIAS - ACRYLIC ON CANVAS (2008)

I REALIZE THAT BY DISCOVERING AND PRESERVING MY IDENTITY I HAVE A "GATE" THAT OPENS TO PARTICULAR KNOWLEDGE OR WISDOM.

Perfect harmony then?

Yes, exactly. But it took me a long time to achieve this. I am 52 years old.

Are you a hard worker or a lazy student?

I am a very hard worker, I create constantly, and I am neurotic. If I am not creating I am so hard on myself. I am the king of guilt. My neurosis comes from my guilt. I am also lucky because I have a great following as a painter, especially for the past ten years. I have numerous celebrities who collect my work, and I am very comfortable as far as making a living. I am not a starving artist. I think the "starving artist" concept is a myth that we grew up with. If as a kid somebody asked me who I wanted to be and I said that I wanted to be an artist, in the back of my mind it was the image of an artist that creates enormous amount of work and dies hungry. And later, once his work is discovered, he is truly appreciated.

In one of your performances I heard you refer to marriage as a "state of mind". What did you mean by that?

Well, I have never believed in the institution of marriage and, strangely enough, neither has my wife, yet we have been married for 26 years.

So you still got officially married. We are a traditional, conservative nation after all…

We got married for practical reasons. However, we were madly in love with each other. And we were very young, I was 24, she was 22. We became the closest of friends, and after all these years we are still best friends. We have gone through a lot of rough times. Probably, one of the reasons our marriage has lasted so long, is because we are never alone, we are constantly bombarded by people.

But don't you think that real intimacy can be achieved even when you are surrounded by people? It is an inner state, nothing external can jeopardize it.

BOOKS:

Hanoun Hor Yev Vortvo - (In the Name of the Father and The Son), 1999, (novel in Armenian)
Namagner Zaataren - (Letters from Zaatar), 1996 (novel in Armenian)
Pages from a Diary - (Vahe Berberian's autobiography), 1996, (in Armenian & English)
Pink Elephant - 1987, (in English & Armenian)

PLAYS:

Baron Garbis – 2007 (in Armenian)
Words - 2002 (in Armenian)
Arvest Comedy Night I - 1996 (in Armenian)
Arvest Comedy Night II - 1998 (in Armenian)
200 - 1989 (in English)
Quicksand - 1987 (in English)
The Night Visitor - 1977 (in English)
Exit One - 1977 (in English)
A Nest At The Beach - 1978 (in English)

It is not easy, because after only three months of marriage wife and I were sitting and having supper. She said, "do you realize this is the first time that we are alone?" I was always with an entourage, always. But one of the greatest things about us is that there is never a dull moment. At one point we did not see each other for one whole year – she was living in Europe, and I was here. We are always apart one way or another, but, at the same time, I think that is what makes it more interesting. We never suffocate one another, and in the end we really miss one another.

Does your humor have an identity? And is it Armenian?

The spring of my humor, the well of my humor comes from Armenian sources. However, I hope my humor is universal. There have been times when I translated some of my monologues into English. It has been received incredibly well. As a matter of fact, a lot of Irish people, or Jewish people, or Middle easterners would come and say "it is just like my mother", or "this is just like our culture!" We are all so much alike. And in the early stages I thought "really? I thought we are so unique…"

But we are unique, aren't we?

We are in many ways. Our very existence has so much to do with the idea of annihilation. Because of the massacres, because of what we have gone through historically. We're in this defensive mode all the time. That is something that



became a national characteristic. I am not saying that there are not other nations like that, but nations are like people, your background dictates who you are, and your DNA dictates what you are. And we are not an easy people to deal with: we are tough, at times xenophobic and very hot-tempered. But I think, all of these traits have helped us stay alive.

In one of your performances you talk about the "happiest nation" survey which was very funny of course. But do you think we are a happy nation?

No, I do not think that we are a happy nation. I think the survey is right. Armenians and Ukrainians came last. It is not because we have all the reasons to be sad, but because we love that sadness, that drama. We love to revel in it – "aman, vai, vyi".

Well, we may not be a happy nation, but we are a lot of fun. And everybody knows us for it.

Yes, well, there is a huge difference. We have a fantastic sense of humor. However, we do not laugh at our own jokes. Even laughter for us is a macho thing. We do not laugh openly and loudly, carefree.

Are there your personal distinctions in humor for you?

There are all kinds of humor. For instance, "slap-stick" and physical humor never interested me. Humor has to have a certain sophistication, and also, I do not like laughing at people. I like seeing the comedy in situations. I give myself the opportunity to laugh at myself. Others – don't. I think only weak people find joy in laughing at others. Humor is a test. If you make fun of something and it stays strong, does not crumble - it was meant to last. If it falls apart it was not meant to last anyway. Anything that does not withstand humor is useless. I also hope that humor can make people think.

I think that artwork that a writer produces is a very specific kind of art. I think you write with your imagery. You write with your brush.

Yes, I do. But see, what I say with my painting I cannot say in any other way. It is like what Robert Frost said when he was asked to explain his poetry, "why should I use worse words when I already used the better ones?" If I was to explain my art I would have written instead of painted or I could get up and talk. There is a lot of humor in my artwork as well. And I think paintings are what translate my moods better than anything else. When I paint, I put my music on and I paint. And I do not care if there are a lot of people. There are always people here, and they all know that this is my working mode. They are the ones who make my coffee and take care of me as I work.



FOX TROT - ACRYLIC ON CANVAS (2008)

ANYTHING THAT DOES NOT WITHSTAND HUMOR IS USELESS. HUMOR CAN MAKE PEOPLE THINK. THERE IS A LOT OF HUMOR IN MY ARTWORK.

What do you think is art and what is not?

Art is something that you do in order to preserve an idea, a story, a mood, and a concept, any experience or thought. There are different variations - good art, bad art, pop-art, etc. and the sophistication of the art depends solely on the sophistication of the artist. The artist is like a blender. Everything that happens to the artist goes inside - he falls in love, listens to some fascinating music, reads a book. The blender is constantly working, and everything that comes out of it is art. It is never one thing or the other. It is the combination of everything.

What about things that inspire you?

There are two different sources - anger and profound love. For years, I think, they came together. When America attacked Iraq for months I was painting stuff that was horrendous… However, the older I get the more I realize that I am more moved by love. Love is the most important force of my life. I fall in love million times a day, I fall in love with trees, I fall in love with my cats, fall in love with women, I fall in love with everything. And that gives me a sense of bliss, especially when I put my music on and paint. Without Rammstein my art would seriously suffer. Their music energizes me. Music is my source of inspiration as well. In my early teens I thought I was going to become a musician. I used to play guitar, flute, and I used to sing. But I quit when I was 24-25. I thought of all the art forms music is going to consume me completely.

What are you working on right now?

Well, this is a very interesting time for me. The play *Baron Garbis* is finally over. We put so much time and energy into it. We broke records as far as Diaspora theatre. 47 performances!!! First 38 performances were sold out, every single one of them. The response was amazing. Now we have invitations to take the play to other cities. So, there is the touring of *Baron Garbis*. The next is the May 3rd exhibition, very important for me. And one of my novels was translated in Turkish. It just came out in Istanbul. Yes. And it was translated as is after months of deliberation. It has been getting very good reviews with Turkish publications. I have also been invited to twenty different cities to do a monologue, and I have agreed to every single invitation without an actual monologue. There are two different scripts I have to work on as well. And I promised the theatre company that I will write another play.

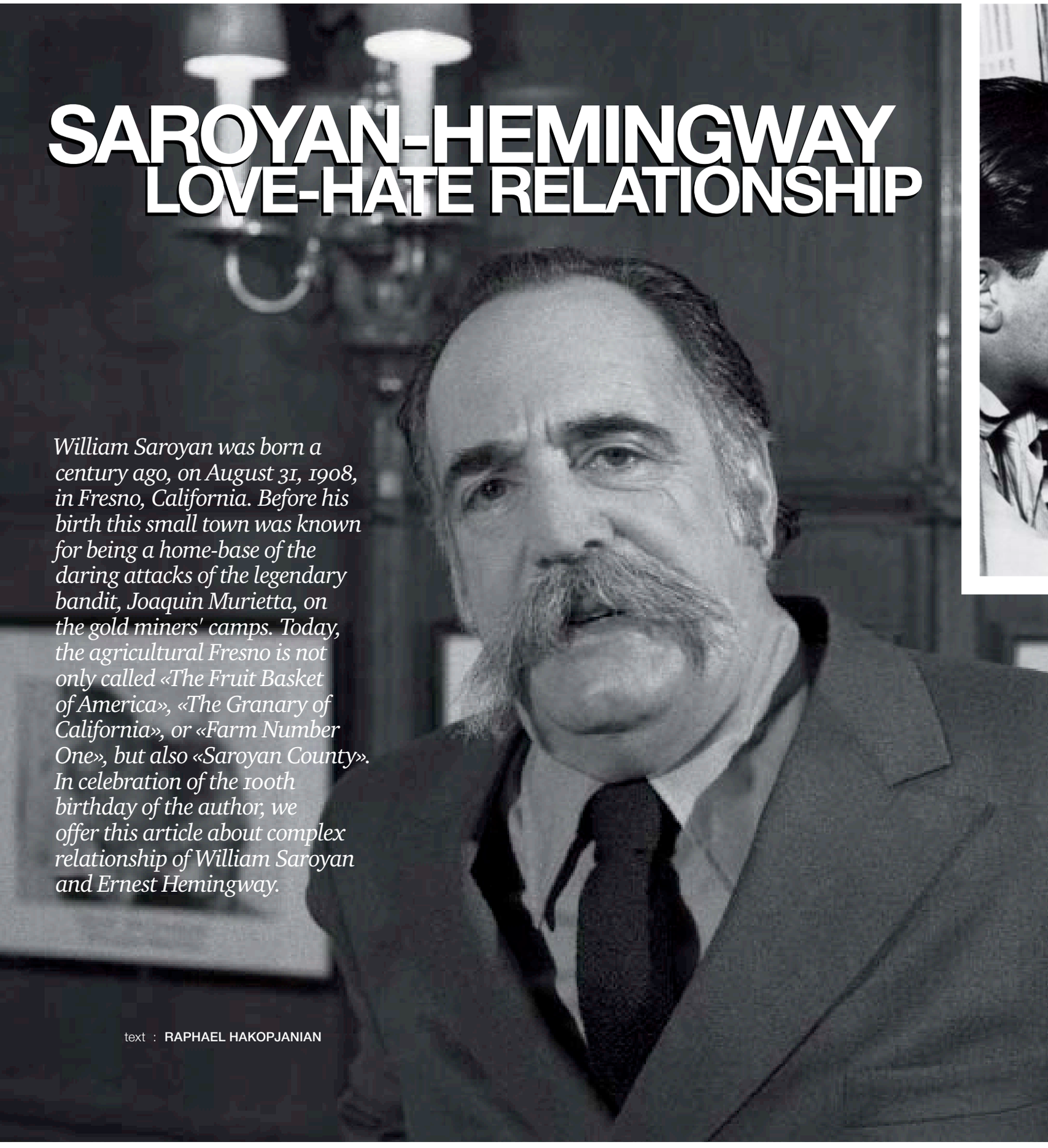
Tell me something to take home with me, a wish, a phrase, anything.

There is something that I also have to remind myself all the time – "The journey is the destination." Every time I enter my studio I tell myself, "I do not need new pieces, I am just going to have fun painting I pleasantly surprise myself". Instead of constantly trying to get somewhere, one must realize that "this is it." It is not about the destination, but about a journey.

What would you say to us, Armenians?

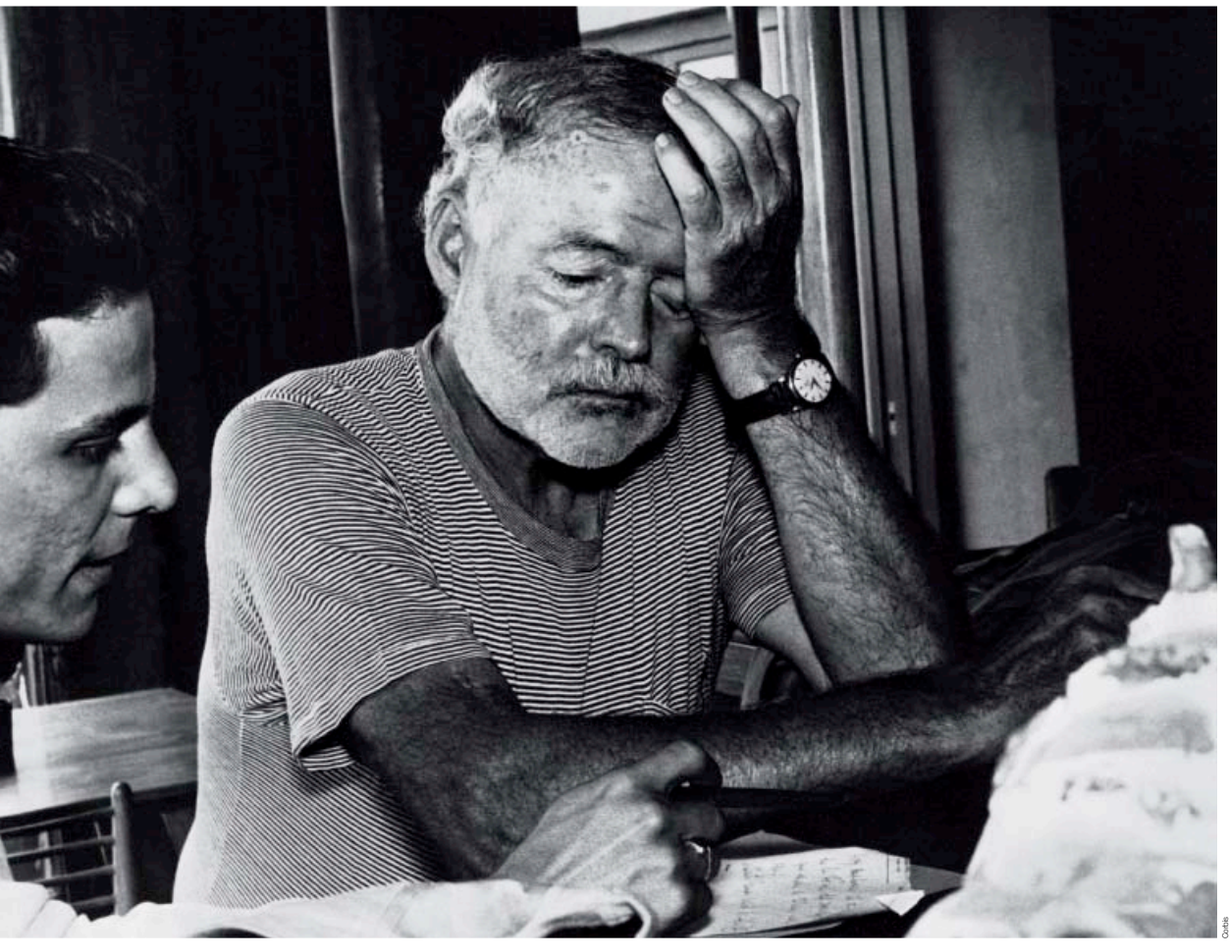
I would say we should lighten up. I think that would make a lot of difference. I think humor is like fiber, without fiber you are constipated. Oscar Wilde once said "I have put my genius into my life". All I have put in my art is talent. To be able to put genius in one's life, to be able to live your life like an artwork, to be able to embrace people with love, make a positive dent in their lives, is far more important than any other artwork you can create. ■

SAROYAN-HEMINGWAY LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP



William Saroyan was born a century ago, on August 31, 1908, in Fresno, California. Before his birth this small town was known for being a home-base of the daring attacks of the legendary bandit, Joaquin Murietta, on the gold miners' camps. Today, the agricultural Fresno is not only called «The Fruit Basket of America», «The Granary of California», or «Farm Number One», but also «Saroyan County». In celebration of the 100th birthday of the author, we offer this article about complex relationship of William Saroyan and Ernest Hemingway.

text : **RAPHAEL HAKOPJANIAN**



Corbis

HEMINGWAY HINTED THAT THE REJECTION OF PULITZER PRIZE BY SAROYAN DOES NOT GUARANTEE THE NOMINATION FOR THE NOBEL PRIZE. HE RECEIVED THE PULITZER PRIZE THIRTEEN YEARS AFTER SAROYAN AND STEINBECK, A YEAR BEFORE HE RECEIVED THE NOBEL PRIZE.

I feel guilty toward William Saroyan, whom I adore. I was wicked and cannot be forgiven! We were strolling around Moscow in autumn of 1978, when he stopped suddenly in the middle of the street and shouted in his deafening voice:

- This city is full of life!

"Of course," I thought rather sadly, "Even Saroyan is persuaded by the communists' propaganda! How can this Soviet reality be called 'life'!"

But twenty years later, at six in the evening, standing in the center of the city square of the deserted autumnal Fresno, I lifted my hand to heavens and screamed at the top of my voice, "Forgive me, Saroyan, for I was foolish! Of course, compared to sleepy Fresno, Moscow would seem like the center of the Universe!"

I feel guilty toward Hemingway, whom I adore. I was wicked and cannot be forgiven. In 1987, visiting his huge mansion Finca Vigia in the vicinity of Havana, I unkindly exclaimed, "So this is Hemingway who is said to need only a typewriter and a stack of paper!" Twenty years later I myself moved into a Victorian mansion in San Francisco. One of my Yerevan friends visiting me in California noted, "I wouldn't say that you have a 'bohemian' lifestyle."

I sadly thought in response, "Forgive me, Hemingway, for I was foolish! It is true, a writer's lifestyle is determined by the storyline of his existence."

My beloved Saroyan and Hemingway did not always, putting it mildly, get along with each other. And they were, to a certain extent, guilty toward each other. But the sins of the titans cannot be accounted for with the same measure used for mere mortals, their scale is cosmic. On the eve of the hundredth anniversary of the writer, who was born in America, wrote in English, but had an Armenian soul, I would like to explore some themes of the relationship of these two titans, who influenced, to a certain degree, Soviet literature, and, particularly, the generation which is conventionally called "The Sixties Generation."

AN AWARD - DECLINED

In 1940 the Pulitzer Prize in the category of Letters and Drama was awarded to two Californians – thirty-seven years-old John Steinbeck received the prize for his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, and thirty-two years-old William Saroyan for his play *The Time of Your Life*. Such an award should have made fast friends of the two recipients from the Golden State. (One was from Salinas, famous for its cabbage, the other - from Fresno, famous for its raisins.) But everything turned out in the opposite manner. Steinbeck had never forgiven Saroyan for his demonstrative decline of the prestigious Pulitzer, and for, willingly or unwillingly, diminishing his own fame as a winner. Hemingway's sarcastic remark followed shortly after, "Is it worthy to copy Sinclair Lewis fourteen years later!?" It was an acid reminder of the precedent that took place long ago - Sinclair Lewis was the first who declined the prestigious award, and four years later, in 1930, became the first American writer to receive the Nobel Prize. The transparent hint meant that the rejection of the Pulitzer Prize does not guarantee the nomination for the Nobel Prize. In response Saroyan sharply made fun of Hemingway's work about Spanish bullfighters *Death in the Afternoon*. The reaction of "Papa Hem" followed without any delays: "Good ones, too. Better ones than you, Mr. Saroyan." I wonder why Hemingway decided to compare the writer with the bullfighters! And by the way, Hemingway received the Pulitzer Prize thirteen years after Saroyan and Steinbeck, a year before he received the Nobel Prize (1954). A curious thought expressed Kurt Vonnegut, saying that Saroyan, Hemingway, and Steinbeck in their twenties were writing better than they had a right to do so (considering their young age).

WRITERS' "OSCAR"

In 1943 two Armenians were

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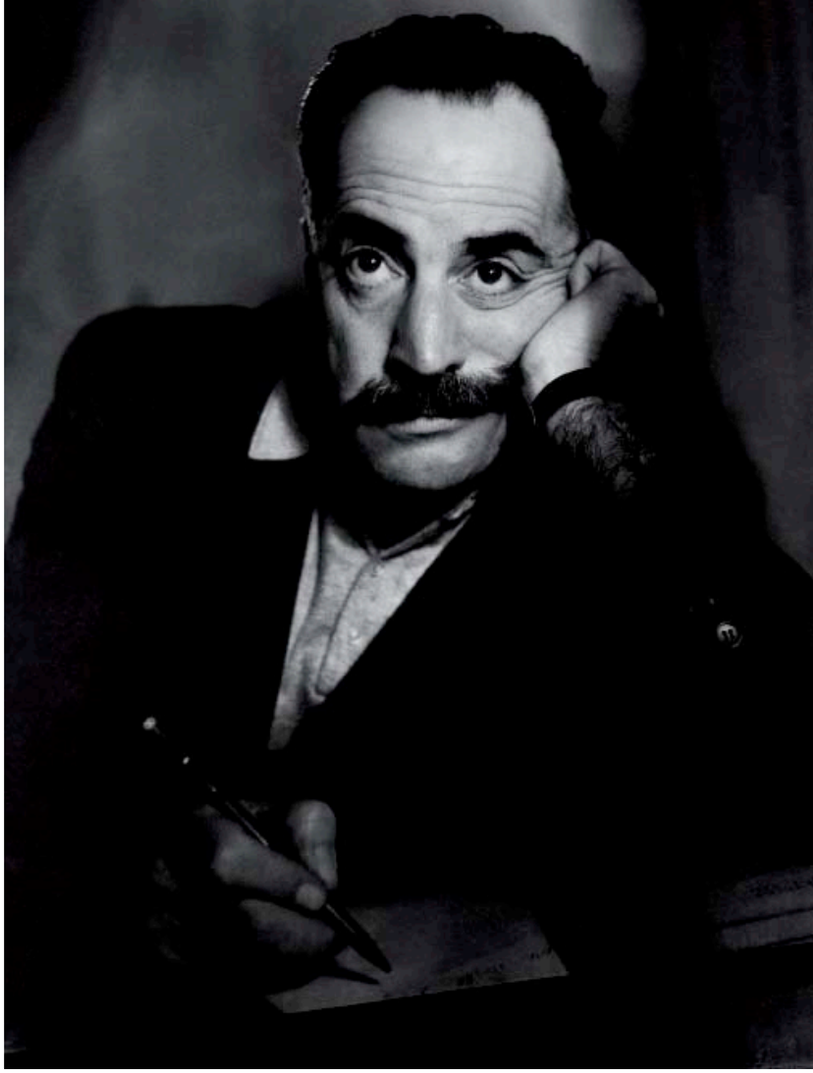

IN HIS BRIEF THIRTY-SIX YEARS, SAROYAN BECAME A CONTROVERSIAL WINNER-REJECTER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE, THE WINNER OF THE NEW YORK DRAMA CRITICS' CIRCLE AWARD, AND, ON TOP OF IT, THE RECIPIENT OF AN OSCAR FROM THE ACADEMY

nominated for the "Oscars"- the highest award of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences - 45 year-old Akim Tamiroff (for the role of Pablo in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*) and 36-year-old William Saroyan (for the original script of the black-and-white film *The Human Comedy*). Hemingway's novel, written in 1940, was directed by the elderly Sam Wood, who will remain in history as the director who paved the path to the Oscars for Ginger Rogers. Saroyan's novel, which was completed in 1943, was soon directed by the prominent Clarence Brown, the director who helped Greta Garbo at the beginning of her career in Hollywood. Hemingway was very dissatisfied by the movie adaptation, saying that the politics were cut from the novel; and out of the two Armenians the Oscar was presented to Saroyan. In his brief thirty-six years he became a controversial "winner-rejecter" of the Pulitzer Prize, the winner of the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, and, on top of it, the recipient of an Oscar from the Academy. Saroyan's fame was reaching its pinnacle. He was accepted in Hollywood – "the brains, honor, and pride" of American culture, yet Hemingway was never nominated by the Academy.

THE OVER-SHADOWED HOLIDAY IN PARIS

Two American writers, 46-year-old Ernest Hemingway and the 36-year-old William Saroyan, met in the early spring of 1945 in the liberated Paris. Saroyan entered the bar of the bohemian hotel Scribe, where Hemingway was having a drink with one of the journalists.

"Here comes Bill Saroyan!" exclaimed the correspondent.

"Where is Bill Saroyan?' asked Hemingway looking directly at Saroyan.

"You had a beard in London. In Paris you have shaved it, but I still recognize you. Is it possible that losing your beard, you stopped recognizing your acquaintances?" maliciously asked Saroyan.

Hemingway remained silent, since he probably remembered that he did not return the money that he borrowed from Saroyan in London. This incident was over at that unpaid loan.

But, as they say, a week later, in a luxurious restaurant at another hotel, the up-scale George V, noticing Saroyan, the drunk Hemingway screamed, "God, what's this son of a b…, lousy Armenian doing here?!" At that, supposedly, Saroyan threw his fists at him. The two fighting writers, again allegedly, were separated only by the arrival of the police. Many years later Saroyan himself completely denied the incident (And there isn't anything about it in the Encyclopedic Dictionary Ernest Hemingway: A to Z) Did the fight take place? Some researchers are very skeptical. I am not so sure myself. As has been mentioned, the main source of this information was a single individual, a British pilot, who later became a Marshall of Aviation of the British Air Forces, Peter Wickham. The alleged fight took place in the presence of a large number of military personnel and journalists. It would have been logical if that same night all newspapers received the breaking news about the incredible adventures of the two American novelists in the liberated Paris. Nothing even close to it! I could not find any mention of the sensational incident in the literary world in any of the American newspapers of the time. It would be appropriate to quote here the words of a Soviet literary critic, "If the works of Hemingway are full of "malicious drunkards," the novelty of Saroyan's short stories was in his use of the "kind-hearted drunkards." For my part, I think that the "malicious drunkards" always have "hate -love" attitude toward the "kind-hearted drunkards," and the "kind-hearted" drunkards have a certain feeling called "love-hate" towards the "malicious drunkards" and never throw fists at the "malicious drunkards". Saroyan, compared to Hemingway, could be called a great teetotaler. Is this version credible enough to disprove the Parisian gossip?

THE UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER

Once a week I visit some second-hand bookstores in San-Francisco. Sometimes I get lucky, and other times - not so much. Recently, in one of such bookstores I hit the jackpot: for just a dollar I bought Saroyan's My Name is Aram published when he was still alive. It was like an omen, considering the upcoming 100-year birthday celebration of the writer.

After I paid for my purchase, I clarified with the salesperson:

- Does this book cost a dollar?
- But you've already paid for it!
- So you can't change the price.
- I can't change the price after you've paid for it.
- In that case, can I show you the title page?
- Why do you need to show it to me? I know this book very well.

I opened the book. On one of the pages was written in Saroyan's uneven handwriting: "For my nephew Arnold Papazian's teacher Mrs. Baranga with sincere regards, William Saroyan. SF, May, 1942."

- Consider winning a hundred dollars. The starting price of such a book with the author's autograph is a hundred bucks, - said the disappointed salesman. Now my goal is to obtain the lifetime publication of Hemingway's In Our Time, naturally, autographed, where the short story «On the Quai at Smyrna» is. In just a few words he describes the horrors of the genocide: "That was the only time in my life that I dreamed about things. You didn't mind the women who were having babies as you did those with the dead ones."

For now, *My Name Is Aram* stands lonely on my bookshelf waiting for *In Our Time*.

WILL BECOME AN ARMENIAN TRADITION…

When in 1944 Saroyan went to a meeting with Bernard Shaw, he bought a gift for the great Irishman – a bunch of muscat grapes, a bunch of Riviera grapes, a yellow melon, and some more fruits and vegetables. The 88-year-old Dubliner, accepted the gifts, saying (as far as I can remember):

-Why do all Americans think that I am food deprived? I have enough of everything. I cannot eat more than I need. I'll have to give all this to my neighbors. It's more than I need!

I visited London this past May. Remembering that 2008 is announced by UNESCO as the Year of Saroyan, I bought "a bunch of muskat grapes, a bunch of Riviera grapes, a yellow melon, and "some more fruits and vegetables" and headed to a small village Ayot St. Lawrence, where Bernard Shaw and his wife are buried.

"Usually people bring flowers," said the approaching cemetery guard standoffishly, noticing my "gifts." But the great eccentric Shaw, in his present state of a bronze statue, kept a haughty silence, looking into the distance. It seemed to me - in the direction of Ireland. I looked back to the South-East, in the direction of Armenia.

EPILOGUE

A whimsical critic in San Francisco's literary café "Vesuvio" once told me that Saroyan's decline in popularity started in 1951, after he married his first wife for the second time, grew gorgeous mustaches, and divorced her again a year later. In contrast, Hemingway's popularity began rising three years prior to the time when he regrew a beard, met the young Italian beauty, Adriana Ivanchich, and finished his next masterpiece *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Some odd literary critics can be met at the café "Vesuvio."

P.S. In January 1988 the City Government of San Francisco came to a decision to satisfy the request of the poet, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and renamed twelve streets after certain famous individuals who lived in San Francisco. Thus, along with Ambrose Bierce Street, Dashiell Hammett Street, Jack Kerouac Street, Frank Norris Street, Richards Henry Dana Place, Kenneth Rexroth Place, Via Bufano, Isadora Duncan Lane, Mark Twain Place, appeared William Saroyan Place. It was a tribute not only to the playwright who wrote the best play about San Francisco *The Time of Your Life*, but also a tribute to a writer for his sharp artistic characterization of the most romantic city of the US: "San Francisco itself is art, above all literary art. Every block is a short story, every hill - a novel." It was a perpetuation of a great writer, who lived in San Francisco and left a distinct ambiance in American literature, an inimitable "saroyanism"! ■



WORLD THROUGH A MAGNIFYING GLASS

Psychologists say that a memory retains more if the information is acquired in a deeply emotional state of mind. Hovhannes Koshkakarian has a memory comparable to that of a powerful computer when it comes to his hobby, the passion of his life, and his favorite topic of conversation – philately: stamp collecting.

TEXT : LIANNA ZAKHARIAN
IGOR GRIGORYAN

Philately is a unique hobby. It can absorb the person completely, making him hunt for small colored pieces of paper all over the world, beg for an exchange, offer sums of money far in excess of its intrinsic value - sometimes bringing him to complete financial disaster. On the other hand, stamps bear colossal amounts of information about geography, beauty of nature, culture and art, science and persons of note. Many well known figures were stamp collectors. Franklin Roosevelt, Queen Elizabeth II, Jawaharlal Nehru, Albert Einstein, Gerald Ford, Anton Chekhov, and Arthur Chilingarov are among those affected by the 'disease' of philately.

In the 1990s, a group of stamp collectors who lived in Los Angeles County started to meet regularly with the goal of creating the first society of Armenian stamp collectors outside of Armenia. Subsequently, the Armenian Philatelic Association (ArPA) was formed in January 1997. Its first (and current) president is Hovhannes Koshkakarian. ArPA has 70 members, most of them from the US with representatives from Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Egypt, and France.

The main focus of ArPA is Armenia and related topics on stamps issued around the world. The points of interest for the collectors are the topic of the stamp, its circulation, and the manner of its production. There are stamps printed on cigarette paper, on gold or silver foil. There are stamps on envelopes that have traveled from various places bearing news and preserving memories. One might be surprised to discover that Armenia-related stamps were issued all over the world, even in such remote and exotic locations as Granada, Singapore, Bangladesh, and Taiwan. For example, Singapore issued a stamp with the Armenian Church on it, the first Christian Church built in Singapore. Granada issued a stamp featuring the photograph of Cher (Cherilyn Sarkisian); Taiwan has a stamp with the picture of apricot blossom with a Prunus Armeniaca inscription.

Many of the stamps issued in various countries were designed by Armenian artists. One courageous artist even sacrificed his life to commemorate the symbols of his Motherland. Mihran Demirchyan designed Turkish stamps from 1901 to 1905. In 1913 he designed a stamp with encoded vertical elements of Armenian letters. When Turkish officials discovered the trick, the designer was exiled. Later that same stamp was reissued without the Armenian letters; obviously it was so good that the Turks could not resist printing it. Another famous Armenian stamp designer is Aida Tasgian (Romania). She designed stamps not only for Romania (more than 400 stamps), but for Chad, Fujairah, and Oman as well. There are many well-known stamp designers of Armenian origin in the U.S. (Souren Yermoyan, George Semerdjian, Vahan Dinihanian). In the former USSR – Ter-Moroukov, Tirdatov, Mkrtchyan, in Lebanon – Akiskalian, Kufedjian, and in Dubai –Tchiterian. Works of talented Armenian photographers have been used on many stamps – works of Yousuf Karsh, Malak Karsh, Arto Gavouk, Vladimir Mousaelian, and Paul Kalinian to name only a few.

Stamps often reflect a country's history: its pride and achievements, or its unfortunate and tragic events. Armenia is no exception.

With the establishment of the First Armenian Republic, the need for postal stamps was evident, and during the short period of its existence, one set of stamps was issued. It did not enter circulation because of the political changes that occurred shortly thereafter. Soviet Armenia issued its own stamps from 1920 – 1923. There were approximately 200 stamps printed over that time period – with original printings and surcharges. In 1923, during the period of the Transcaucasian Republic, over 34 stamps had designs that contained symbols and inscriptions of all three Transcaucasian Republics – Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

As we looked at the World Map with Armenia-related stamps printed in every corner of our planet, Hovhanness Koshkakarian, a true enthusiast of philately, described various stamps, revealing his encyclopedic knowledge of the subject. Later he looked through the pages of Yerevan Magazine and automatically connected many subjects of our articles to certain stamps issued around the world. Evidently, Hovhanness has a unique way of perceiving the world around him – he sees it through the magnifying lens of a stamp collector. ■





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1. A stamp issued in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Gulbenkian Foundation (Portugal)

2. A stamp designed by Aida Taschyan (Romania)

3. A souvenir sheet dedicated to the acceptance of Christianity in Armenia (Greece)

4. A stamp with the Armenian church - the first Christian church in Singapore (Singapore)

5. A stamp in commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide (Uruguay)

6. The Apricot Blossom: Prunus Armeniaca (Taiwan)

7. The Armenian Church (Bangladesh)



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"INCORRECT" STAMPS



Stamps with misspellings or errors in the text or in a subject are considered to be most precious for collectors worldwide. It is these items that are valued over all others and are most expensive to purchase. One of such items is a so-called "Blue Maverick" stamp, issued in 1847 that happens to be the first postage stamp of Maverick that in these years was a part of Great Britain. A profile of Queen Victoria is depicted on the stamp. On the left appears an incorrect text reading - "Post Office" instead of "Post Paid". From this edition only 29 single stamps have been discovered. One of these rarities was purchased by the Prince of Wales (future king George IV) in 1904 for 1,450 pounds sterling. At the end of 2007 another "incorrect" postage stamps was sold for $825,000 in the United States – the so-called "inverted Jenny". On this stamp, issued by the United States in 1918, an image of the Curtiss JN-4 airplane is inverted. 90 items of this edition have survived since the time of its issuance.



STAMP RECORDS

The Mark Haas stamp collection, 3000 American postage stamps and pre-postal envelopes of the United States issued before 1869, was purchased by a London based company Stanley Gibbons Ltd. in 1979 for 11 million dollars.

A Swedish stamp named Treskilling Yellow is the most expensive stamp in the world. On November 11th,1996 it was purchased for 1.45 million pounds sterling in Zurich. It is the only stamp of its type issued in 1895 that has been discovered.

To celebrate its ten year anniversary Hong Kong post office has assembled a world's biggest mosaic panel. It is 6.45 meters in width and 3.97 meters in height and depicts the Hong Kong panorama. This unique creation was assembled from 69 thousand used stamps from 98 countries. 1,500 Hong Kong postal workers and their families worked on creating the panel.





Once Karo Ovasapian took the Armenian flag in the Consulate General of the Armenian Republic in Los Angeles and promised to set it on the tallest peaks of each of the seven continents, as well as on the North and South Poles. After raising our flag on heights it never had reached before,Karo intends to present it to Armenia.

Inteview : **GAYANE HAROUTYUNYAN, ANNA LORENTZ**
photo : **ALEX ABRAMOV IGOR POKVALIN DIMITRY MOSKALEV**

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

An ascend to a summit is an ultimate journey, and, as with any journey, it is important what one takes with him and what he brings back. Karo Ovasapyan, a distinguished, Tehran-born Armenian mountaineer and polar explorer, took the Armenian flag and brought it back with courage, humility, and a deep respect for Mother Nature.

Having faced the inhuman weather conditions, physical exhaustion, and the prospect of injury and death each time, he safely returned to prove yet again that the will to survive is an essential part of the Armenian character, engraved in our very core, wired into our genetic code. Karo has demonstrated this by putting it to the test, whether in the mountains, at the poles, or in the jungles.

Thanks to Karo, the Armenian flag is the only one that has seen all seven Summits of the world. Karo conquered them all, including Mt. Everest (that 29,028-foot giant of a mountain) – his lifelong dream, which he finally fulfilled in May of 2005. He is the first Armenian to climb all seven tallest Summits of the World.

His journey started in 2000 with the skiing voyage to the South Pole and culminated with Carstensz Pyramid, in February 2008. In between, the restless mountaineer conducted numerous skiing treks to the North and South Poles.

Once you enter his home, decorated with exotic ethnic masks, hunting trophies, souvenirs, and framed photos, you are drawn into his world of pure action and few words. The newlywed mountaineer seemes at ease in his cozy room with a stereo playing a bland, smooth jazzy tune. He speaks softly, almost whispering, but at the same time, passionately. His modesty and simplicity are endearing, and yet he is a genius of sorts. He likes to do the job rather than talk about it – that is his essence.

Once he is "up there," he is nothing but power and determination. For him the word "human" does not signify an excuse for failure; rather, it's an honorable title.

How did you first start in sports and mountaineering?

I started sports at the age of 12 with wrestling. From early childhood I loved nature and mountains and so did my whole family. However, I hardly had the opportunity to really explore mountaineering. When I was 10 years old, we moved from Tehran to Armenia. We lived in Charentsavan, 25 kilometers away from Yerevan. My friends and I went hiking on weekends, and through reading I discovered my heroes, including Captain Robert Falcon Scott, the first explorer of Antarctica. In 1997, I went to Canada by the invitation of the chief of a North-American tribe and lived there for two months. It was a great learning experience. Not only I learned about the customs and traditions of the tribe, but also acquired survival skills in the extreme conditions. Later, in California, I met one of the heroes from my favorite books – the famous polar explorer Lori Dexter. This was fantastic! For four years he had been testing my abilities before taking me on an expedition to the South Pole. In November of 2000 our group started a skiing trip. Eight out of ten team members, including myself, reached the South Pole. Antarctica is the largest source of fresh drinking water in the world, so the expeditions are conducted with special caution. We even collected and removed our own waste.

When did you climb your first major mountain?

It was 1980 – Aragats Mountain in Armenia.

What kinds of skills are important to make it in the mountains?

One has to be physically fit for this kind of sport; one must have survival and navigation skills in the wilderness. There is also a psychological factor. First of all, you have to love mountaineering more than yourself. You have to prepare yourself for encounters with all kinds of nature's unexpected obstacles, which could be severe and cruel. One has to fight to survive. It is an art to be able to endure difficulties that nature brings. I had times when out of a 5 or 6-person team I was the only one who made it to the summit. In a team some do not make it, some get injured or die, it is not uncommon.

Tell us about your family.

Well, I got married a week ago, actually. I was married before. I was married to the mountains. I knew what I was doing and the kind of risks I was taking on, and I just did not want my family to go through this.

Well, it seems people take on these risks consciously. But what draws them in so much? Is it the nature, the beauty, the risk itself?

It is impossible to explain, it is like a narcotic. Even at the poles, where all you see around is snow and ice and nothing else, it is incredibly beautiful. You have to be in that moment, love it and live it. It is very different from what a person experiences in the civilized world. It has its purity, its own beauty, peacefulness; you feel that you are alive and living. You realize that you are becoming kinder, and you promise yourself that once you are back in the civilized world you will make yourself an even better, more generous man. The nature empowers you, makes you stronger.

Your experiences, how did they affect your attitude towards animals or nature that you encounter in the civilized world?

I have the greatest respect for nature. Of course, we must protect its ecological state. A human being is a part of nature, and if he or she pollutes it, that is disrespecting oneself. I love animals, and I am particularly fond of dogs. We had a lot of farm animals in Tehran when I was growing up.

Which one of your experiences was most memorable and why?

Every single one has its own place in my heart. The most challenging was the Everest experience, of course. I never told anybody about my desire to climb Everest. Nobody knew why I am so persistent to train and keep in shape. After several injuries doctors insisted on decreasing the intensity of

THERE IS NO ROOM FOR EGO IN THE MOUNTAINS. MOUNTAINS CHOOSE THE RIGHT PEOPLE. IT IS NOT WE WHO MAKE THE CHOICE, IT IS THE MOUNTAINS. WE JUST DO NOT TAKE PEOPLE WHO ARE ANGER-DRIVEN OR MENTALLY UNSTABLE.



my training routines. It took me basically 21 years to prepare for this ascent. When I first started my training, I had no idea how many peaks I have to ascend before seeing the legendary mountain. Finally I felt that I am ready. It was a special ascent for me. I did not just dream of Everest, I lived for it. And, on the 30th of May of 2005 I stood on its peak, for 45 minutes…

Do you ever experience fear?

I am not afraid of anything. The only thing that I am afraid of is a syringe. Even though I have received a lot of shots throughout my life, every single time it was a very unpleasant experience. Sometimes I have to administer the shot myself when necessary…

How do men and women differ in their skills and abilities to survive in the mountains?

Some women are far stronger than most men I have met in my life. It is about percentages, as well. If the team consists of fifty men and three women, it is hard to make an evaluation as to their strength and survival skills. If it is 50/ 50 – that is another story. Physically, men are stronger; morally, women are not stronger, but just as strong.

Mountaineering is quite an expensive type of a hobby. Is it worth the money you invest in it?

If you love it as much as I do, yes it is.

Have you ever had a near-death experience in the mountains?

On Everest I came face-to-face with death. I slipped into an ice crack twice. The snow opens and you fall in. I had to climb out. Luckily, I was tied to my crew by a rope. The second time the crack was narrow at first, but then it widened up, and I was very fortunate not to get injured. When one falls in, he has to scream out to his crew to let them know he fell, like shouting out "falling!" The faster they react, the better are his chances for survival. These are some essential rules of behavior in the mountains.

How does it work if one of the team members gets sick or injured? Is it the "all for one, one for all" principle here?

Of course. If that happens, it has to be determined if the person is able to go back alone; if not, somebody goes along. Whoever goes back with him has to give up his participation. This is the decision that a team makes beforehand – who goes back with whom. If it is more than one person that has to go back, the whole team returns as well. The greatest joy for the mountaineers is when all members of a team come back safely from an expedition. Once, a close friend of mine, Alexander Yakovenko, was climbing down from a mountain by a rope ladder. I waited for him, so we could continue the descent together. Time went by and there was no sign of him. I started worrying. The guys secured me while I looked down a steep cliff. I saw him hanging on a rope motionless. It was obvious that something had happened. It turned out, that the rope got tangled and blocked the oxygen hose. If we came to rescue two minutes later, we would have found him suffocated. Fortunately, that did not happen.

Is there a limit to the control of the team captain?

His word is law for the team. It has to be followed unconditionally, as the captain is chosen mostly according to his experience.

Well, you are all grown men; does it not hurt your pride just a bit to obey unconditionally?

People who get hurt by it do not go on such expeditions. There is no room for ego in the mountains. Mountains choose the right people. It is not we who make the choice, it is the mountains. We just do not take people who are anger-driven or mentally irritable.

Has it ever happened that you felt you couldn't go further?

I made it every single time. Maybe it is luck. I have to admit, though, that each time I was well prepared. Maybe it was just that.

How advanced are mountaineering expeditions in Armenia? Our nation is very sturdy, we would succeed in this sport, don't you think?

Unfortunately, there is not much financial opportunity for it there. When I came back from Ararat, I met a team of mountaineers that work in rescue missions. Their equipment was old, left over from the earthquake of 1988. The government does not support them much. It is very sad because this is a very masculine and interesting sport. It builds discipline; the younger generation would benefit a lot from it. As far as Armenians succeeding in this sport, it does not only take survival ability, it takes inner discipline and moral stamina. We have yet to grow in that sense - we pollute our country to such a degree!!! I love Armenia, but I cannot remain ignorant to what is going on.

You have placed the Armenian flag on the highest summits of all seven continents. What does the ritual consist of? Did you leave it there?

Oh no, it is my most precious possession! I place it, take a photo with it, and take it back with me for the next expedition. I want to give it as a gift to the History Museum of Armenia.

You have ascended Ararat Mountain. How did that feel? And did you encounter any difficulties in organizing this venture?

I have been denied a permission to climb Ararat for four years. Turks look at it their way – it is their territory. One of the major Russian mountaineers had helped me, and fortunately we managed to do it. A lot of Armenians have actually climbed Ararat, but it was me that they did not want to let in. I guess, they assumed that if I visit Ararat, the whole world will know about it. The press meticulously keeps track of my life…

Ararat is beyond sacred for me. I am talking about it now, and I feel like crying. For me it is the most beautiful mountain in the world. It is a feeling that can't be compared to anything. I can hardly explain it. I could feel that, of all other mountains, this one is "ours." I looked down from the top of Ararat and… I lost my breath from the feeling of love that came over me. I came down on my knees and prayed, I believe. When I came to my senses, one of my friends said: "It is too bad that it is cloudy – we will not be able to see Armenia". I said: "Everything I am looking at right now *is* Armenia. It is sad I cannot see Yerevan though!"

ON THE TOP OF ARARAT ONE OF MY FRIENDS SAID, "IT IS TOO BAD THAT IT IS CLOUDY - WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SEE ARMENIA." I SAID, "EVERYTHING I AM LOOKING AT RIGHT NOW *IS* ARMENIA. IT IS SAD I CANNOT SEE YEREVAN, THOUGH!"



Reaching a mountain peak – is it the very goal for you?

Yes and no. I think that mountaineering is not a sport but rather a lifestyle, a philosophy. And I do not know how one can live without a desire to "go even higher". This desire is stronger than anything else in this world. It is even stronger than death. In the mountains I have lost three of my friends. Most often this happens on the way back when one has little energy left. I used to think that after Everest and Ararat I can die without regret. Sometimes I think it is silly, sometimes – that it is worth it.

What is your motto - your principle of survival, so to speak?

One should never underestimate nature and its strength. And one has to be patient.

Do you regret sacrificing so much time and energy to mountaineering? If you become a father now, your children will be young and you're almost 50 now.

I do not regret anything. I have reached my goals. I always dreamed of climbing Everest and I did. It took me over 25 years, but I did it. If you set a goal for yourself, you cannot stop halfway, give up. Now my goal is my family.

Would you want your kids to pursue mountaineering?

No, I do not. But if they choose it I will not stop them. I will guide them. I want them to be into sports for the discipline of it. And I want them to have a connection with nature.

What are you planning now?

Greenland is the destination. It would be a 636 km ski trip… ■



ASCENTS

1. Everest (Chomolungma) – Asia, The Himalayas, Tibet (8,848 m, 29 028 ft)
2. Elbrus – Caucasus, Europe (5,642 m, 18 510 ft)
3. Aconcagua – Andes, South America, Argentina (6,962 m, 22 841 ft)
4. McKinley – North America, Alaska (6,194 m, 20 320 ft)
5. Kilimanjaro – Africa, Tanzania (5,895 m, 19 340 ft)
6. Vinson Massif – Antarctica, South Pole (4,897 m, 16,066 ft)
7. Kosciuszko – Kosciuszko National Park, Australia (2,228 m, 7,310 ft)
8. Carstensz Pyramid – Indonesia (Australian Continent) (4900 m)

DAVIS CUP, HERE I COME

text : Lianna Zakharian
photo : courtesy of United States Tennis Association (USTA)


USTA

Alexios Halebian, a thirteen-year old tennis player from Glendale's Central Park Tennis Academy is one of the three U.S. National Teen Tennis Team members to participate in Junior Davis Cup this year. His participation in Davis Cup is the result of series of impressive wins in international tennis tournaments for teenagers in France and England this Spring. In February, Alexios was one of the four players, along with Reo Asami, Robert Livi, and John Harrison Richmond, chosen by the United States Tennis Association (USTA) to travel to Europe to participate in two prestigious "14-and-under" tournaments.

He started the tournaments in Bolton, England, by beating the No.1-seeded player. After several consecutive wins Halebian managed to reach the third round only to be defeated by the winner of the competition, Evgeni Karlovsky from Russia.

A week later Alexios played through the qualifying at the prestigious Les Petits As Junior Championship in Tarbes, France all the way to the semifinals. Americans have won the boys' singles title at Les Petits As six times (second only to France with seven boys' titles), including Michael Chang (1986) and more recently Donald Young (2003) and Chase Buchanan (2005).

Kent Kinnear, the USTA National Coach for boys born in 1994, was very satisfied by Alexios's performance, "He competed very hard. He wasn't intimidated at all by the experience. I saw a lot of good, promising things for his future." Next, Alex Halebian flew to Canada with two U.S. teammates, Christian Harrison and Tyler Gardner, to participate at the 2008 North/Central America & Caribbean Regional Championships in Montreal. This international tournament is the main team tennis tournament, during which the National tennis teams of the region compete with each other. Alexios, who was the first to play in each team match, won in all four singles matches, adding to the overall team's score. It was a huge responsibility for Alex to play first, since it set the overall mood for the rest of the team. Alex brilliantly completed his task.

ALEXIOS PLAYED THE FIRST IN EACH TEAM MATCH AND WON IN ALL FOUR SINGLES MATCHES, ADDING TO THE U.S. TEAM'S SCORE.


USTA

Overall, the U.S. Junior Davis Cup and Junior Fed Cup (16-and-under) teams, as well as the boys' and girls' World Junior Tennis teams (14-and-under), went undefeated in this international tournament. The U.S. teams are now qualified to participate in the World Finals later this summer. It needs to be said that previously the U.S. Boys' World Junior Tennis team won the world championship in both 2002 and 2003.

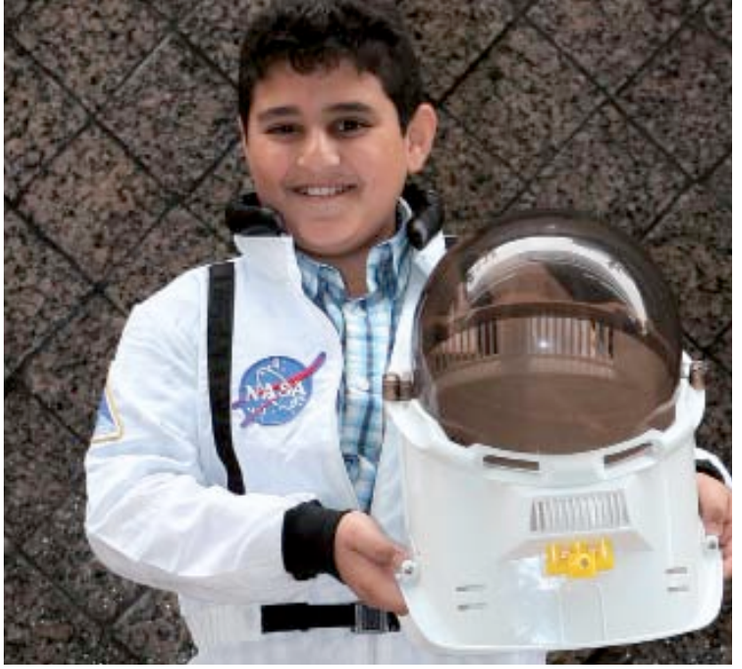
Patrick McEnroe has been named as the General Manager, USTA Elite Player Development, as part of a new strategic direction for the development of future American champions. He will begin his new full-time position as General Manager on May 12, and will report to Arlen Kantarian, CEO, Professional Tennis. McEnroe will oversee the USTA's National Coaches and coaching program, as well as the USTA Training Centers in Boca Raton, Florida, and Carson, California. "This is the beginning of a new strategic direction for the USTA as we create a unified effort to help keep America a dominant force in tennis for years to come," said Arlen Kantarian, CEO Pro Tennis, USTA. "Patrick McEnroe is one of the most respected and forward-thinking minds in tennis today, and has achieved success at every level of the sport. With Patrick at the helm, we look forward to building a broad coalition of support toward one common goal - create the next generation of American champions." Alexios will fly to Boca Raton, Florida, in July of 2008 to participate in the USTA training camp.

If for Kinnear this was a brief encounter with Alexios, for his coach, Gagik Rostomian of Glendale, Alexios's performance was a result of daily work from the time when his student was five years old. "Coach Gago inspires me in life; he teaches me not only tennis techniques, but also how to be a strong strategic player. He guides me by being a positive role model; teaches me manners, communication skills, and even simple things, like playing soccer, laughing at a good joke, and playing backgammon."

Alexios' recent success attracted large companies, such as Head and Adidas, who signed contracts with the promising teenager to endorse their new products. Halebian's plans for the immediate future include the participation in the World Junior Tennis Finals in August in Prostejov, Czech Republic. As for more distant future, he is clear about one thing – he hopes it will involve professional tennis.

DAVID GORE, SPACE TOURIST

text : Lianna Zakharian
photo : Lika Brutyan



"When Noah landed on Mount Ararat the first thing he saw there was...the Armenians... scuba diving," is the opener for the act of an eleven-year-old stand-up comedian, David Gore (Gor Mkrtchian). The brave boy blinks and smiles, standing under the blinding stage lights in front of a large room full of laughing adults and waiting for the laughter to subside. It's eleven o'clock at night, and he would rather be in his bed, getting a good night's sleep before school the next day. But it's his job to be an actor, and he does it with seriousness of a true professional. He has worked hard for this moment and this opportunity.

David has spent his life so far getting ready to be noticed. He takes his school work seriously; he is a straight "A" student in the Gifted and Talented Program at his middle school. He tirelessly practices his sometimes dull piano lessons, has taken acting classes, and has even sacrificed the simple opportunities to spend time with his friends at play. He's sat through numerous casting sessions, stood in long lines, where hundreds of children just like him longed for their chance to get noticed.

One time, he went to a casting for the movie "Click" with Adam Sandler. Everything went well, he was almost sure that he would be chosen for the role, but his father, who always accompanies him to castings was not satisfied. His father is a strict man who knows what's best for Gore. "It's not that easy," he always says, "we should try harder." And Gore tries, he works on his comedy act in the evenings. It seems funny at home, but before his turn on the stage of the comedy club, he always gets stage fright. This is one thing he will never get used to, he tells me.

ARMENIANS ARE A VERY OLD NATION. WHEN COLUMBUS ARRIVED TO AMERICA, THEY ALREADY LIVED IN GLENDALE

"We Armenians are a very old nation. When Columbus arrived to America, Armenians already lived in Glendale."

"We Armenians..." he starts each subsequent joke, and by the third or fourth one-liner the audience begins laughing before the punchline ...as if it's funny just to be an Armenian. David likes to spend his off nights with his grandfather, playing chess. His grandfather patiently teaches him chess combinations, and David, who learns very quickly, pretends that he doesn't understand - he knows that his grandfather takes pleasure in teaching.

"We Armenians... are a very religious nation," he starts his next joke with the uneven accent of an old Armenian grandma speaking English. Audiences love when he does folksy accents, and David can imitate Italian, Irish, or any other accent. David prefers telling this sort of jokes, because it's not just them laughing at us, but more of we all are laughing together, he confesses.

Eventually, there was the day of the life-changing audition for an animated film *Fly Me to the Moon*. It was at this audition that he landed his first lead part. The film has been created entirely in a digital 3-D format produced by the company nWave, which specializes in large screen productions for the IMAX theatres. He is the voice behind a teenage fly, Scooter, who happens to land on the moon with two of his fly friends trapped in the space helmet of the Apollo 11 astronaut Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin. I asked David how he got chosen for the part. I anticipated a proud boasting about his artistic talents, but David modestly answered that he didn't think he would get the role. "Why not?" I asked him. "...Because I couldn't pronounce the word metabolism...I said 'meatballism' instead, they all laughed, and that's how I've got the role." Saying this he remains absolutely serious, "Just like all the great comedians in real life," it occurs to me.

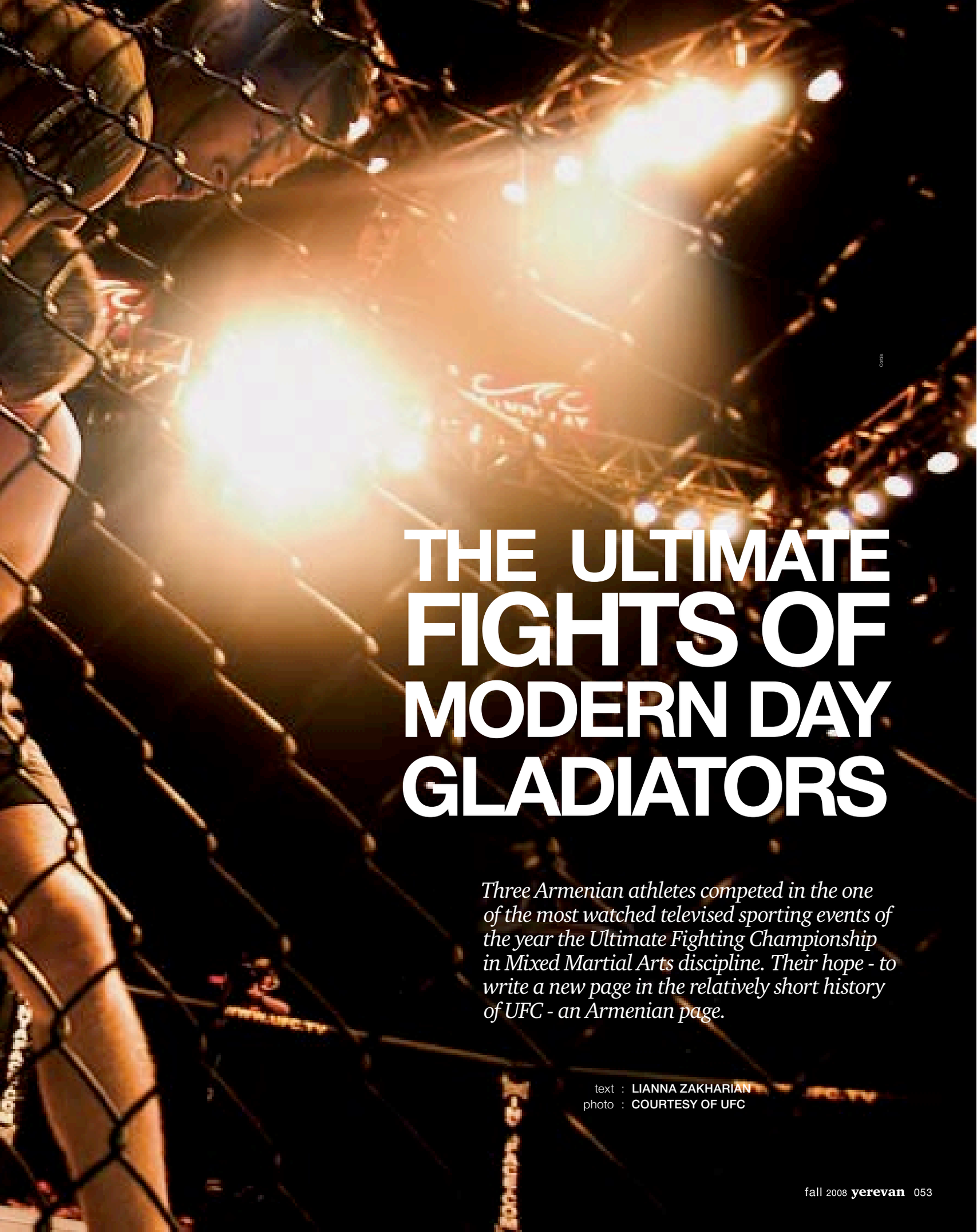
David's film partners are the star host of "Mornings with Regis and Kelly", Kelly Ripa, her 9-year old son, Michael, Jack Nicholson's daughter Lorraine, and Buzz Aldrin himself.

Fly Me to the Moon will be released in theaters in August, and David will become a star, I am sure. In the meantime, David's resume becomes more impressive with his guest appearances in TV talk shows, roles in independent movies, and stand-up shows in big clubs.

"There are so many Armenians all around the world... It's very easy to recognize Armenians, just by their last names. They all end with –ian. For example, Asian, Caucasian, Canadian, Hawaian..." the list goes on and on, until the audience joins the word game trying to find more *-ian* words. In the end, David just stands there, smiling shyly, like he doesn't understand why everyone is laughing. Nevertheless, he just delivered the central idea of his comedy act: that we all, regardless of nationality, have more similarities than differences, and the most unifying trait of human beings is the ability to laugh at a good joke. ■







THE ULTIMATE FIGHTS OF MODERN DAY GLADIATORS

Three Armenian athletes competed in the one of the most watched televised sporting events of the year the Ultimate Fighting Championship in Mixed Martial Arts discipline. Their hope - to write a new page in the relatively short history of UFC - an Armenian page.

text : **LIANNA ZAKHARIAN**
photo : **COURTESY OF UFC**

When our editor-in-chief gave me my next assignment– to cover the UFC "Fight Night" with the three Armenian fighters, I panicked for a moment. What do I, a woman and mother of two sons, have to do with a sport known for its ferocity and aggression? "A job is a job," I told myself and turned on the TV. It was the evening of Wednesday, April 2, the Ultimate Fighting Championship's "Fight Night" event televised on the Spike channel. I had never watched this kind of sporting event before, so I called my son for some insights. "Hi, what are you doing?" I asked him. "Sorry, mom," he answered hastily, "I am watching TV. Can I call you back later?"

"Are you watching Spike's "Fight Night", by any chance?"

I could feel that he was shocked by my telepathic abilities, as there was a long silence on the other end of the phone, "How do you know?!... Oh boy, if YOU are watching it then I guess everyone is…"

And indeed, as I did a little research, I found out that UFC events are currently among the most watched sporting events in the U.S. Their popularity has surpassed soccer, and has the highest ratings on pay-per-view channels. The April 2 event in Broomsfield, Colorado was sold out, as was Glendale's "Anoush" Restaurant, which organized a special viewing party with a 72-inch TV screen and all-you-can-eat buffet. It was not too surprising given that three Armenian athletes: Karo Parisian, his cousin Manny Gamburyan, and their friend Roman Mitichyan were going to show their fighting skills and athletic spirit during this competition.

It was the first time in the history of UFC that three Armenians fought on the same night. "We have to come back victorious," said Mitichyan in an interview prior to the fight, "I love Karo and Manny, we train together, and we're getting ready. Karo is gonna beat Thiago (Alves), Manny is gonna beat his guy (Jeff Cox), and I have to finish George. That's the plan." As simple as it sounded, the fighters' paths to that particular night were long and bumpy.

"Once Senator McCain labeled the UFC events a 'human cockfighting' Now the sport is so popular than even 6-years old children take mixed martial arts (MMA) classes," said a Forbes magazine article entitled, "The Ultimate Cash Machine."

None of them started their sporting careers with an intent to participate in the Ultimate Fighting Championships, because it was not a single discipline, but a mixed martial arts competition featuring professional fighters from judo, sambo, jiu-jitsu, karate, boxing, kickboxing, wrestling, and other martial arts disciplines. To be an "Ultimate Fighter" one has to be among the best-trained athletes in the world - many of them are former world or Olympic champions. All three of the Armenian fighters had Judo and Sambo training in addition to elements from the Hayastan Grappling System developed by Gokor Chivichyan, a former Soviet champion, and the martial arts legend Gene LeBell. They all train hard – six or more hours a day. The fighters have well-planned routines alternating boxing, weight lifting, and grappling. Their years of training, competition, and The Ultimate Fighter reality TV series participation led to the fights in the UFC's 'Octagon'.

"Do you know the rate of fatalities for the UFC? It seems that the judges stop when they are about to kill each other," I asked my son. He sounded like an expert, "Mom, over the past eight years there was one athlete who died during this event, and I guess, he had a previous heart condition, or something… In comparison with American football, it's nothing."

The UFC Octagon is a unique fighting arena, so named because of its octagonal shape. Fighter safety is the main concern of the UFC organization. For an outsider with no sense of the world of mixed martial arts, the fight might seem to have few, if any, rules. However, the establishment of strict rules made televised fights and their growing popularity possible. These rules include: the presence of officials, judges, weight divisions, rounds, time limits, mandatory drug testing, no head butting or kicking, no knees to the head to downed opponents and other stringent guidelines. The UFC, since the implementation of standardized rules and governance, has become a billion-dollar industry, with a growing audience across the globe.

I asked young men around Glendale about our UFC gladiators. Everyone had detailed information about the three athletes. It seemed that Glendale's entire male population was on a first name basis with the fighters. It turned out that the majority had simply followed the televised reality show.

Karo Parisian, "The Heat" is often compared to an Armenian version



of the character from a movie *The Bronx Tale*. He considers himself an offspring of an aggressive, macho society. Born in Armenia, he grew up in California, where his family of six lived in a one-bedroom apartment. His father was the driving force behind his athletic career. He told me, "My father would wake me up in the morning and we would go running up the hills." Karo began training in Judo with his cousin at the age of nine. He continued, "I was very versatile, and during the junior competitions I competed not in one, but in three weight categories." He was noticed and mentored by Gene LeBell, a former American Judo Champion and legendary martial arts instructor. "I was 14 and they took me to Mexico to fight. I took on the top guy in Mexico, he was 23 and his record was 10-0. We went five rounds, and everyone saw I was a tough kid." Since then Parisian grew into an athlete with Olympic dreams. He has seven Junior National belts in 81 kg category, and competed in Olympic Judo trials for the 2004 games in Athens. He was twice the winner of the Junior US Open, the Champion of Youth Pan-American Games, ten times he won the California State Championship, and the Canadian Open Championship in judo. His popularity skyrocketed after his win over Dave Strasser at UFC 44. I asked him what was so special about that fight. "I think everyone noticed that I am very prepared technically. In judo you can grab the opponent by his kimono, which is impossible in the MMA, since we don't wear anything on the top. I managed to pull him down on the mat, and there I could take over by using my grappling techniques. Overall, technically I feel that I am superior to most of the UFC fighters. For a long time that gave me an advantage, but now I have to train seriously again every single day. I know what I lack, so I hired a boxing trainer. I also have to be prepared psychologically, I mean I have to want to win." Over the course of his career Parisian has faced all the major welterweights in the World including Serra (who he defeated at UFC 53 in 2005), Georges St-Pierre, Diego Sanchez, and Drew Fickett. His unparallelled judo techniques attracted many followers and fans. A major publishing company will soon release his book *Karo Parisian: Judo in Mixed Martial Arts*. He plans to open nationwide training facilities to help the next generation of the MMA athletes.

Participation in the Ultimate Fighting Championship allows him to pay back his family with the devotion of a loving son, "And at the moment, I



TO BE AN "ULTIMATE FIGHTER" ONE HAS TO BE AMONG THE BEST-TRAINED ATHLETES IN THE WORLD. THEY COME WITH A BACKGROUND IN ALL MARTIAL ARTS DISCIPLINES - KARATE, SAMBO, JUDO, BOXING...



take care of my whole family – my mom, my dad, my sister, and my grandma…It's my duty – my parents took care of me until this age, and now I've been taking care of them the last three years of my success in the UFC." His biggest dream remains unaccomplished, "I want to take the world championship belt one day, I want to keep it a couple of times. I don't know how to give up on that – either I'm stupid or I have a big heart."

"Yeah, I know Roman," my husband told me, "he used to work in the car-wash down the street. They are not like all the other professional athletes, they also have to work to support their families, you know. That's tough…"

I met Roman at the Glendale Fighter's Club. The slim, good-looking athlete had been working out since the early morning.

The greatest popularity came to Roman Mitichyan, "The Emperor", with his participation in the Ultimate Fighter series on Spike TV. Sixteen men were locked in a house where they ate, talked, and fought each other. Roman was one of the fighters in the house until the first episode of season six when he was told that he couldn't fight due to a broken elbow. The tirade that followed turned him into a star. "I didn't know I could be a comedian… but they're taping and they take all the pieces, put them together, and … we've got a comedian on the show," he laughed later. The native of Vanadzor was very disappointed by the doctor's





ALL THREE ATHLETES WERE MEMBERS OF THE HAYASTAN TEAM, AND RECEIVED TRAINING FROM GOKOR CHIVICHYAN, A CELEBRATED CHAMPION WHO HAS DEVELOPED HIS OWN HAYASTAN GRAPPLING SYSTEM.

decision, "I've been doing martial arts for over 20 years, and I've had injuries…back then we didn't have any doctors that had the power to say we couldn't fight. I had a broken rib a long time ago and I continued and beat the guy anyway. Now, it was just a stupid elbow and he is telling me not to fight. If they let me fight, I would still fight with one hand. That's why I got chosen from thousands of people, and it was a big opportunity and I couldn't let it get away." That kind of determination reversed the UFC President Dana White's decision, who gave Roman a chance to fight again. His next fight was against Dorian Price on the December 8th "Fight Night" of the UFC finale at Playboy's Palms Casino in Las Vegas. Roman won in an unprecedented 23 seconds, a record time. That fight went down in UFC's record book of the Top 15 fastest finishes. He was really calm during that important fight, "I think that comes from my background of training sambo and judo." He fought in the World Sambo Championships (3rd place in 2002), and is the 2006 U.S. National Judo Champion. In 2007 he won the UFC Welterweight Bout.

Apart from his sporting career Roman has another creative occupation. He is an actor and stuntman. In the past seven years he has worked in films Felon, The Suitcase, The Kingdom, and in television, such as Showtime series Dexter, Fox Television's 24, The Shield, Numbers (CBS), Threat Matrix, and had lead role in Masada (Greystone).

I did not want to finish our interview on a sad note and talk about the April 2 fight in Colorado. Roman himself turned the conversation to it. Obviously, he wanted to explain, "It wasn't a good experience at all. The high elevation…Although we practiced in Big Bear for a while, I wasn't prepared for it. Even the most physically conditioned fighters needed oxygen tanks after the fight. I got tired too quickly and lost. For me it was a lesson to learn. But I will fight again." His boxing partner and his fitness trainer standing next to him affirmatively nodded.

"Even the UCLA girls know about the UFC. You can hear them talking about Manny, as if they know him," with a hint of envy shared my friend's son, a USC student.

The lightweight Manvel Gamburyan, "The Anvil", was the fighter who was able to make it all the way to the finals on the same Ultimate Fighter reality show. After his loss to Nate Diaz as a result of his shoulder trauma, the Ultimate Fighter 5 came back in December 29th by popular demand, and beat Nate Mohr. That fight turned him into an overnight star. Fans recognized him on the street and asked for his autograph. In spite of all the fame, he was happy to get out of the reality show house. The outgoing Armenian hated to be locked in without his family and friends, "I didn't want to lose to anyone, but at the same time I wanted to go home," he said later. A lightweight, standing 5'5" and 155 lbs, reporters call him the "Armenian tank in a nutshell." He told me, "My heart beats everybody. That's the bottom line. Every time I fight, it's going to be a show."



The final count of the April 2nd UFC Fight Night - Karo Parisian "The Heat" lost to Brasilian Thiago Alves by a technical knock out, Roman Nitichyan lost to George Sotiropoulos by a technical knockout in the second round, and Manny Gamburian won his fight in the first round by submission over Jeff Cox. The final chapter in the story of these brave fighters has yet to be written, and the hopes of the Armenian fighters may still be accomplished, considering their utmost determination and the continuing support of the Armenian communities. ■



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The Third Rachmaninoff International Piano Competition & Festival

A triennial international piano competition and festival presented under the auspices of the Cities of Los Angeles and Moscow, Russia, is dedicated to the musical icon – Sergei Rachmaninoff – who was born and raised in Russia, relocated to the United States and died in Beverly Hills, California. The event features an illustrious group of international judges with legendary American pianist Earl Wild as Jury Chairman and twenty four competitors from across the globe. The final round and the Awards Ceremony will take place in Walt Disney Concert Hall and will feature the Moscow Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra. «This event is unique for Los Angeles, because other than the Van Cliburn competition in Fort Worth, Texas, no other large city in the US has such an international competition,» said Armen Ter-Tatevosian, the impresario of the event.

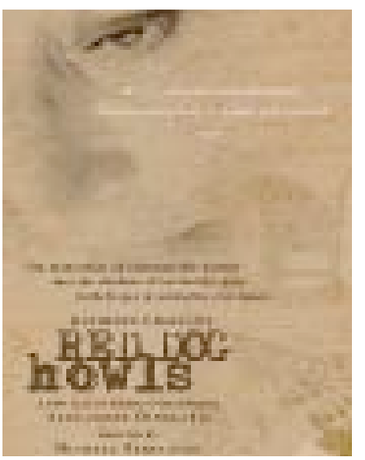


Sylvie Vartan's New Release

French singer Sylvie Vartan performed in Tokyo for the first time in three years showcasing songs from her new album "Nouvelle Vague". The concert was held at the Orchard Hall in Tokyo's Shibuya-ku and was part of her "Nouvelle Vague Tour 2008," which earlier was presented at the Palais des Congres in Paris. After making her musical debut in 1961, Vartan played a major role in spreading French pop music around the world. In the latest album, Vartan covers in French hit songs from the 1960s and '70s, including "Blowin' in the Wind" by Bob Dylan and "Drive My Car" by the Beatles. "I wanted to recreate the atmosphere of the era when music was cheery – the kind of music that makes you smile and brings back good memories," shared Sylvie Vartan in regard to her new album.

RED DOG HOWLS

The World Premiere of Alexander Dinelaris' new play *Red Dog Howls* is performed at the El Portal Theatre in Los Angeles. Set in present day New York, the play deals with the terrible legacy of the Armenian Genocide. It tells the story of Michael Kiriakos, a young man who is forced to confront his family's most terrible secrets, in order for him to move forward with his own life. Kathleen Chalfant, one of the theatre's most celebrated, Tony-nominated actresses will star along Matthew Rauch, who plays the role of Michael. Red Dog Howls is directed by Michael Peretzian, who previously won the Los Angeles Critics' Award for Best Director for the production of Hugh Leonard's *A Life*.

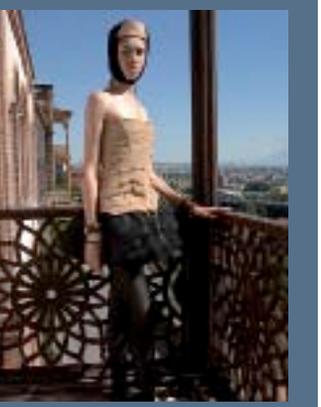


International Festival of hot air balloons "A Colorful Sky over Yerevan, 2008" took place in Yerevan for the first time. The conquerors of Yerevan's skies opened the summer aeronautics season in the territories of the Eastern European countries and former USSR.



Preparations for the participation in the World Exposition EXPO 2010 in Shanghai, China with the motto "Best City – Best Life" started in Armenia.

A Stem-Cell Harvesting Research Center will be opened in Yerevan with the funds raised during the charitable telethon "Be an Angel, Save Lives."



Armenian fashion designer Rima Kazumian, an honors graduate of the Milan-based Istituto Marangoni, became the Assistant to the Chief Designer of Emporio Armani. The team has already begun work on the Autumn 2009-Winter 2010 men's collection.

Predictions of independent experts on the main macro economic indicators of Armenia are posted on the website of the Economic Forecasting Platform - a new project of the Central Bank of Armenia.

USC Salutes the Armenian Community

University of Southern California celebrated the Third Anniversary of the Institute of the Armenian Studies by saluting the achievements of California's Armenian community over the last half-century. Among the distinguished individuals who were honored at the Gala Banquet were actor Mike Connor, Governor George Deukmejian, former Asst. Defense Secretary Paul Ignatius, coach Jerry Tarkanian, and business leader Ronald Tutor. The achievements of Californian Armenians were depicted in a special documentary based on the newly digitized archives of the *California Courier*, America's oldest independent English-language Armenian weekly. The Gala banquet concluded with a tribute to The Lincy Foundation for his generous philanthropy in Armenia and the Diaspora, and acknowledgement of the founders of The California Courier on its 50th anniversary.

Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates, Prince of Sharjah, Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi donated $1.7 million for the restoration and renovation of the Armenian monastery complex of the 9th century – the Haghartsin Monastery.

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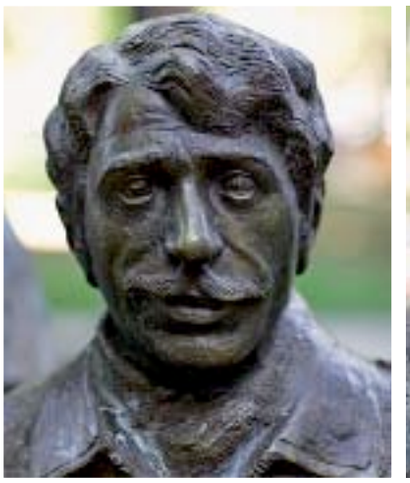
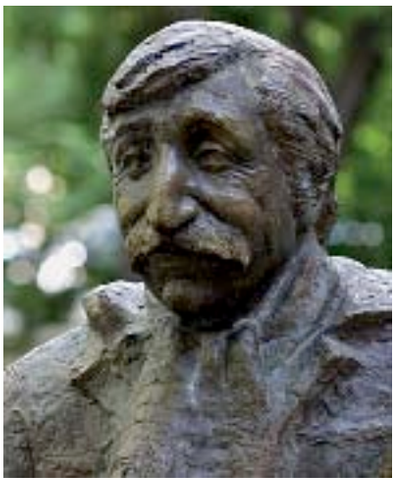
MEN

"Men," a sculpture by David Minasian has found its home in a park behind a famous caf "Koziryok," a popular spot for local Yerevan residents. Here, right across the street, lived an unfulfilled love of Aram, one of the main character in Edmond Keosayan's film "Men". The sculpture shows bronze figures of Vazgen (Azat Sherents), Sako (Armen Ayvazyan), Aram (Avetik Gevorkyan), and Suren (Mger (Frunze) Mkrtchyan) froze in a monument to reproduce the last scene in a beloved film.

photo : **ARMEN POGHOSYAN**










Woman of the Year

Alice Petrossian - mother, grandmother, wife, educator, community activist, philanthropist, Assistant Superintendent. The list of her accomplishments and accolades could easily go on for pages. It might be easier to simply agree with the California State Legislature and call her, "Woman of the Year".

interview by : GAYANE HAROUTYUNYAN
photos : FROM ARCHIVES OF ALICE PETROSSIAN

I anticipated a mess when I came in, the signs of the stressful, chaotic life of someone whose resume resembles a business school course catalogue, of someone for whom the word *workaholic* seems to have been created. Instead, I saw nothing but harmony and tranquility. The beautiful, delicate orchids positioned on the round table in a stylish and well–lit office were real, as was everything else, including the tears she shared that so moved me when she started talking about her "kids". The main question soon emerged - not simply what Alice Petrossian does but how she does it? It is hard to single out the role that best describes her – strong educator, career woman, or resolute humanitarian. A charismatic woman, a dedicated wife and parent - she is all these things in equal measure.

Alice Petrossian is the Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services for the Glendale Unified School District. A 30-year journey with the school district has, she says, been a privilege; I am sure her employers feel the same way. The Armenian Educational Foundation (involved with scholarships and school renovation projects), The Armenian Relief Society, The Character and Ethics Project (sponsored by The Glendale Chamber of Commerce), The Glendale Community Foundation, The ACSA (Association of California School Administrators), the "No Child Left Behind" Task Force, are just a few of the vast number of educational and humanitarian organizations that Alice has worked with in her vibrant career. Alice Petrossian devoted enormous amounts of time and effort to working with troubled, underachieving and minority youth in her early years as a high school teacher; and has continued to work on their behalf to resolve corresponding issues at district and regional levels in this latest phase of her career.

Mrs. Petrossian has traveled to Armenia annually for the last eight years with the intention of improving the facilities in Armenian schools, which have long needed revitalization. Back in the US, she dedicates every spare minute and financial resource to shipping school supplies to our Motherland. Even thousands of miles away, she never truly leaves Armenia for it is always in her heart. As the former Director of Special Projects and Intercultural Education for the Glendale Unified School District, Mrs. Petrossian is especially sympathetic toward immigrant students. She herself is an immigrant who came to the United States from Iran at the age of nine, only to find that her exposure to those less fortunate, as it seemed to a sensitive child, had uncovered her capacity for genuine compassion and humility. Her benevolent spirit is indeed transparent…she is a passionate and straightforward conversationalist and public speaker, who inspires and instills intellectual and moral substance with a motherly smile.

What makes an ultimate educator?

The most crucial? You have to love children. It has to be about your client - a child, it cannot be about you. There has to be enormous dedication. You also have to be bright, knowledgeable and educated. You have to be selfless. For me it has always been a cause, every child succeeding, reaching their academic goal.

Why underachieving, troubled children? Is there a story behind it?

There is. I was an immigrant child in America. When we arrived we were very poor. I only spoke Farsi and Armenian. We ended up in the middle of an African-American community and I was the only white child in my school. I then thought that all Americans must be black. I understood pain of being different, poor, or handicapped. I learned the hard way that a caring teacher makes a difference. I had a teacher that became my mentor and did everything she could for me.

You speak Armenian fluently and your Farsi is limited. Can you tell me about how you see your cultural identity now, is it purely Armenian?

We spoke Farsi when we first arrived. Now we only do when we have a Farsi-speaking guest. As a child I spoke fluent Farsi, I let it go. My grandmother (a Russian-speaker by the way) told me that I needed to learn all these languages and stick with them. I (as a ten-year old child) told her that I would only learn one. Of course it had to be Armenian. My native language is technically English, everything else was either forcefully maintained or maintained out of love.

My cultural identity is very mixed. My husband and I are both from Iran. His grandfather is from Gyumri, part of his family is from Van. My father's side is purely "Vanetsi" and my mother's purely Russian Armenian. Overall, ours is a multi-cultural family in a multi-cultural nation.

So you were raised with an Armenian spirit?

The spirit was deeper than you can imagine. Living in this country for 50 years while being one of the first families in this community and never losing that love and the language… I did not even understand what that was about when I was a child. As I grew up I realized that the preservation of the language and culture was crucial. Then it became almost a cause for me. That is why my children had to learn the language



WE LIVED IN THE MIDDLE OF AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND I WAS THE ONLY WHITE CHILD IN MY SCHOOL. I THOUGHT THAT ALL AMERICANS MUST BE BLACK.



RECOGNITION AND AWARDS:

2008 - Legislature Woman of the Year
2008 - Woman in Education Award – Armenian Chamber of Commerce
2005 - Association of California School Administrator (ACSA) Ferd. Kiesel – Most Outstanding Administrator Award
2002 - Armenian National Committee Community Service Award
2001 - USC R.O.S.E. Award (Recognition of Outstanding Service/Support for Education)
1997 - Professional of the Year, Armenian Professional Society
1996 - Woman of the Year Award, California State Legislature
1995 - Distinguished Educator Award, California State University, Los Angeles School of Education
1990 - Outstanding Service in the Field of Human Relations, John Anson Ford Award

MY CULTURAL IDENTITY IS MIXED. MY HUSBAND AND I ARE BOTH FROM IRAN, BUT OVERALL OURS IS A MULTI-CULTURAL FAMILY IN A MULTICULTURAL NATION.

and their kids as well. I am a strong American but my love is still Armenia.

You communicate a lot with the youth. Obviously, we have areas to improve. Do we have something to embrace?

Well, about 20% of our students are high-achieving. They are absolute models. My concern is that the majority of them are women. I would like to see more of our men succeed. We have a specific strata in both Armenia and the United States. I get to work with high-achieving students and give out scholarships in Yerevan on behalf of Armenian Educational Foundation, but there is a group that is not interested in education. I think that group has not been motivated properly.

You seem to recognize our nation for what it is and what it is not, yet you are deeply in love with it...

I guess for me it is a sacred nation. So much we have suffered and so much has been tried on us. But we have succeeded, we are here. We have shown the world what a small nation can do. We have many young professionals volunteer – doctors, lawyers, helping immigrant children who have problems. How can you not love these people?

What do you think the "national pride" phenomenon of Armenians has to do with?

I think it comes to us with our mother's milk. It is genetic. When my mother sang to me when I was born, we were in Iran, though her songs were in Armenian. I heard Armenian language when I went to church. I never stop dreaming of buying a house in Armenia.

Can you tell me about yourself as a mother?

I wish you could ask my boys about that. I probably have done more for others than for my own children. But they always told me that the quality of time I spent with them is more important than quantity. At least three weeks a year we travel - be it Armenia, be it other countries. And I am married to an Armenian who happens to be an exception to any other. There is so much love and respect in our relationship. I think no woman can do what I do without the support of her family and I have been blessed with that. In Armenian families you can talk and share. I am also very religious and I do not go to bed without prayer.

Do you think that people are measured by the work they do in their lifetime?

Well, you have to leave a legacy. If you leave a beautiful house with marble as your legacy you will soon be forgotten. In my family, if we have extra money we use it to remodel schools in Armenia. Helping start ORRAN is one of my legacies.

Armenians who come from different backgrounds seem to emphasize their differences instead of their similarities. What do you think can unite us as a nation?

You would think that the genocide would do that. The key to me is for us to look at our roots. If we all look at our roots we are going to find we are the same. I strongly believe that the next generation to grow up in America will not look at that. When we just came here there were only 50 of us and we all loved each other.

What is your greatest accomplishment?

My children are my greatest accomplishment. That would be the legacy I leave. Besides, they get to continue in my causes and they already are doing that. My whole family is involved in humanitarian activities.

What is the motto, a wisdom that you live by?

I live by "do not do things right but do the right things". One can rob a bank perfectly, but is it the right thing to do? I also like this one – "the power is not finite, power is infinite, the more of it you give away, the more of it you have." Love for me is being good to someone else.

If you had an opportunity to address our nation, what would you say to them?

Something Winston Churchill said – "never give up". We cannot give up. We have a small piece of land that many generations fought to keep. We were once a great power in our history. Do not let the corruption, the evil let down your spirit. Just know that good will prevail and our nation will stand strong again. Also another piece of advice - whatever we do we must do through peaceful means. We can make a difference, every one of us. And our only hope is educating our young, we need to do it right. ■

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ARMENIAN TIME

Contrary to a widely held view, wristwatches are a relatively recent phenomenon. The first wristwatch appeared in Switzerland only 200 years ago. Today, Switzerland is the world leader in this industry. It might make one happy to learn, however, that recently Armenia has gained a small foothold in the world market for wristwatches.

text : **ANI ABRAMYAN**
photo : **SUREN MANVELYAN**



In 1810, Abraham-Louis Breguet produced the very first ticking wristwatch, ordered by Napoleon's sister, the Queen of Naples. Here is the description of the item that has come down to us: of "elongated shape, with a free arrow motion, thermometer, silver dial face and with Arabic numerals." The watch band was plated with gold strings and human hair.

Today, the wristwatches made from a simple instrument measuring "fast-moving" time have long had symbolic overtones. That is to say, the wristwatch serves as an essential accessory that identifies one's social status and level of material well-being. Wristwatches will never go out of fashion and are available in a wide array of styles. Anyone can find a watch that corresponds to his/her distinctive lifestyle, as well as having a choice of manufacturer country – whether Switzerland, Japan, or France… Furthermore, one now has the opportunity to purchase Armenian wristwatches of AWI brand in stores worldwide. The Armenian Watch Incorporation (AWI) was founded about 6 years ago by a New Yorker of Armenian descent, Hratch Kaprielian; his motive was not only desire for profit, but to assist the Armenian economy. After all, wristwatches help define the country that produces them. Utilizing Swiss watch assembly technologies, the cutting edge precision mechanisms of Citizen, the Japanese firm and native Armenian craftsmanship, AWI's production of men's, women's and children's watches began on July 17th, 2001.



At AWI, only women participate in the assembly process; they learn the required skills from a highly qualified specialist invited from Switzerland. AWI's designs can best be described as a blend of classic and contemporary styles. The company offers conservative men's watches, Working SCA4.1. 002, as well as glamorous watches for women, Voguish SC40.I-0. There is also something available for fervent patriots – they can purchase watches bearing the national emblem or flag on the dial face; in buying this watch, one helps support Armenia, not only its economy, but its prestige. For the most part, however, models are developed according to their popularity in other countries. It appears that the preferences of Armenian and Russian buyers coincide – they favor classical models with leather straps. Eastern consumers on the other hand favor the shiny metal watches incrusted with precious stones, while Europeans and Americans are fond of practical and somewhat avant-garde models.

Interestingly, in Armenia men make up most of AWI's customer base; In Europe, it is mostly females. Private distributors handle AWI sales in foreign countries, as it has proven easier than dealing with official entities and private stores. Even though AWI wristwatches are intended for middle-class consumers, the company tries to achieve maximum quality and attractive design. And now, tourists have something to bring home other than Armenian cognac, ashtrays and jewelry boxes with an ethnic motif - our very own AWI wristwatch. Besides, everyone knows that the wristwatch is a classic gift. If they are wisely picked, it will serve its owner for years to come - and this means, of course, that the memory of the gift giver will remain strong for a comparable period. ■







WHAT DO YOU WEAR?

Silvio Berlusconi — Vacheron Constantin,
Vladimir Putin —
Patek Philippe Perpetual Calendar,
Robert Kocharyan — Bernard Richards,
George W. Bush — Timex Indigo,
Mikhail Gorbachev — Omega Constellation,
Anna Kournikova — Omega Quadra,
Arnold Schwarzenegger — Audemars Piguet,
Brad Pitt — Tag Heuer Grand Carrera Calibre RS,
Roman Abramovich — Rolex Daytona,
Clint Eastwood — Hampton Classic XL.







THE SUNNY CREATIONS
SERPUI MARIE

In her quest to conquer San Paolo, Serpui Marie's intention was to dedicate her life to natural sciences. But when she arrived in the fashion capital of South America, she chose the profession of a fashion designer. Soon handbags with the label "Serpui Marie" were sold in Europe, Japan, and the USA.



Interview : **STEPAN KAZARIAN**
Photography : **ANTONIO RODRIGUEZ**
Stylist : **GUEGELLA BACARI**
Assistant photographer : **GABRIEL ALFONCO**
Model : **KARINA PAGANINI (MEGA)**
Hair and makeup : **ANDREA BRAGA**
Design : **FERNANDA DO VAL**
Sponsors : **ABEST (ASSOCIATION OF BRAZILIAN DESIGNERS), APEX, MINISTRY OF TOURISM OF BRAZIL**



You became a successful designer and businesswoman, although you weren't preparing yourself for either one of these careers. How did your project begin?

I studied Chemistry at the University of San Paolo, and took on design seriously only in my last years of university studies. When I realized that it wasn't just a whim, but my calling, I quit the university. My brother and I started our company and developed a product line of women's shoes and handbags. My brother took on the administrative responsibilities, and I, the design, production, sales and export. Of course, it is very difficult to combine all these various responsibilities; in fact, one cannot avoid problems in the beginning of any venture. Because I was very inexperienced my close relatives were pessimistic toward the choice I made. They thought that I should have not quit my university studies.

How independent is contemporary Brazilian fashion? Isn't it dominated by the European fashion trends?

The local tendencies have very little in common with global, or even with South American fashion trends. One has to take into account the Brazilian mentality and to remember that people here are optimistic and buoyant. In spite of all the hardships, they prefer "sunny" things – bright, and not necessarily practical. That's why our production primarily targets the Brazilian consumers. Even though we sell our products in the USA, Japan, and Europe, Brazil remains our primary market. We certainly are seeking ways to expand our geography of export, but I don't intend to open brand boutiques at this point. My avocation is designing,









There are quite a few Armenians in the fashion industry, particularly in the area of fashion design. In fact, many of them reside in San Paolo, since this city is definitely the fashion capital of Brazil.



not marketing. I don't want to have a huge network of stores and to be constantly preoccupied by the problem of how to make our products more appealing to the customers so that the sale profits would exceed the store rental expenses. It's enough for me that our production is sold by many department stores and fashion boutiques around the world.

What are the perspectives of your business development?

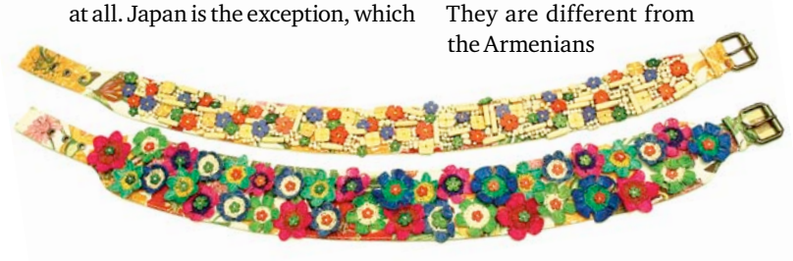
My responsibilities include finding new opportunities for business development. With that exact intention I visited Moscow two years ago as a member of a Brazilian government group. I was trying to weigh the perceptions of my products in the Russian market. I discovered that the Russians are not so different from the Americans, French, or even Brazilians. They, too, like to wear bright, quality things that can distinguish them from a crowd. And yet, I don't have any plans to open a store in Russia. I don't want to open stores anywhere at all. Japan is the exception, which only confirms the rule. My products are very successful, but I want to remain a designer.

The whole world knows the Argentine tennis player David Nalbandian. Is there an Armenian who would equally brilliantly represent Brazil?

Brazil does not have Armenians who are well known beyond its borders, however there are many doctors of Sciences, and professors of Armenian descent. There are quite a few Armenians in the fashion industry as well, particularly in the area of fashion design. In fact, many of them reside in San Paolo, since this city is definitely the fashion capital of Brazil. The most famous representative of the local Armenian community is the actress Araci Balabanian. She has worked in dozens of films and on television, and her name is familiar to all Brazilians without exception.

Is there a distinctive trait between Brazilian, North American, and European Armenians?

They are different from the Armenians



STEPHEN WEBSTER



















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My ancestors lived in what is now Turkey, and my grandfather moved to Brazil at the beginning of 20th century. He was a real adventurer; he arrived in Brazil fully confident that he could make a fortune here.



from Argentina or Uruguay, as much as they are different from, let's say, French Armenians. The main distinction is in mentality. Just like all Brazilians, they have a fairly easy-going attitude towards life - they literally emanate optimism. But I have to confess that I do not maintain close relationships with the Armenian community of San Paolo; I just know that it includes several thousand people.

It seems that your family lived in Brazil long enough to acquire the local way of thinking. How did it happen that your parents moved to Brazil?

My ancestors lived in what is now Turkey, and my grandfather moved to Brazil at the beginning of the 20th century. As a matter of fact, he abandoned his family. He was a real adventurer. He arrived in Brazil fully confident that he could make a fortune here. Grandfather settled in Londrina. Many people from Germany, Italy, Japan and other countries arrived there at that time hoping to strike it rich. This small town was located close to a railroad station. The railroad was built by a British company, and the town got its name from it. My grandfather indeed became a very rich man. At that time my grandmother and my father moved first to Beirut, then to Marseille. Later they crossed the ocean and arrived first to San Paolo, then to Londrina. Many years later my father went back to Beirut for an old friend's wedding, which is where he met my mother.

For a long time your family has been separated from Armenia. Have you ever considered visiting it?

No, unfortunately I have never been in Armenia. But I am thinking about visiting Armenia someday in the future. I consider myself first Armenian and then Brazilian. Armenian is my primary language – I speak Armenian to my parents and brothers. That's why when I have a child, he will be an Armenian. And if he decides to go to Armenia and stay there, I will accept his decision and will not oppose him under any circumstances. ■



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70.3% OF FREEDOM

Armenia's 2008 Index of Economic Freedom rank once again puts it ahead of regional trends, and above European average ranking

Armenia's 2008 Index of Economic Freedom rank once again puts it ahead of regional trends, and above European average ranking

On January 11, 2008, the Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street Journal released its joint study of economic freedom and investment climate trends in the world, better known as the Index of Economic Freedom. The 2008 Index of Economic Freedom covers 162 countries across 10 specific freedoms such as trade freedom, business freedom, investment freedom, and property rights. The 2008 Index provides an even clearer picture of economic freedom by using data-driven equations which allows countries to be graded between scores of 0 and 100.

The Index covers 10 freedoms – from property rights to entrepreneurship – in 161 countries. For the first time, the 2008 edition also analyzes regions to showcase the freest economies in every part of the world.

Armenia's rank of 28 out of 163 countries of the world is well above both the world and European average. The Index of Economic Freedom report on Armenia notes that "low tax rates, low government expenditure, and low revenue from state-owned businesses contribute to impressive fiscal and government freedom rankings. Inflation is low, and the banking sector is both wholly private and well regulated. Commercial regulations are flexible and relatively simple. Armenia's great strength is its investment climate, with few restrictions on foreign investment. Armenia's economic freedom score ranks considerably higher than that of any CIS country or any of its regional neighbors. Thus, Georgia is ranked #32, Turkey #74, and Azerbaijan #107 in the same study.

Currently around 70 American companies do business in Armenia in the fields of precious stone processing and jewelry manufacturing, information and communication technology, food processing, mining and tourism. Bilateral trade volume in 2003 comprised 140.3 million dollars, a 76% increase over 2000, with exports from Armenia at 37.5 million dollars in 2003.

As conditions in Armenia show positive signs of improvement and development - stabilization of the economy, strengthening of macroeconomic management, improvement of the investment climate, acceleration of the privatization process, stability of the political situation - Armenia undertakes major efforts toward a larger involvement in the U.S. - sponsored regional economic integration and cooperation projects.

BUSINESS FREEDOM — 81.3%

The freedom to start, operate, and close a business is relatively well protected by Armenia's national regulatory environment. Starting a business takes an average of 18 days, compared to the world average of 43 days. Obtaining a business license requires about the world average of 19 procedures and about half of the world average of 234 days. Closing a business is easy. However, the business environment can be risky because of the poor implementation and application of business legislation.

TRADE FREEDOM — 85%

Armenia's weighted average tariff rate in 2001 was a relatively low 2.5 percent. Unpredictable customs valuation, improper implementation of the customs code, inefficient customs administration, and corruption in customs add to the cost of trade. An additional 10 percentage points is deducted from Armenia's trade freedom score to account for non-tariff barriers.

FISCAL FREEDOM — 89%

Armenia has low tax rates. Both the top income tax rate and the top corporate tax rate are 20 percent. Other taxes include a value-added tax (VAT) and a vehicle tax. In the most recent year, overall tax revenue as a percentage of GDP was 17.3 percent.

GOVERNMENT SIZE — 86.4%

Total government expenditures, including consumption and transfer payments, are low. In the most recent year, government spending equaled 21.3 percent of GDP (Gross Domestic Product). Despite some delays, privatization has accelerated over the past two years in sectors like mining and metals.

MONETARY FREEDOM — 84.6%

Inflation is relatively low, averaging 2.7 percent between 2003 and 2005. Relatively stable prices explain most of the monetary freedom score. Government subsidies and regulation policies distort prices in some sectors, such as public transportation, electricity, and gas. An additional 5 percentage points is deducted from Armenia's monetary freedom score to adjust for measures that distort domestic prices.

INVESTMENT FREEDOM — 70%

Officially, foreign investors and native Armenians have the same right to establish businesses in nearly all sectors of the economy. Armenia maintains a liberal trade regimen, receiving the highest classification from the International Monetary Fund. Non-residents may lease land but may not own it. The major impediments to foreign investors are weak implementation of business legislation and corruption in the bureaucracy. Privatization, though generally successful and legally open to all bidders, has not been transparent. Commercial arbitration laws passed in December 2006 allow a wider range of settlement procedures for parties contracted to the Republic of Armenia. The government maintains several incentives, such as tax holidays, for investors, but the regulation system is still not transparent. The IMF (International Monetary Fund) reports that there are no restrictions or controls on the holding of foreign exchange accounts, invisible transactions, or current transfers and no repatriation requirements.

FINANCIAL FREEDOM — 70%

Armenia's underdeveloped financial sector is dominated by banking. Following a banking crisis in the 1990s, the government embarked on a process of privatization and regulatory reform that included adopting International Accounting Standards. Under the revised rules and standards, many banks have closed or merged. In 2001, there were 31 banks; by the end if 2006, there were 21. The remaining banks are becoming more liquid and profitable. The state no longer has a stake in any bank, and all 21 are privately owned. However, banks remain hindered by difficulty in debt recovery. The central bank has intervened in the market to encourage dram transactions, but without much success. The Ministry of Finance and Economy regulates the small insurance industry. Foreign insurance companies and banks are permitted. In February 2006, the active stock exchange had a market capitalization of $18 million, with 190 countries listed.

PROPERTY RIGHTS — 35%

Armenian law provides substantial protection for intellectual property rights and is in compliance with the World Trade Organization's Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Properties (TRIPS) Agreement. The government has increased enforcement of IPR laws. The judicial system is still recovering from underdevelopment and corruption — legacies of the Soviet era that substantially impede the enforcement of contracts. In November 2005, the constitution was amended to increase judicial independence, but it remains to be seen how this translates into practice.

FREEDOM FROM CORRUPTION — 29%

Corruption is perceived as widespread, although the government has introduced a number of reforms in the past few years. Petty corruption pervades Armenian society. Armenia ranks 93rd out of 163 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2006.

LABOR FREEDOM — 73.1%

Armenia's labor market operates under relatively flexible employment regulations that could be improved to enhance employment and productivity growth. The non-salary cost of employing a worker is moderate, and dismissing a redundant employee is relatively costless. ■



Armenian Recipe American Brand

There are many brands of yogurt in today's markets. Manufacturers compete in flavor variety, packaging styles, container shapes as well as more serious attempts at branding – some yogurt companies support cancer centers, some AIDS prevention. And of course, in our diet-crazy era some yogurt brands emphasize the slimming features of the product - and they are wise to do so.

text : **GAYANE HAROUTYUNYAN**
photo : **COURTESY OF EAGLE TRIBUNE**

YOGURT HAS "CULTURE"

Armenians as a nation have contributed to the well being of America in many ways, and here is a the great-tasting one…

Many Armenian immigrants arriving to the United States at Ellis Island tried to bring with them the yogurt culture so that they could continue to enjoy making and consuming yogurt in their new homes. No Armenian housewife could do without a jar of yogurt – an important ingredient in baking, a great side dish and a healthful treat – in her kitchen. Jars of sour-smelling bacterial culture were discovered by customs officers and quickly ended up in a trash bin, to our ancestors' great disappointment. A resourceful Turkish- Armenian woman, intending to immigrate to the US, came up with a solution to the transportation problem. She took clean white handkerchiefs, soaked them in yogurt and dried them out. She packed them between her linens to better conceal them in her luggage. Naturally, passing through customs with a stack of fresh white handkerchiefs was no challenge. She later dipped the hankies into warm milk in order to reactivate the culture. Many other nations have their own traditions of culturing and consuming yogurt, but Armenians were the first to start commercial production of yogurt in 1929…

BEGINNINGS

A small jar of yogurt bears a playful, somewhat exotic brand name: Colombo. One might reasonably wonder, is it a reference to the legendary travels of Columbus or something very foreign to us and native to vibrant Latin culture? Is it possibly an exotic cocktail of some kind? Although logical, these assuptions are not quite right…

In fact, "Colombo" comprises the first seven letters of the name of the family - Colombosian - that brought us this rich, creamy yogurt. For the uninformed consumer, yogurt is a cultured dairy product nothing short of health in a jar. The Colombosians were among the most important pioneers of commercial yogurt production.

The yogurt on the supermarket shelves is based on that of Rose Colombosian. After coming to the United States, this wise and patient Armenian woman made her family's yogurt with little more than a wood-burning stove and a warm family feeling.

The Colombo recipe is Armenian in origin and

quite elaborate - whole milk is heated, nonfat dry milk is added to the base for extra volume, cooled to a precise temperature, and plain yogurt is added as a catalyst. The mixture then rests in a container in a slightly heated oven for several hours. Naturally, the more closely one follows the recipe, the better the results will be. There is, of course, more to the recipe than what is outlined here. The secret is the freshest milk and precise timing, but it may be the warm feeling of Colombosian family that makes all the difference.

THE STORY

Armenian immigrants Rose (Krikorian) and her husband Sarkis Colombosian came to the US in 1922 and began making yogurt at their farm, located in Andover, Massachusetts, in 1929. Initially, they made it for themselves and their frequent (I am sure) houseguests.

Soon thereafter a catchy name, "Colombo," was "cooked up" and their small business establishment, Colombo & Sons Creamery of Andover, supplied the whole neighborhood with a fresh and tasty treat.

By 1940, Colombo had expanded throughout New England. In 1941, Bob and John Colombosian joined the family business. The hard-working family crew filled 8-ounce glass containers manually for delivery, initially by horse-drawn wagon and later by delivery truck. The sixteen-year-old Bob Colombosian made daily trips to ethnic markets in Lowell, Watertown, Southern New York, and New Jersey.

In the 1950s, an article about the business in Reader's Digest drew more attention to the family's yogurt business.

By the 1960s, the public had become aware of the many health benefits of yogurt, and the business entered a period of rapid growth.

By 1971, a new plant was built in Methuen, Massachusetts, and modern technology was utilized for production and packaging.

By 1975, Colombo became the leading plain yogurt company in America, exceeding 8 million units in annual sales. The business had grown so large that it required outside investment and a substantial work force and so a decision had to be made concerning the future of the firm.

In 1977, the Colombosian brothers sold the business to Bongrain, a French cheese-making company that eventually (1993) relinquished it to General Mills, a billion dollar industry leader. Currently, Colombo is produced by Yoplait-Colombo – a division of General Mills.

Robert Colombosian still lives in the family homestead on Argilla Road with his wife Alice, where they have raised their four daughters. He often reminisces about the beginning, when Colombo was still a small family enterprise…

In 2001 General Mills hired Colombosian and his wife, Alice, for a new advertising campaign featuring images of the proud Armenian couple in a promotion for yogurt.



Top Left: Rose Colombosian
Top Right: Bob Colombosian during the recent advertising campaign for General Mills.

YOGURT (MATSOON) CHICKEN

INGREDIENTS:
2 Lbs. boneless, skinless, chicken breasts
1 cup olive oil
1 tsp. crushed garlic
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 tsp. fresh basil
1/2 cup chopped Armenian or Italian flat leaf parsley
2 medium yellow onions (sliced)
Salt and pepper to taste
2 cups of plain yogurt (matsoon)

PREPARATION:
Place the olive oil, crushed garlic, wine and basil in a bowl or pan and add the chicken breasts so they are covered with the marinade. Cover and let the chicken marinate overnight in the refrigerator. Heat a teflon chicken fry pan with a tablespoon of olive oil and brown the chicken on both sides. Discard the marinade. In another pan, add 2 tablespoons of olive oil and sauté the onions until they are golden. Place the chicken in the pan with the onions. Spread the matsoon over the chicken and onions, cover and let cook over a medium burner for 30 minutes. Garnish with the chopped parsley and serve.

"HEALTH IN A JAR"

The benefits of yogurt are so numerous, we cannot list them all here. Yogurt is an important source of both calcium and protein, it reinforces gastrointestinal function, strengthens the immune system, and reduces cholesterol level – to name a few. Fans of yogurt also benefit from moderate amounts of vitamins B-2 and B-12, potassium and magnesium. Moreover, many have found that yogurt is a useful alternative to milk for those who are lactose intolerant, because yogurt is rich in bacteria that breaks down some of the lactose in milk. In addition, many prefer the taste of yogurt to that of regular milk. Another interesting fact is that yogurt is 88% water and is therefore a good source of the daily recommended water intake.

A TIME TO CELEBRATE...

On May 17th, 2004, Colombo celebrated its 75th birthday. The famous Colombosian family was presented with the "Key to the Town" and a proclamation establishing Andover as the official birthplace of Colombo Yogurt. The governor of Massachusetts also presented the family with a proclamation, declaring May 20th Colombo Yogurt's Anniversary.

The glass container the initial product came in along with family memorabilia and company material was displayed at the Massachusetts Historical Society venue for a summer-long exhibit. ■



13 NAMES OF YOGURT AND MORE…

Yogurt has a nearly 4000 year old history: many different names and an unidentified ancient legend say that an angel taught Abraham how to make it. America's coined name for it is derived from the Turkish yogurt. In Arabic-speaking countries, it is called Laban, in Iran, Mast, in India, Dahi. The Greeks refer to it as Yaourti and oxygala, the Bulgarians and Yugoslavs as Kiselo and Mleko, respectively. Georgians named it Matsoni. In Sardinia it is known as gioddu, in Sicily, Mezzoradu. The French call it Yaourt and the Dutch, Yoghei. As to its use – yogurt serves as a light side-dish, a salad dressing ingredient, baking ingredient, or - improvise!!!

THE GREAT SILK FRUIT

Gathering mulberries is quite an undertaking and requires a large crew. The younger and braver among the team climb the trees to gather the ripe sweet fruit, sometimes pausing to take advantage of their elevation to enjoy the many beautiful in the orchard. Surely among the loveliest sights are the local ladies spreading out sheets to catch the berries.

Many techniques have been invented over the centuries to prolong the life of the perishable mulberry – sweet citrons, aromatic jams, healthy "doshab" (boiled mulberry juice) and last but not least, the famous mulberry vodka. One or two sips of this clear elixir under the shade of a mulberry tree and thoughts of the eternal come to mind. Indeed, the great "silk fruit" must have some role in helping to inspire the silkworms to create the thinnest, softest, the most wondrous string.

photo : **ARNOS MARTIROSYAN**



Silk table cloth

Black and white mulberry

The mulberry citron

Mulberry jam

Doshab (boiled mulberry juice)

Mulberry vodka



Triumph of the Weightlifters

Armenian weightlifters returned trumphant from the 2008 European Weightlifting Championships in Lignano, Italy. By winning 13 gold, 3 silver, and 1 bronze medals the team won in the overall medal count (17). The gold medals in women's competitions were earned by Meline Daluzian (63 kg) and Nazik Avdalian (69 kg), who won the small gold medal in the "push" lift. The "big" gold medals in the men's tournament were won by Tigran G. Martirosyan (69 kg) and Tigran B. Martirosyan; in addition, Ara Khachatrian (77kg) was the silver medalist of the European Championship.

Dan David Prize

On February 11, 2008 Dan David Prize – the awards institution founded in 2001 in State of Israel that annually selects three winners for achievement in technological, scientific, cultural, or social fields – has announced its winners. Among them is a celebrated Canadian film director of Armenian descent Atom Egoyan. Atom Egoyan received an award for "superb modernist filmmaking that explores Armenian history and culture". Each year Dan David Prize selects fields within dimensions of Past, Presents, and Future to determine the winners and grants a prize of $1 million for an outstanding impact on our world. The awards ceremony took place on May 19, 2008, at Tel Aviv University, in the presence of the President of the State of Israel, Mr. Shimon Peres.



Gold medal of Honor

Austria's Consul General, Astrid Alexanian-Papazian, received the "Gold Medal of Honor for Devotion and Services to the Republic of Austria. The medal was presented by Thomas Nader, Austrian Ambassador to Egypt, during the reception in his Cairo residence. On behalf of Austria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ambassadors, ministers, and provincial officials, the ambassador extended his warmest congratulations and wishes. Alexanian was nominated Honorary Consul of Austria in Alexandria in 1987 and Honorary Consul General in 2004, in charge of Austrian Commercial and Cultural Affairs. She is currently the President of A. Alexanian Group of Companies and is a member of the board and shareholder of the Egyptian Textile Industries. She is an active member of the AGBU for the past 49 years and is the President of the Armenian Cultural Center Dikran Yergat.

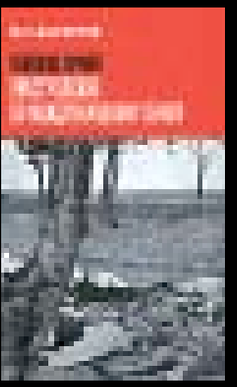


Bush Foundation Artist Fellow

Artist Norik Astvatsaturov, who immigrated to the U.S. in 1992, was selected as the 2008 Bush Artist Fellow. His entry was in a traditional metal works genre of art. He was one from a total of fifteen, all residents of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota (the Bush Foundation's region of interest). The National panelists considered the past endeavors and current work, the impact a Bush Artists Fellowship may have on artist's work and future directions. As a fellow, Norik will receive $48,000 in unrestricted funds to pursue his development as an artist, with an additional $2,000 to go toward an individualized communications/ promotion plan that the Bush Foundation will help him develop, making a total of $50,000 in support.

One more Armenian elected to the U.S. Congress

Armenian American Jackie Kanchelian Speier swept to a resounding victory receiving close to 80% of the vote in a special election in California's 12th Congressional District. She will be joining Republican Anna Eshoo (California's 14th District) as the only other Armenian American legislator in the 110th Congress. "When I get elected to Congress, the epicenter of Armenian American representation in Congress will be right here," she said during her speech earlier this year in San Francisco.



President's Recognition Award

The recipients of the President's Award for significant contributions to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 by the world community were announced in Yerevan. This year the award was given to Doctor of Jurisprudence Yury Barsegov (Russia) and historian Ives Ternon (France). Yury Barsegov is the author of a two-volume history The Armenian Genocide: The Responsibility of Turkey and the Obligation of the International Communities. The French historian Yves Ternon, who was involved for many years with the subject of the Armenian Genocide received the award for the significant scientific contribution into the task of recognition of the first genocide of the 20th century.

Armenian translation of the last novel by famous Catalonian writer Maria Angels Anglada *Aram's Diary* (1997) was published in Armenia. The novel tells of the life and wanderings of the main character, a Genocide survivor. The translation was completed by Grikor Janikian.

Days of Remembrane

Lisa Kalustian, Chief Deputy Director of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger office reported that the California Governor has proclaimed the week of April 27th as "Days of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide." In his proclamation, the Governor stated, "I ask all Californians to take time this week to reflect on this tragedy and its consequences. In joining our friends in the Armenian-American community in this observance, all of California helps remember the lives that were lost or changed by these fateful events."

ARMENIAN DUDUK from Djivan Gasparyan

is an exclusive collection.

The exclusiveness of this collection is in the duduk, which is made by well-known masters and tuned up by Maestro Djivan Gasparyan. This instrument made in 1000 examples. Each of them has gold **signature of Maestro** that is a **quality** confirmation for the latter. Besides the duduk, this collection includes one **information booklet**, one **CD** recorded of well-known contemporary duduk players, as well as original compositions executed by the famous jazz and ethno-folk musicians, one **DVD** of a film translated in 4 languages, where **Maestro Djivan** tells interesting stories about the national instrument. Besides this film, there is a music video of Djivan Gasparyan after the **"Msho Gorani"** music.

Thus, purchasing this collection you will inscribe your name in the history of duduk that the value, as the value of each masterpiece, increases in the time. In a certain sense, you will become a member of an aesthete club, including your name in addition to their creators.

ARMENIAN DUDUK
from Djivan Gasparyan
collection is made with love and respect to the ancient Armenian traditions, and you will be able to become a part of ancient and beautiful legend about duduk that is the music of our heart.

Part of the income received from the sale of the **ARMENIAN DUDUK from Djivan Gasparyan** collection, will be sent for the duduk school construction of Djivan Gasparyan.

For information about the purchase of the **ARMENIAN DUDUK from Djivan Gasparyan** collection, call:

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ARMENIAN DUDUK
FROM DJIVAN GASPARIAN



InterContinental Yerevan

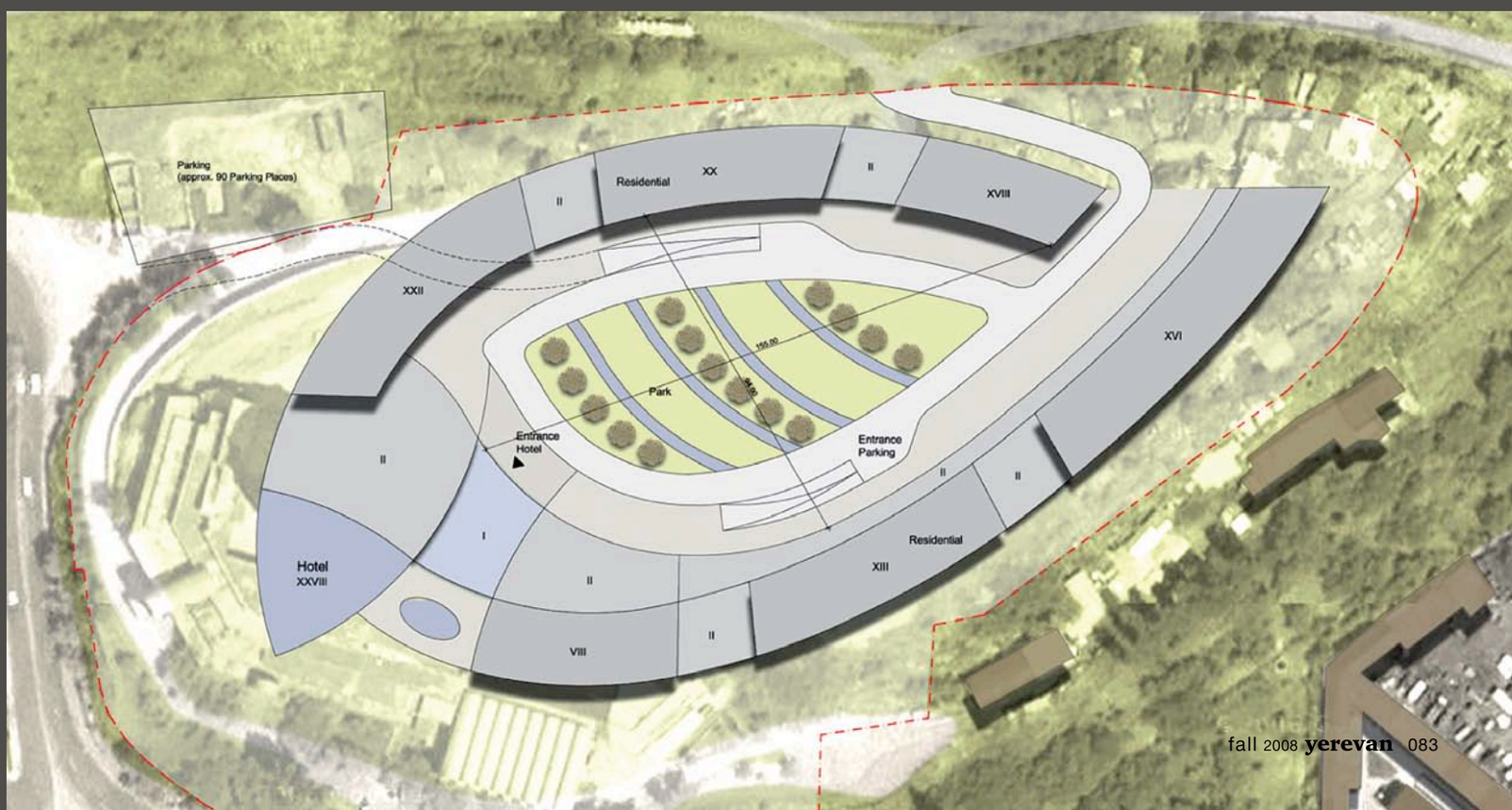
The structure of an unfinished five-star hotel, the InterContinental Yerevan, now stands in the spot formerly occupied by the 20-floor Youth Palace in Yerevan (dismantled due to emergency conditions). World famous architect Sergey Choban (his projects include the Federation Tower in Moscow and the Radisson SAS hotel in Berlin) designed this hotel. The new complex is the latest offering of the InterContinental Hotels Group hospitality line that currently owns over 3700 hotels worldwide. The 27-floor hotel, triangular in cross section, will be furnished with between 200 and 225 rooms, large meeting halls (with a 1000-1500 capacity), both in and outdoor pools, a fitness club and restaurants situated in the upper part of the hotel, providing a stunning panorama of the city. The building is expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

Illustrations provided : **LCC "AVANT-GARDE MOTORS"**





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WHY DID YOU GRANT ME SO MUCH?

As I was leaving the studio of one of the most prominent contemporary French painters, Jansem, I asked him, "What are you going to do now, right after I leave?" He replied, "I'll have a snack and will continue working." That's how the monologue that started with the words, "I love to paint," should have ended.

text and photo : **KHACHATOUR MARTIROSYAN**

I love to paint. This kind of love, just like anything else in the world, had its own beginning. When I was only eight years old in school I could copy any picture. I received my first set of oil paints as a gift from my brother when I was eleven. When we moved from Greece to France, I began attending Art school. Over the course of several years I participated in various contests, and received many awards. There have always been two very important factors in my life – "luck" and "encounters." I was often given a chance in life, and I met with famous people who appreciated my work. Of course, my paintings weren't bought right away – an eighteen year-old boy cannot sell his paintings.



Jansem in his studio (above)

Quartering of Dionysus (top right)

Ages of Life (bottom right)

AND I DIDN'T PAINT THEM FOR THAT PURPOSE

Today I could be happy, but the painting that I make might be sad, or the other way around. I am not influenced by momentary perceptions, or fleeting moods, but by my overall feelings. Who can explain why people sing in sadness, or cry in joy?

In reality, a painting isn't a mood, but a lifetime search. The world is created in such way that many puzzles remain unsolved, and yet men continue to search for eternal truths, final answers. Philosophers contemplate the meaning of life and death; they try to understand what comes after death. I think that they know for sure that the answer in unattainable, but that's how it is…

A MAN ALWAYS LOOKS FOR ANSWERS

Entering life each one of us takes the path that he or she must. Some manage to reach the end of it, and some stray far away from their original path. Once, long ago, I spoke harshly about Picasso in an interview. Now I regret it, of course. Picasso is a great artist, but his work does not resonate to my feelings. In any case… I love him at times, and sometimes I hate him. I love Cezanne, Van Gogh, and Klimt. They always took one straight path - their own, till the end. Picasso was wavering left and right, mixing up everything on his way. He seems to be wandering, drawing others into his confusion. Many young artists have lost themselves trying to follow his path. I am not fond of artists and people like Picasso. I like those who don't seek fame, or money – those who just do their work.

Great wealth is given even to the poorest among us. Our head, our eyes, arms and feet, beautiful things, colors, the world – it's so beautiful. Fifty, or even one hundred years ago we weren't here. Life – this is the greatest gift. We should try to use our

CHANCE TO LIVE AT ITS BEST

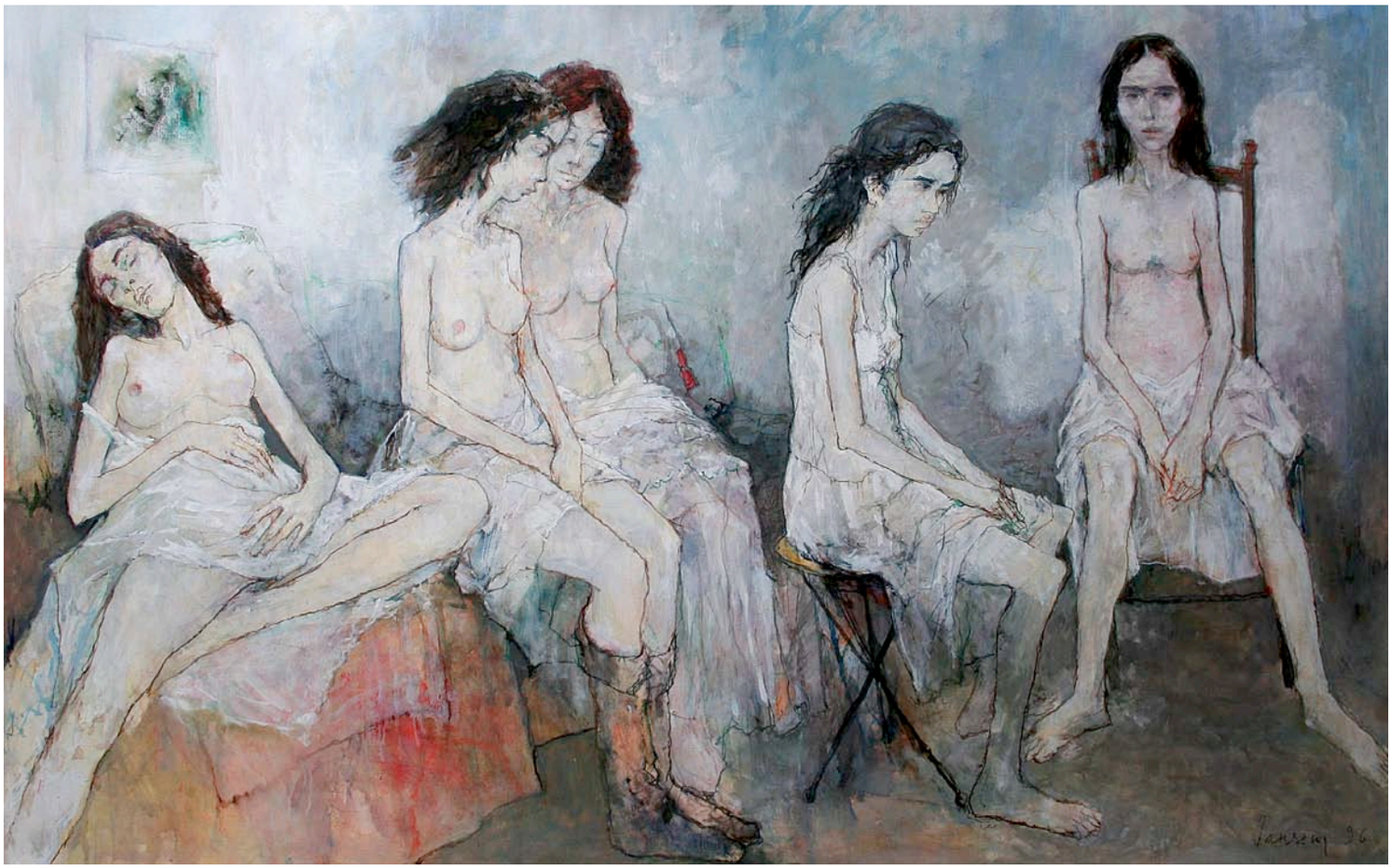
When I was a young boy I always took the same road to school, passing by a house with a window into a small studio. It was full of dust and firewood. And every time I passed, I would stop by that window and ask God, "Give me a place like that, tie my foot to the wall, give me a bit of bread, and I will draw my whole life." That was all I wished for. Now I have several large studios. I was not longing for fame, property, or money. I just lived my life, I just live my life. I have much more than I ever wished for. Sometimes I ask God for something small, and He gives me much more. And then I ask Him, "Why did You grant me so much?" But I don't get an answer.

HOW TO COMPREHEND IT?

I am not a religious person, I don't go to church, but I have faith in God, of course. I know that He created our world. Maybe not so successfully, it can be said. There is no truth in the world, no fairness…I think, He tried to make the world perfect many times over, but it didn't work out. Probably, it's impossible to make it better than it already is. Maybe if

I LOVE CEZANNE, VAN GOGH, AND KLIMT. THEY ALWAYS TOOK ONE STRAIGHT PATH - THEIR OWN, TILL THE END. PICASSO WAVERED LEFT AND RIGHT, MIXING UP EVERYTHING ON HIS WAY. HE SEEMS TO BE WANDERING, DRAWING OTHERS INTO HIS CONFUSION.





fairness existed, there would be no life. If there was truth – again, there would be no life. Let's accept it, all creatures and plants eat each other in order to survive. So existence, in my view, is possible only in its present form. In this form, life has its own rules and these I call "God". To think that there is no God – all that would be left in the universe is complete

MADNESS AND EMPTINESS

I have a feeling that soon everything will be over. I so want to return my youth and strength! I would give everything for that – estates, wealth, fame… I would interrupt this conversation, would get out of this studio with just a shirt on, and would never return. I would have asked the God for that, but if He suddenly granted my wish, I would stop believing in him. What kind of God He is, if

HE GIVES TO SOME, AND NOT TO OTHERS

I am eighty-six today, so I have been painting for seventy-five years. If we count 30-40 paintings a year, it totals to approximately three – four thousand. Only

JANSEM (OHANES SEMERJIAN)

Born in Seuleuze (Bursa), former Armenian part of Turkey. Graduated Ecole des Arts Decoratifs in Paris (1938), attended "independent academies" of Montparnasse (1934-1936), attended Sabatie's workshop (1936-1937). Lived in France since 1931. Had numerous exhibitions in many countries of the world starting from 1966. In Tokyo galleries Ginza (starting in 1955) and Azumino (from 1996) there are his permanent museums. In the museum of the Armenian Genocide in Armenia there is a permanent exhibition of Jansem's work (2002), where his series of paintings "Genocide" are displayed. He is an Honorary Doctor of the Armenian Academy of Sciences (2001). First recipient of the "Populist" (1951), "Antral" (1953) and other awards. Grand Prize of "Kamparezon" (Mexico, 1958). In 2002 he received the medal "St. Mesrop Mashtots" (Armenia). Received Medal of French Legion of Honor in 2003. Had over one hundred individual exhibitions in Paris (from 1935), New York (from 1965), Tokyo (from 1971), Yerevan (1973, 2002), Los Angeles (2008) and other cities. Illustrated books.



Arevik (left)

People of the Travel (top right)

Reclined woman Arevik (bottom right)



HE CREATED OUR WORLD. MAYBE, NOT SO SUCCESSFULLY. THERE IS NO TRUTH IN THE WORLD, NO FAIRNESS… I THINK HE TRIED TO MAKE THE WORLD PERFECT MANY TIMES OVER, BUT IT DIDN'T WORK OUT. PROBABLY, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE IT BETTER…

the most valuable ones are documented – about three thousands of these. I know people who have at least ten – fifteen of my paintings. But the majority of paintings – who knows where they are now. So many exhibitions of my works were organized by galleries in various countries around the world… In most of them I wasn't even present. Just in New York, there have been over fifty exhibitions, but I attended only two of them. There are two museums in Japan which display my paintings – approximately one hundred works in each. But I have never been there. For what?

IS IT REALLY NECESSARY?

There are masters who are able to express themselves with a great power and a big soul. Leonardo da Vinci, Titian! Everybody loves them, and I love them, too. There are artists who feel the same way as I do. They are mostly expressive, like El Greco, Goya…But I love even those who don't have a great talent, because I think that there are many interesting thoughts in their heads, only their hands are not able to express them all. One isn't always able

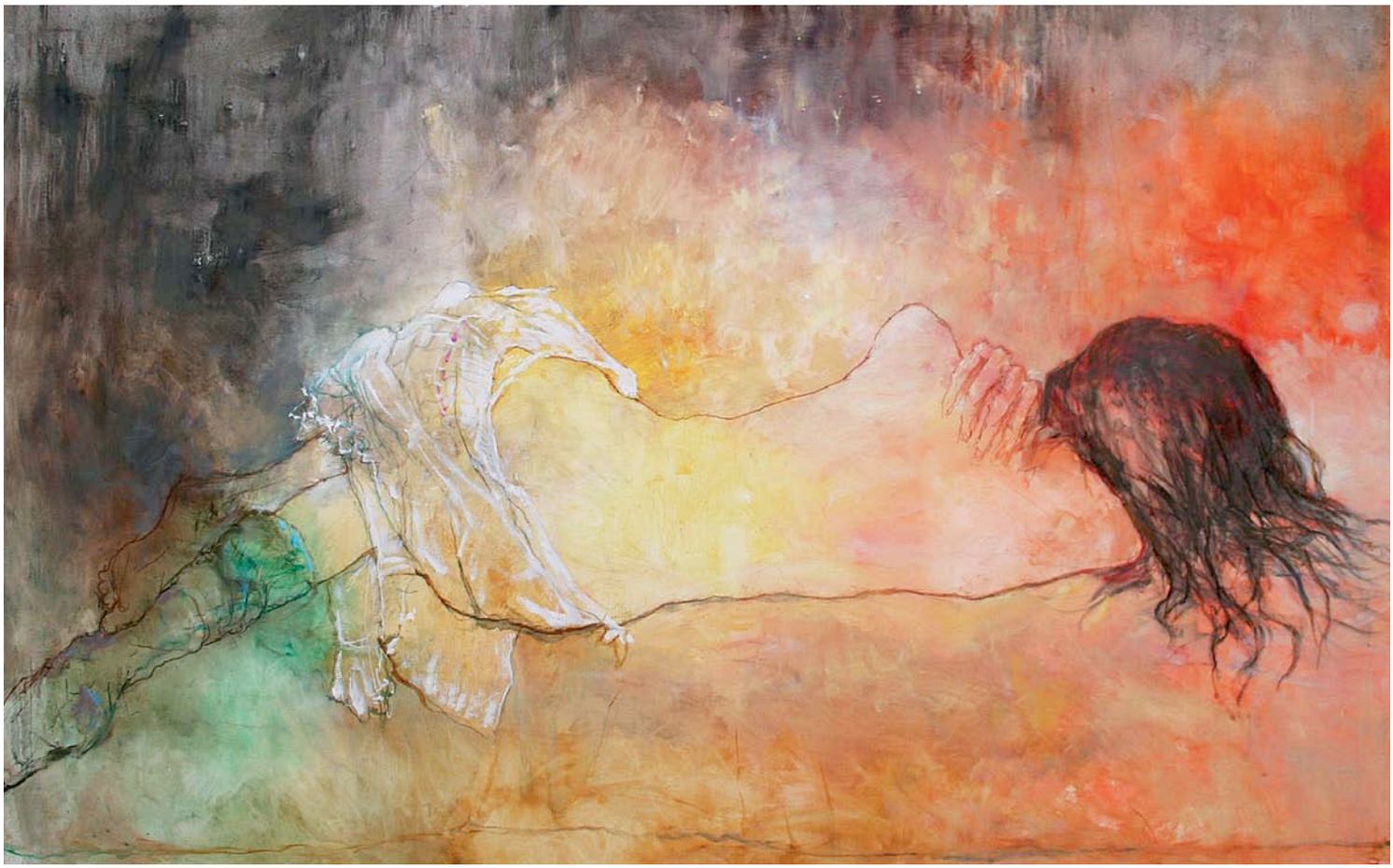
TO DO WHAT HE WANTS.

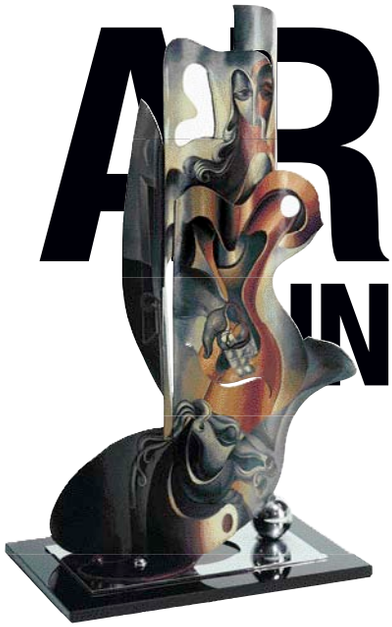
If I had more strength, I would go back to Armenia. I have many friends there. I am very well accepted during both official and informal meetings, although I don't feel any difference between these two – the attitude of the government officials towards me is so warm and friendly, that one can't call them "official meetings". I am tremendously grateful to the Armenian Embassy in France and personally to Sir Ambassador Eduard Nalbandian for arranging my last trip to Armenia. I like it there very much. I would like to live in Armenia to know it more intimately. I had a feeling that it is my place to live, my "apartment." Although I lived in France my entire life and am more fluent in French than in Armenian, I never had such a feeling here, in France. As soon as I return to Paris, I feel nostalgia for Yerevan.

THAT'S THE PROBLEM OF THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA

They would like to live on the Armenian land, but they can't. Their roots are in another land. Those, who have moved back, could not stand being uprooted. I ask myself, could we call someone a one-hundred-percent Armenian if they do not live in Armenia? No! I love Armenia, but I can't live there, and for me - it's a great pain. ■







ARMENIANS IN THE HISTORY OF ART

The sources of Armenian Art are deeply rooted in antiquity, a statement confirmed by the unique pictographs dated to the 6th millennium B. C.

The choice of these particular painters could be, naturally, questionable. We could have included in this list also Momik (13th century), Sarkis Pitsak (1301 - ?), Hagop Kodjoyan (1883-1959), Georgi Yakulov, or Reuben Nakian (1897-1986)…The list could go on and on… With names from continents on both sides of the ocean.



Thoros Roslin (13th century)

The Armenian "miniaturist" school of painting was known from the 9th century, but the height of mastery and style was achieved in Cilicia during the 12th century. The Cilician school of Miniaturist painting, the master of which was undoubtedly Roslin, is considered as the "Renaissance" of medieval manuscript illumination. Notably, the Canon Tables from the Zeytun Gospels (1256) by Toros Roslin are displayed at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

Hakob Hovnatanyan (1806-1881)

The Armenian artistic dynasty of the Hovnatanyans from Tiflis, Georgia, produced a galaxy of bright art stars. The most recognized representative of the talented family was the "Rafael of Tiflis", Hakop Hovnatanyan, who is justly considered the founder of the portrait genre in Armenian Art.





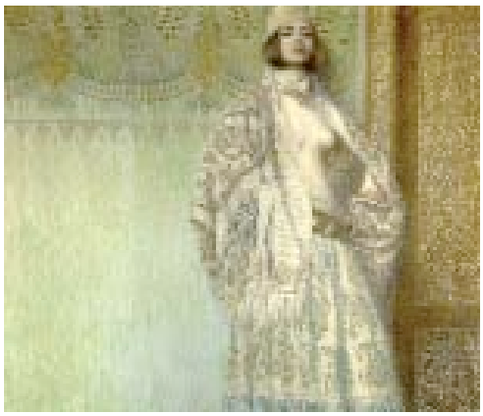
Zakarie Zakaryan (1849-1923)

Zakaryan is an artist with a unique biography. He was born in Constantinople and acquired a medical doctor's diploma in Paris. However, after working in hospitals for several years, he unexpectedly decided to dedicate himself to art. He is the only Armenian artist whose masterpieces are displayed in the famous Musée d'Orsay in Paris.



Hovhannes Aivazovsky (1817-1900)

Aivazovsky is acknowledged as the premiere seascape painter, and one of Russia's greatest cultural icons of the 19th century. His artistic technique was unparalleled, his brushstrokes - the work of a virtuoso, his compositions unique and bold. Art historians agree that only Aivazovsky has been able to capture the "extraordinary beauty of the sea" in all of its guises – the powerful, deadly force of the storm, the peaceful stillness of a calm day, the brilliant colors of a sunset at sea, or the tranquil reflection of the moon upon the water.



Vardges Sureniants (1860-1921)

This master is the first artist in the history of the Armenian Visual Arts who created paintings on historical themes. His painting "Semiramis at the Corpse of Ara the Beautiful" and "Salome" are included in the national treasury of the Armenian culture. And his work "Sanctuary Trampled" will forever remain as evidence of the brutal genocide.



Edgar Chahine (1874-1947)

An Armenian born in Vienna, he was admitted to the Academie Julien in Paris to become a French painter and a great master of poetic etching. Even as a young artist he was distinguished by numerous awards, including gold medals in major international exhibitions in Paris (1900) and Venice (1903).



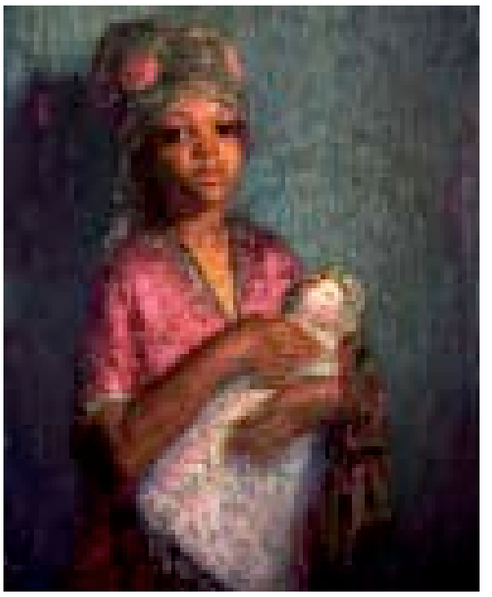
Yervand Kochar (1899-1979)

It has been over fifty years since Armenia's capital city of Yerevan became associated with the monument of the hero of the Armenian mythology , David of Sasoun. The author of the monument was Yervand Kochar. After moving from Tiflis to Paris at the age of 22, he vanquished the jaded French art critics with his mastery of drawing. Kochar developed his original art movement – "Peinture dans l'espace" (3-dimensional painting). After spending 15 years of his life in France, Kochar returned to Armenia, first to serve time in Stalin's labor camps, and later to become an enduring classic of Armenian Art.



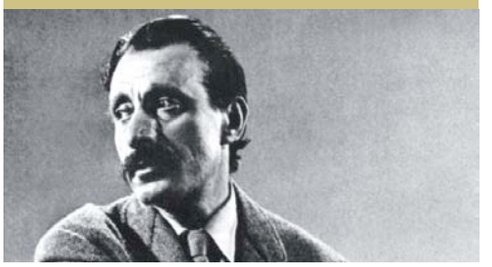
Hovsep Pushman (1877 – 1966)

When a 1932 exhibition of the unknown 55-year-old Pushman opened in New York, it was a great surprise to the organizers that all sixteen of his works sold immediately. The oriental still life paintings of this Armenian painter are unique. His works are displayed in many museums across the United States, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.



Arshile Gorky (1904-1948)

The real first and last name of this great master with a tragic destiny of a genius is Vostanik Adoyan. Along with Willem De Kooning and Jackson Pollock, he is considered to be one of the pillars of American Modern Art. It is only fitting to mention that Arshil Gorky is the only Armenian, whose name is included in the book 1001 People Who Made America by Alan Axelrod, published by National Geographic in 2008. His canvasses are displayed in major museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



Carzou (1907-2000)

Garnik Zouloumyan was born in Aleppo, but lived in Paris from the age of eighteen. There he chose a word-play pseudonym, combining the first syllables of his first and last name. Nevertheless, he had to wait for a long time for recognition. It was not until 1953, when the Parisian Grand-Opera staged Tchaikovsky's ballet Giselle with stage decorations by Carzou, that he became famous. Carzou is extremely poetic as a painter. It is for this reason his illustrations to the books of the most poetic novelist, Albert Camus, are considered unsurpassable.

Martiros Saryan (1880-1972)

Often, when the conversation turns to Armenia, memory inevitably brings back the sunny canvasses of Saryan. Born in Nor Nakhijevan, or Rostov-on-Don, Russia, educated in Moscow, captivated by Egypt and Persia, Saryan never left the country of his ancestors, the land of Nairi, in his paintings. Even his masterpiece "Date Palm", displayed in Moscow's Tretyakov Gallery, painfully resembles the familiar heat of the scorching Yerevan summer. That's the sort of miracle that Saryan's brush has created.





Minas Avetisian (1928-1975)

Minas, as he was lovingly called in Armenia, is another tragic figure in the history of Armenian Art. In 1972, when he was accepted as the leader of his generation of artists, his workshop was engulfed in fire, and as a result most of his works were destroyed. After the fire he began painting with the rage of a man who took his fate as a challenge. However, three years later he was run over by a car and died soon after in the hospital. His life was interrupted at the highest point of its inspirational flight, and although much was lost, even more was achieved.



MASTER-S



ERVANT

Famous throughout Europe, tenor Ruben Elbakian is convinced that the most important function in the art of music is that of composer – the one who actually creates. As for singers, even the quite gifted ones, he considers them servants of the author, summoned only for giving voice to the creations. Even if one accepts this somewhat radical notion of the role of the performer, it is not easy to apply the word "servant" to Ruben himself.

As told to : **TATEVIK TOVMASYAN**
Photos by : **ARNOS MARTIROSYAN**

THE BEGINNINGS

According to family history, when I was only 30 days old, I scared the heck out of my grandmother. She was home alone looking after me. She began to worry when she heard male voices coming from inside the house, and nervously walked around the rooms, looking for thieves. She was surprised when she realized, firstly that I was awake, and then that I was the source of the sounds she heard! Now that I am grown up and a professional singer, my parents tell this story with a special air of pride and mischief. Actually, even from early childhood, my path was filled with "signs." Individually, they did not have a much meaning, but together they seemed to indicate that I was fated for my life's work. For example, as a boy I saw the film The Great Caruso, with Mario Lanza, and thought for the first time how "cool" it was to be an opera singer. Soon after, I fell in love with Sophia Loren's character, Aida, in the filmed opera of the same name. Then I bought a Norma record with Maria Callas from the record shop. I fell asleep while listening to it, then woke up in tears. My tears came in spite of the fact that it is hard for me to physically cry – I usually can't produce tears. The dramatic talent of Loren and the musical talent of Callas have both affected my professional development significantly.

THE DOLL

In addition to those who I admired from afar, there were female geniuses I interacted with more directly in my life - Tatevik Sazandaryan and Gohar Gasparyan. I was not Mrs. Sazandaryan's pupil, for she only tutored girls, but I was determined to attend every class she gave and learned a great deal from her. Over time we grew so close that we often took walks together, causing our share of malicious gossip. Sometimes she was quite harsh - to this day, I hear her voice scolding: "Will you keep bowing all your life like a caricature?" Luckily, these words were not addressed to me, but they taught me how to behave myself on stage, and in life, for that matter. I was not the only one who learned from her, I am not the only one who can say: "Tatevik Sazandaryan contributed great magic to the performing arts in

Armenia, and instilled a musical and artistic culture in our performers; she taught them not just to demonstrate vocal techniques but to create a character." In the middle of my fourth year at school, after final exams, in the presence of my whole faculty and without my teacher's consent, Gohar Gasparyan referred me to her husband, Tigran Levonyan. At that time, he was a creative director for the National Opera and Ballet Theatre. This is how it went: "Listen, go to Tiko and tell him I am sending you to him on a trial basis". Hearing a great singer say something like that meant the world to me! It was very interesting studying with Gohar Gasparyan. She could be silent the whole day and then say just a few words. Later, having attended many master classes taught by famous European singers, I realized to my great surprise that I have rarely heard anything new, that I didn't hear first from dear Koko, which is what her close friends called her. By the way, if I may be permitted to boast, she called me "doll" – a term she reserved for her husband and a very few others close to her. This was her way of praising and conveying her positive disposition towards you. To this day, I can still hear her voice: "Listen, doll, come and see me today, we will study. I have praise for you too." And the way she cooked! She cooked the way she sang – brilliantly. It is too bad I did not have the chance to say good-bye to her. Sadly, my final concert during my tour took place in Nice just a couple of days after her passing. I dedicated the concert to her memory and demanded that the city office change a prepared and finalized program to include her photograph.

CULINARY DIGRESSION

Without false modesty, I can say my cooking isn't bad either. One of the major cognac manufacturers in France, the HARDY Company, helped sponsor my second performance before the French Senate. My wife and I were supposed to meet privately with the executives of this company before my performance. We did not want to leave our infant son with the babysitter so I invited them to our own house and decided I would cook myself. My wife exclaimed indignantly, "Do you realize who these people are?!" But I insisted and cooked all of my trademark dishes. After the dinner, my guests were curious to know where I found such a good cook. I blushed and said it was my own cooking. Now we are good friends and often joke that both stomachs and hearts played roles in establishing our relationship.



IT WAS VERY INTERESTING STUDYING WITH GOHAR GASPARYAN. LATER, HAVING ATTENDED MANY MASTER CLASSES TAUGHT BY FAMOUS EUROPEAN SINGERS, I REALIZED THAT I HAVE RARELY HEARD ANYTHING NEW, THAT I DIDN'T HEAR FIRST FROM DEAR KOKO, WHICH IS WHAT HER CLOSE FRIENDS CALLED HER. SHE CALLED ME "DOLL" - A TERM SHE RESERVED FOR HER HUSBAND AND A VERY FEW OTHERS CLOSE TO HER.

A NEW ADDRESS

I was admitted to conservatory following a god-forsaken period that I refer to as "vermicelli times". Those times! I remember we would buy big bags of pistachios and roast them, pack them in small plastic bags, seal them with candle wax and turn them over to a newspaper vendor, who sold them from his booth near our house. That is how we made a living. We would fall asleep fully dressed in our unheated house. In spite of the hardship, this was the period when I took my first steps as a performer. As it turned out, the muse never rests, even in the most difficult of times. That said, I must admit it is much more pleasant to sing on a full stomach!

I was often told that it is wiser to build one's career abroad. But that was a tough decision. Back then, a famous French singer, Elena Vasilieva, came to Yerevan to hold master classes. After hearing me sing she said: "You belong in Europe." Perhaps these words of hers were the last straw and I decamped for Europe. However, I never truly left Armenia, only my address changed. I did not take much luggage with me because I was sure I would soon return. I performed with the Paris Chamber Orchestra at a charity concert dedicated to the tenth anniversary of the Earthquake of 1988. I entered a private conservatory to

RUBEN ELBAKIAN

Ruben Elbakian was born in Yerevan in 1971. At age seven he became a soloist in the Armenian Children's Philharmonic Choir. In 1996 graduated with honors from Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory. In 1999 received a Gold Medal at the National Musical Schools Competition of Val-de-Marne in Paris. Elbakian is the first Armenian to perform at the Luxembourg Palace twice (2000, 2004) with a solo concert upon the invitation of the French Senate Chairman. The album Komitas released by Elbakian in 2006, was awarded the prize, "Choice of the Heart" by the store chain, FNAC, in France. In 2006 recorded a new, original version of the French Anthem. In 2006-2007 Elbakian toured Paris, Versailles, Bordeaux, Marseille, Valencia, Nice and Mirabeau, during the "Days of Armenia in France" event.

acquire a residency permit. In another coincidental twist of fate, I received the necessary documents the very day my visa expired. In only one year, I was awarded a gold medal at a conservatory contest.

LYRICAL DIGRESSION

I will tell you about this in detail. A popular French journalist, Armine Azizyan, was invited to my concert. She was told that an "interesting" tenor from Armenia was performing. Later, I found out that she was less than thrilled about coming. She had met famous politicians and artists like Charles Aznavour and Robert Hossein and didn't look forward to meeting a novice opera singer. But once she heard me sing, she said to her girlfriend: "He will be mine". She "conquered" my heart during the very first interview, and we now have a son together.

THE VOICE OF THE WORLD

Jacques Delon, who at the time was a leader of the French-Turkish group in the Senate, was the first to offer me an opportunity to sing at Luxembourg Palace. The performance took place after the French Senate recognized the Armenian genocide. I began with the song "Victoria, Victoria…" Next day, the newspapers wrote that Elbakian sang about the victory of his people. In 2004, a group from Minsk (Belorus) was present during my second performance in the French Senate, at the invitation of the Senate Chairman. The time for autographs came. I asked for their names. These were Georgian, Azerbaijani…but unfortunately, as strange as it sounds, I did not see a single Armenian delegate, although they had been invited. Nevertheless, I remembered Delon's words with pride: "Technically, you are becoming an ambassador of Armenia. Your voice is capable of ending the struggle between the two nations, even if it is only for a little while." I believe that art exists outside of concepts like nationality. I sang "Krunk" by Komitas and the French cried without understanding a single word. And, once in Yerevan after one of my concerts, German guests approached me and asked me to introduce them to Mr. Komitas. I was shocked. And later I realized that time and nationality mean nothing for geniuses.



A POPULAR FRENCH JOURNALIST, ARMINE AZIZYAN, WAS INVITED TO MY CONCERT. LATER, I FOUND OUT THAT SHE WAS NOT THAT EXCITED ABOUT COMING. SHE HAS MET MANY FAMOUS POLITICIANS AND ARTISTS AND WAS NOT TOO THRILLED TO MEET A NOVICE OPERA SINGER. BUT ONCE SHE HEARD ME SING, SHE SAID TO HER GIRLFRIEND: "HE WILL BE MINE". SHE "CONQUERED" MY HEART, AND WE NOW HAVE A SON TOGETHER.

COME ON, DEAR!

After a seven-year absence spent in Europe, I performed on the stage of my native National Opera and Ballet Theatre. The concert took place under the patronage of the First Lady, Bella Kocharian. Neapolitan songs were in the program – those that were included on the album I recently released – Chansons Napolitaines. So great were my feelings of national pride that it was a great challenge for me to perform in Armenia after such a long absence. I assume that would be the case for any Armenian performer. And to make thing worse, I saw a gigantic poster on the Opera building that made me a little uncomfortable. In addition, I was exhausted after two months of work in a recording studio. In other words, I was even considering cancelling the performance. But this was a charity concert. The collected amount would finance the purchase of musical instruments through Spivakov's Fund for musically gifted underprivileged children. And all the tickets were sold. I decided to sing, whatever happened. Before coming out on stage, my accompanist of many years, Anna Mandalian, said to me: "Come on, dear! Today you have to sing even if you die on stage". And I came on stage. I think it was apparent to the audience who heard my voice on television, on discs, that I was not in top form, but I was greeted with a storm of applause. And I am very grateful to her for that. Soon I am to go to Paris. To work and anticipate a return home… ■

"To this greatly popular artist I wish success."

NICOLAS SARKOZY,
President of France

"Heavenly voice and majestic stage presence."

LUCY KALDERON,
Culture Minister of El Salvador in UNESCO

"I wish him the good fortune his talent deserves."

CHARLES AZNAVOUR,
singer

"With one's head, body and heart, one listens to this new Caruso from Armenia. With a voice massive and gentle at the same time, warm and magnificent, with an extremely beautiful timbre, he provides a performance that turns music into a play of subtle inflections and harmonies. He has excellent prospects."

ELIZABETH BERNARD,
musicologist, ELLE magazine



The ART of Beauty

They say that «gentlemen prefer blondes», but some prefer brunettes. Some look to a beautiful body for inspiration, and others the soul. Some like a day in the country, others a night in the city. Beauty may be in the eye of the beholder, but finding it is an art. Where is the beauty in this image - the women, the city, or the sacred Armenian mountain?

Photo : **SERGEY KOVALENKO**





Find the beauty, it's an art: the game, the tradition, the men, or the woman.







Find the beauty, it's an art: the girls, the boys, or the harmonic alliance?



Find the beauty, it's an art: the market, the fresh vegetables, or the man, who likes to keep them fresh.





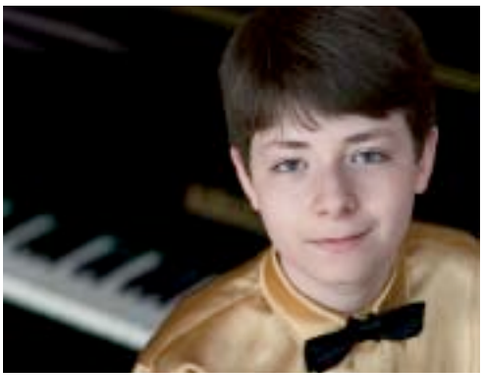


Find the beauty, it's an art:
the painter, his muse,
or the observers



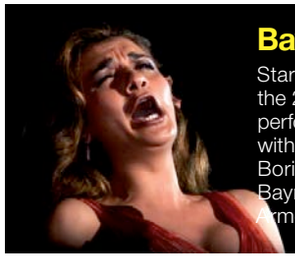
L.A. Fashion Gala

The Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) presented its annual L.A. Fashion Gala. The event was designed to highlight the work of FIDM students graduating in Theatre Costume and Advanced Fashion Design. The theme for this year's Theatre Costume Design graduates was Can-Can at The Moulin Rouge, which presented scenes of elaborate costumes from the famous Moulin Rouge nightclub in Paris. Costume designer, Mikael Sharafian was among the selected students who showcased their work to the distinguished audience from the entertainment and fashion worlds. Mikael designed the costume of "The Mistress of Moulin Rouge" and two additional costumes for can-can dancers. Mikael, who was born and raised in Yerevan, comes from an artistic family that moved to the U.S. in 2001. His great-aunt Irene Sharaff won five Academy Awards for costume design for such legendary Hollywood productions as Cleopatra, West Side Story, An American in Paris, and others.



Prodigy

David Hovanessian, a 12-year-old student at the Sayat Nova Music School in Yerevan (Instructor Anna Hovanessian) became the winner of the Eighth International Alexander Scriabin Music Competition in Paris. The young pianist was named as the winner in the Preparatory (age limit 12- years-old) category. He played the works of Rachmaninov, Debussy, and Haydn.



Bayrakdarian to open Chamberfest

Star Armenian-Canadian soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian will open the 2008 Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival on July 25, performing music from her recent album Tango Notturno. Performing with Bayrakdarian will be pianist Serouj Kradjian, and cellist Roman Boris with his colleagues from the Gryphon Trio. In September Bayrakdarian and Kradjian plan to have a Gala performance in Armenia in celebration of Armenia's Independence Day.

An inventor and a descendant of a family of inventors, power engineer Nerses Nersesian, **created a backgammon which can be played by three players.** The rules of the game, which has additional fifteen red counters, remain unchanged.



Soprano Kallen Esperian

Kallen Esperian performs on the stage of Opera Birmingham (Alabama) the role of Floria Tosca. Early in her career she was invited to sing on the stage of La Scala, Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, and Opera National de Paris. Growing up in Barrington, Illinois, outside of Chicago, she studied ballet for 15 years. After getting a voice degree at the University of Illinois, she started her singing career as a mezzo-soprano, but after winning the Luciano Pavarotti International Voice Competition in 1985 as a soprano, she moved into that voice category. Esperian developed a lasting friendship with Pavarotti, partnering with him in "Luisa Miller," "Otello," and "Il Trovatore."

Doudouk for the "Lunatic"

Veterans of Russian rock music, the band Krematoriy with its leader - Armen Grigorian, finished recording their album Amsterdam. The musical arrangements of the songs included Russian folk choir, a symphonic orchestra, violin, and doudouk. The Armenian instrument is featured in the song "Lunatic" performed by the funeral Orchestra of the Armenian Cemetery in Moscow. Grigorian came to such an unusual artistic decision, after he heard the musicians play during a visit to the graves of his relatives.



Paradjanov's Kaleidoscope

The Museum of Paradjanov in Yerevan presented a publication of the director's works entitled *Paradjanov's Kaleidoscope: Drawing, Collage, Assemblage*. It included 60 photographs, 180 collages, and related assemblages made of various three-dimensional objects. The works of the "most liberated person in the least liberated country," as he was called by poet Bella Akhmadoulina, included in the book are divided into periods before and after his imprisonment. The English edition of the publication is being prepared for release.



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THE PIT

We are heading to the monastery Khor Virap to descend into the same pit used for those condemned to death, in which the first Head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Gregory the Illuminator, spent thirteen years. As a matter of fact, it turned out that it was not the only underground dungeon around here used at the turn of the new millenium.

text : ANAHIT HOVANISYAN
photo : HAYK MELKONYAN



SUBJECTIVE DEVIATION FROM HISTORY

A chatty grandma appropriately named Mariam, seated comfortably at her usual place by the entrance to the monastery, eagerly volunteered to tell us the story of Khor Virap.

- You don't know it, so listen. Under our church there is a huge hole. You should go down there. The stairs are shaky, but don't be afraid, it won't collapse. I've never seen anyone fall in, ever. In olden times they put the criminals in that hole. It was a kind of a punishment. King Tiridat, God forgive his soul, put Gregory the Illuminator there. The man spent thirteen years in it. He died and was buried there too. Oh, wait… Maybe I am confusing something here… Or was it Tiridat who was buried in it… Ah, what's the difference…

A very significant component unwittingly fell out of this free interpretation of history – Armenia became the first state that accepted Christianity, particularly because Gregory the Illuminator did not die in that hole.

CORRECTING MISTAKES

Fortunately the 5th century historian Aghatangelos, as opposed to the grandma, described the events that took place in Khor Virap in his work *The Life and Story of Saint Gregory*. The Armenian King Tiridat, learning about Gregory's Christian faith, ordered to "take him with the shackles on his feet, arms, and around his neck to Ararat region; to put him into a very deep hole in the citadel of the city of Artashat, and leave him there to die." But a pious widow "by God's will" fed him, bringing one flat bread daily for thirteen years. "And…he survived by the will of his God. All others, who were thrown there from time to time, died, because of the foul-smelling, choking, poisonous, filthy, snake-ridden, unbearable place." It was dug for the criminals and for the execution of those condemned to death from all over Armenia.

Eventually, the head commander of Ote came to get Gregory. He was sent by Tiridat's sister – she saw a vision that the gravely ill Tiridat could be saved only by Gregory. That is exactly what happened. Cured, Tiridat the Great found faith in God and his Son, Jesus. The King's entire clan was baptized, and Christianity was accepted as the state religion of Armenia. Gregory the Illuminator became the first Armenian Catholicos.

CODE OF CONSCIENCE

I enter the monastery and can't believe my ears – I hear a voice of a muezzin calling Muslims to a prayer. I look for the cross on the Surb Mariam Astvatsatsin (Saint Mary's) Church, located in the center of the monastery complex. I stand, quietly observing. The vendor of the church candles provides an answer to my silent question.

- Don't be scared. It's not here. It's on the other side of Araks. Do you see the minaret?

Yes, it's a border and this river doesn't only separate two countries.

Khor Virap of the twenty-first century is both a spiritual and tourist center. The best proof is a bright "Souvenirs" sign attached to the arched entrance to one of the cells. Handmade paintings of Jesus, the Holy Mother of God, Saints, and some local handcrafts are sold here. And because it's a Holy place, anyone wanting to buy something has to look for the storekeeper for a long time. Obviously, it doesn't cross his mind that anyone might steal something from the shop. In fact, not being able to wait any longer, people sometimes leave their money on the counter, take what they want to buy, and leave.



Tiridat's sister had a vision that the gravely ill Tiridat could only be saved by Gregory. And that is what happened indeed. Cured, Tiridat the Great found faith in God, and Christianity was accepted as the state religion of Armenia.

THE BOAR DISEASE OF KING TIRIDAT

"… when the King (Tiridat) sat in the chariot and headed to the countryside, he was possessed and thrown of the chariot by a repulsive devil. Immediately, he was overcome by the inner rage and fury. Like the King of the Babylonians, Nebudchanezer, he lost human appearance, turned into a boar, and went to live among them like one of their own. Getting into the reeds, he became an herbivore, and, completely losing his mind, ran in the fields, tormenting his naked body. Even though (people) tried to keep him in the city, they couldn't: first, because of his natural strength, and secondly, (because) he was a possessed by the devil." Confession of Saint Gregory the Illuminator, Aghatangelos (5th century)

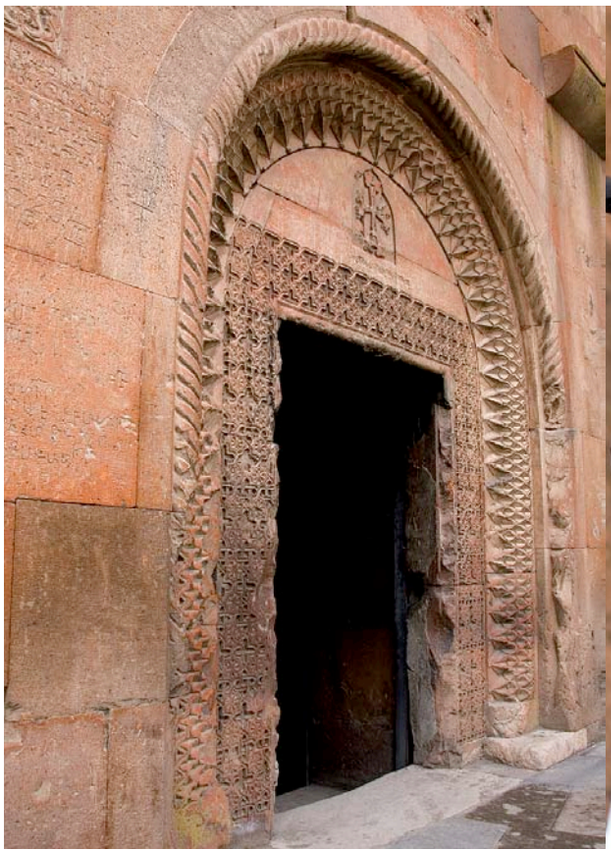


A small chapel – Church Sourb Grigor (Saint Gregory Church) – continues further along the monastery wall. It was built in the second half of the fifth century by Catholicos Nerses the Third, Taetsi. The pits are on both corners of it. The prior of the monastery, Father Narek, tells how Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned in the deepest one of those. Its depth is six and a half meters – since his crime was considered particularly heavy. The other was for less significant crimes, such as a refusal to worship the pagan gods and disobedience to orders of the King of the Greater Armenia.

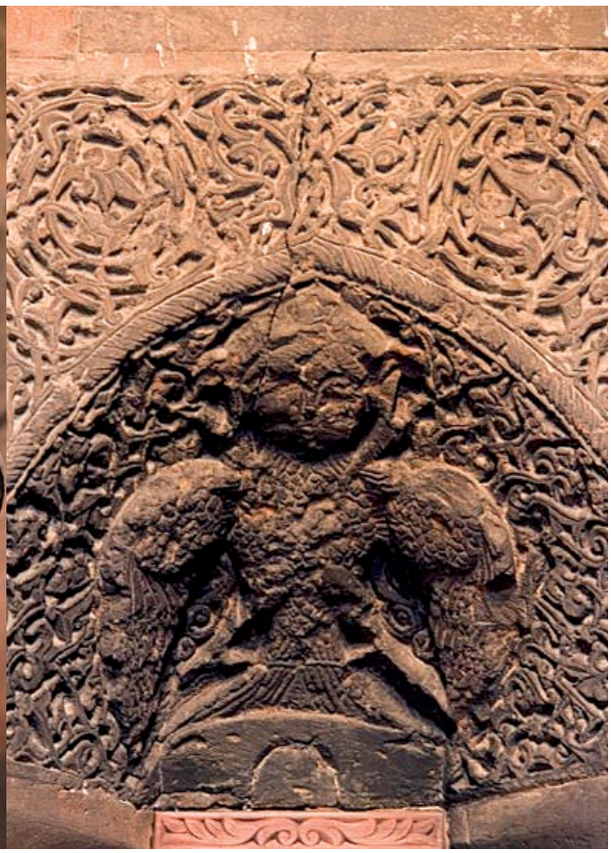
The narrow passageway leads us to the pit, which became an amphitheatre, where an act of tragedy about the struggle between the criminal code and the code of honor took place once. It would be more appropriate to say "code of conscience".

UNDERGROUND

The steep stairs are indeed shaky, and for a second it gets a little creepy. But soon the ground is under my feet. In fact, it is over my head as well. The semicircles of the blackened walls are above me, and on the right from the stairs there is a small altar with a black khachkar (cross stone). It must be this one that grandma Mariam took for someone's grave. The silence is interrupted by scared voices of those who didn't dare to come down here. But soon, in the opening one can see the sneakers, then jeans, and the owner of the jeans himself. ▶







The narrow passageway leads us to the pit, which became an amphitheatre, where an act of tragedy about the struggle between the criminal code and the code of honor, or rather "code of conscience", took place once.

"Get down here, get down," he shouts, "it's not scary at all! Come on! It's not like you are going to be here for thirteen years, just for a couple of minutes. Hey, you!"

It is probably for this kind of visitor, overly active and noisy, that there is a sign on the wall, "Do not write on the walls, please. Do not attach candles to the walls. Please, keep quiet." But, as always, these signs are rarely read. The active visitor in jeans is not an exception, he immediately climbs on the altar – how else to spend his restless energy in such a restricted space! Not everyone can study, some have to experience things for themselves.

I subconsciously look for snakes on the floor. Aghatangelos wrote about some serpents. Grandma Mariam's story coincided with the historian's data, "We have countless number of snakes. And black scorpions. The red ones – it's nothing! If they sting – it will just hurt for couple of days and that's all. But the black ones – they need to be respected." No, it's better to go back to the light of day.

THE CITY OF KING ARTASHES

We exit the monastery, and a man with impressive bushy mustache, David Arakelian, comes towards us. He volunteered to take us to Artashat, the site of the capital of Armenia in the second century B.C.

"It is not very far," he confirms. "Do you see the river Araks? And these poles with wires – it's the fence



Holy Mother of God Church in the monastery complex Khor Virap (bottom right)

A detail of the interior and the small bell of the Holy Mother of God Church (top)

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THE FOUNDATION OF THE CAPITAL CITY – ARTASHAT

" Artashes (I) (189-160 B.C.) arrives to the junction of rivers Yeraskh and Metsamor, and, finding a hill that he likes, builds there a city which he names after himself, Artashat.

…(He) brings from the city of Yervand captive Jews… and settles them down in Artashat. Also, all kinds of luxuries that were in Yervand, and all that he took from Armavir, and all that he made Artashes brings to Ashtarak. But most importantly, he creates a city that is worthy of an image of a royal capital.

History of Armenia
By Movses Khorenatsi
(5th century)



of the Commonwealth Union. I mean, the border. It's a short driving distance."

A turn, another one – and on the right hillside like the steps of a stairway the ruined walls of houses are sticking out the ground. I am somewhat uncomfortable – I feel like I'm walking into strangers' houses, but then I don't see any streets either. It might sound strange, but even the cubicles of the house ruins seem cozy. This was probably a bedroom, and in this corner might have been a crib. This large room could have been a parlor. As a guest I jump in down the wall raising a cloud of dust. Even the greatest of the cities turn to dust – it's the only force that could compete with time.

David points to recently dug holes, "These are done by the locals. The excavations were done in 1975, now look, they are digging on the Turkish side – they're looking for the continuation of the city. Periodically archeology students come here – they have a practice course or something like it. But they do not dig holes. It's our local folk who search for treasure. A lot was found here – it was a rich city. See the bones? These are human bones. There was possibly a cemetery here. But no one could find the grave of Tiridat's daughter. You know, there is a legend that she was buried in a gold coffin. So people dug around the whole hill."

FOLLOWING THE FOX'S STEPS

"Do you see our river?" our guide continues, "It flows from the Bagrat Canal. There are such catfish there! But that is not what I was going to tell about. The river is really shallow now, but when it's a rainy season it rises and then disappears. It flows out somewhere, who knows where. It disappears there, by that rock. People say that during Artashes's or Tiridat's reign they built underground passages to cross under the







David Arakelian climbs out of the underground passageway, located in the vicinity of the ancient ruins of Artashat



People say, that during Artashes' or Tiridat's reign they built underground passages to cross under Araks River and get out at the foothills of Mountain Ararat. Maybe, the river disappears into the one of these passages.

river Araks and to come out at the foothills of Mount Ararat. Maybe the water flows down into some of these passages. By the way, I, too, found a tunnel in that rock over there. You want to go up? I'll show you."

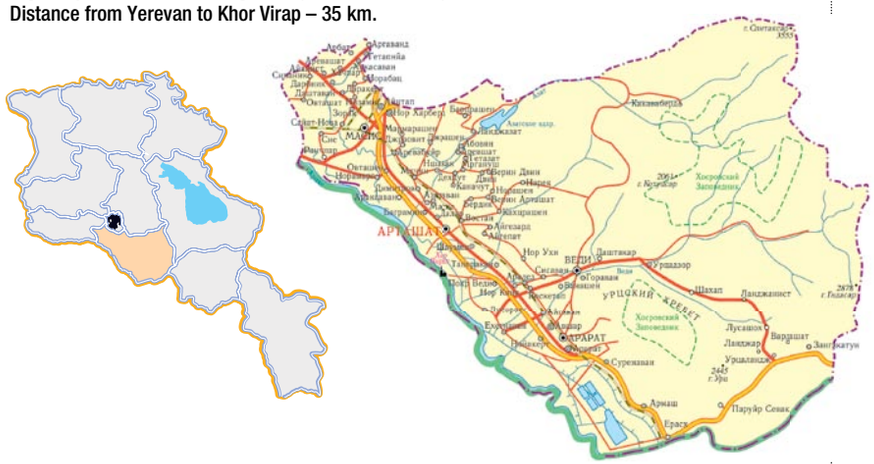
Frankly, I wasn't planning on any rock climbing today. But it is interesting, so we climb up. From the outside, it looks like a hole covered by a boulder. But David briskly slides into the hole, and disappears briefly. Then he gets out in the same agile manner. Today is a day full of "holes".

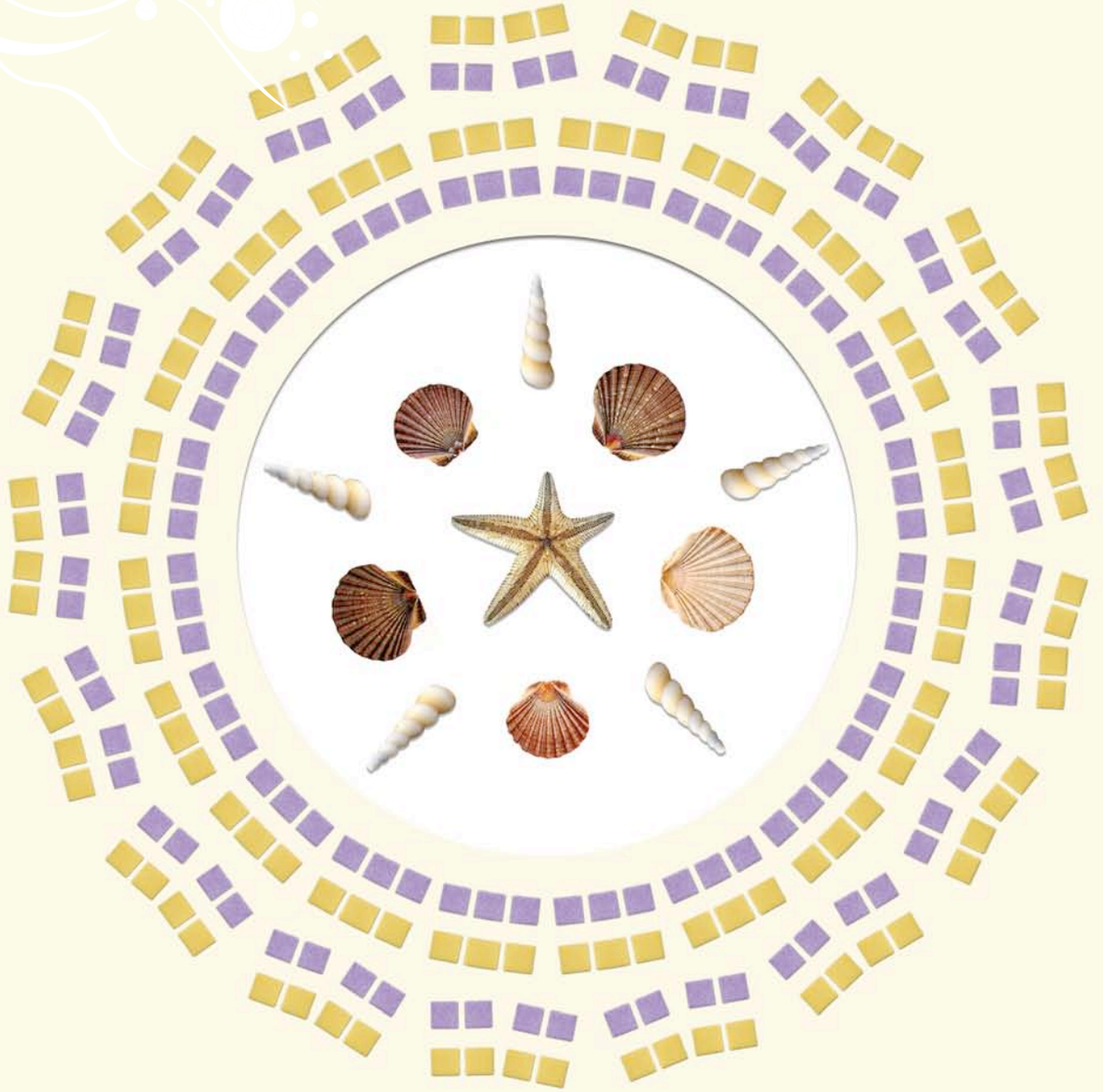
"I was fox hunting here," he explains upon restoring his breath, "I shot and injured it. It ran up the rock - I followed. Suddenly the fox disappeared. I came closer – and it looked like a cave. I went down into it, but I couldn't find the end of the cave. I got frightened and got out. Later a whole group of guys decided to find out where the tunnel leads. We spent three hours underground, but then we started suffocating because there was no air. Later people from the KGB came. They found me and asked me to show them the place. So I did…what they were doing there – I don't know. And they covered the entrance with boulders. Now you can't go very far down the tunnel anymore."

We say good-bye to David and head back. The mountain tops are covered with snow, but all along the road little white balloons fly on a background of the bright, green, new grass – the Ararat valley is full of apricot blossoms. It's such a beautiful day on Earth. Sunny. ■

ARARAT REGION

Area – 2,100 sq. km. Population – 274,200.
Center – Artashat.
98 villages, 4 towns – Masis, Ararat, Vedi, and Artashat
Highest point – Mountain Geghasar (elevation 3443 m)
Distance from Yerevan to Khor Virap – 35 km.





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With Metal on Voice

Knowledge has been the most valuable asset throughout the history of civilization. How can we preserve it, pass it to our descendants, and not to lose it, harm it, break it, tear it, burn it, or erase it? Listen carefully to the Armenian words, examine the letters that form these words, and a great secret will reveal itself to you.

text : **EDUARD AYANYAN**





The Armenian alphabet, gold and precious stones, 1976. Artists Zhirayr Chouloyan and Baghdasar Arzoumanian. Stored in the treasury of Holy Echmiadzin.

Why do we name objects with certain words and not others? Why is the earth called "earth", the sky – "sky", and gold – "gold"? Linguists are discovering hundreds of possible explanations, decoding the etymology of words, and finding connections between the words of various world languages. We are given plenty of substantial information – this word comes from that word, and that word come from some other word, and so on. However, these chains inevitably lead us to a certain word or a word root, the meaning of which is given without any explanation. The central question remains unanswered: why a certain thing has this name, and not another.

This brings to mind the main and most important assignment given to Adam in the Garden of Eden – to invent names for the animals. Think of it – it was a very difficult task indeed: to give names to things without using familiar word roots and without having any logical frame of reference.

Let's take a look at the names of metals, known to man for ages. Where do these words come from, why do they have certain sounds, and do they have some deep meaning? For instance, the Latin word for gold – Aurum - etymologists link this to the ancient Greek morning light goddess, Aurora. The Latin Argentum (silver) they trace to the Greek argos – white, shining. It's a nice try, but nothing deeper is offered.

How about Armenian words? It's a well-known fact that as early as five thousand years ago metallurgy and metal goods production were developed in the territories of what is now Armenia. Subsequently, words such as "gold", "silver", or "lead" existed in Armenian since ancient times. These words have been preserved in the language without any major changes. We use them without thinking about their true meaning, because for us it's just a familiar sound combination. But if we take a different perspective and look at these words closely, the revealed meaning can be astounding. The Armenian word for gold is "voski". Without getting into etymology of the word or into possible explanations of its origin, let's do a simple experiment. Let's write the word in Armenian, and under each letter let's write its ordinal number in the Armenian Alphabet. Then let's add up these ordinal numbers:

U S K I
24+29+15+11 = 79
("voski" — "gold")

But 79 is nothing other than the atomic number of gold in the periodic table of chemical elements!

Au	79
196,9665	
gold	

We know from school chemistry classes that many properties of chemical elements are periodic functions of their atomic number (the number of protons within the element's atomic nucleus). Mendeleev's periodic table is an arrangement of the chemical elements by their atomic number in columns (groups) and rows (periods) presented in such way that it emphasizes their periodic properties.

It means that in the word "voski" there is an encoded atomic number of gold. Is it a simple coincidence? It is easy to check by the other Armenian names of metals (naturally, according to their old, original form of writing):

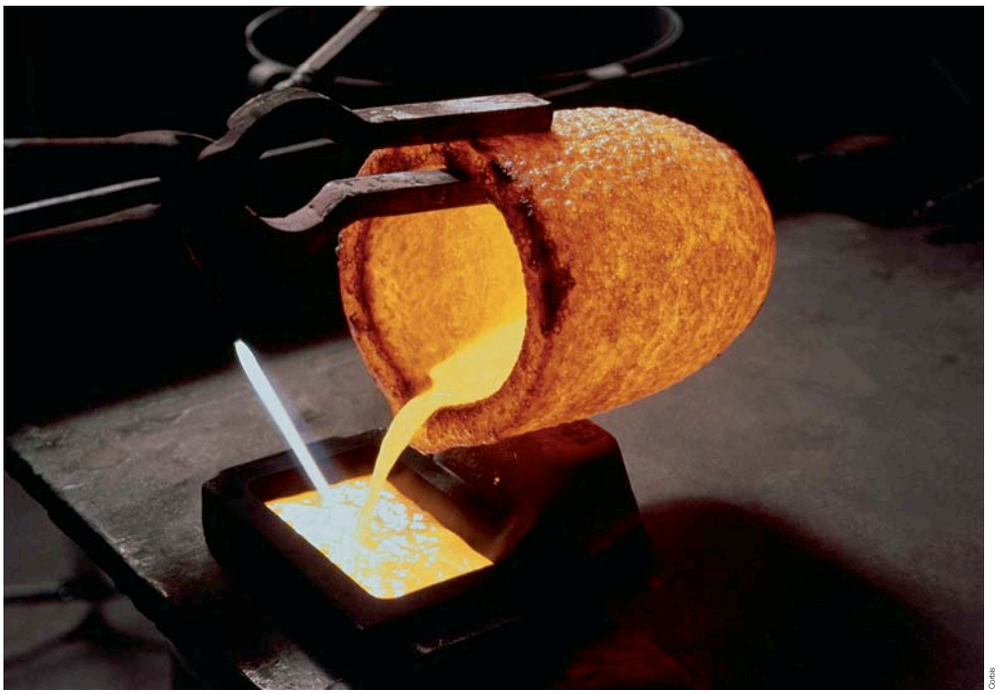
Pb	82
207,2	
lead	

A R ~ I ~
1+32+19+11+19 = 82
("artchitch" — "lead")

Ag	47
107,868	
silver	

A R |
1+32+14 = 47
("artz" — "silver")

As one can see, the totaled numbers also coincide with the atomic numbers of these metals! The probability of such a coincidence in mathematics is expressed through a number of 2.3×10^{-9}, which means that such an occurrence is as probable (or improbable), as the possibility of assembling a Mercedes-Benz out of couple of hundreds of randomly selected car parts. But if it is not a mere coincidence, then it is a system with a set of rules. Moreover, a set of rules with no exceptions: it had to include at least all the metals known at that historic period of time.



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LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE NAMES OF METALS, KNOWN TO MAN FOR AGES. WHERE DO THESE WORDS COME FROM AND DO THEY HAVE SOME DEEP MEANING?

Thus, let us check one more metal, used since the dawn of civilization – tin. The contemporary name of tin in Armenian is "anag", but that is a word that came from a foreign languages. In the book of Amirdovlat Amasiatsi Angitants Anpet (Of No Use to the Ignorant) there are several words meaning "tin", including the Armenian word for it – "klayek" (Klayek) (In contemporary Armenian this word is used for the metal alloy used for tinning.) However, as we check, that word does not support our hypothesis. It occurred to us that we also need to take into consideration that Amasiatsi's book was written in the 15th century, and many Armenian words of that time were already different from the original Old Armenian forms. The experts agree that in the roots of true Armenian words consonant blends were rarely used in the beginning of the words. As a rule there was a vowel between these initial consonants, which later was omitted. That brings us to a conclusion that "klayek", most probably, is also an altered form of the word.

And where can we find its original form, one might ask? We came up with an idea – to check the word for tin in the word roots of other languages, particularly of those that were languages of countries neighboring Armenia. It turned out that such a word existed – it was the word "kalay." This word is used in Turkish, Kazakh, Uzbek, Serbian, Macedonian, Bulgarian, and Albanian languages. A practically identical form is also preserved in Georgian, Osetian, and other Caucasian languages.

Interestingly, Armenia is located at the very center of the area where the word "kalay" is used.





The remains of the site of the metallurgy complex (3,000 B.C.), Metsamor, Armenia

Thus, our assumption that the word "klayek" is a version of the original "kalay" later "enriched" with a suffix "-ek" becomes more reliable.
What's next? Let's simply write "kalay" in Armenian.

K A L A X
15+1+12+1+21 = 50
("kalay" — "tin")

And again, the result is the atomic number of tin!

Sn	50
118,69	
tin	

The picture that comes to the surface is pretty shocking – the names of the metals in Armenian represent their atomic numbers! This astonishing fact inevitably brings up numerous questions. What are we dealing with here? Who created these words? Who came up with metal names containing their main characteristics?- And really,- are we talking about a creation by humans? If the answer is yes one can come to a sensational conclusion: that our ancestors had an incredibly high level of scientific knowledge.

For instance, if they knew that gold is the seventy-ninth element, then they, at least, knew the preceding seventy eight elements. To that group, also belongs the sequence of lantanoids (the chemical elements from atomic weights 58 to 71), the latest of which were discovered only in the 20th century. But if such knowledge was not available in ancient times, then they had to know the periodic law and had to define the atomic charge of gold and other metals. But by what means? We know very well that the physicists "figured out" the structure and the charge of the atomic nucleus between the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century.

A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, IT WAS SUFFICIENT TO SPEAK ARMENIAN AND MEMORIZE THE LETTERS OF ALPHABET TO KNOW THE BASICS OF MODERN CHEMISTRY!

Nevertheless, if we assume that these names are given to us from the "heavens above", then all we can do is to marvel at the creative genius of the solution – since language is the most reliable mean of passing and preserving information. The textbook with the Periodic Table can be destroyed or lost, but it is impossible to forget the words of the mother tongue.

It seems impossible, but a thousand years ago, it was sufficient to speak Armenian and memorize the 35 letters of the Armenian alphabet to know the basics of Chemistry! And if such a seemingly fantastic approach is applicable to Chemistry, then why can't one assume that the astronomical names of space objects or the physical names of the states of the matter are not encoded in their Armenian equivalents?

The staggering, mind blowing conclusions do not end here. As the little stone rolling from the mountain top can trigger an avalanche, a small fact can uproot the long established, branched out, and broadly supported scientific theories. A conclusion that comes out from simple logic can be a revolutionary one.

The fact is that our hypothesis is based on the ordinal sequence of the letters of the Armenian alphabet, which, according to the official belief, was created by Mesrop Mashtots in 405-406 A.C. However, the creation of the alphabet is not the same as the creation of the language! And the words "voski", "arts", "archich", and other names of the metals appeared in the Armenian language long before the birth of Mashtots!

It is understandable that these words were mentioned in the written language starting from the 5th century. However it doesn't mean that they did not exist before that. Does it mean that the Armenian words were linked to the numerical order of the letters of the alphabet that was later created? Mashtots couldn't possibly correlate the created alphabet to these words, and if we assume that he did exactly that, it means that he was aware of the existing connection. For instance, we could have followed an assumption that the letter " S", which represents the sound "s", theoretically could have had another graphical representation, but to assume that it could have been also the 29th letter of the alphabet, would have been an axiom. Similarly as the letter "K" ("k") is the 15th, and the " R" ("R") – is the 32nd.

In any case it turns out that the existing number of letters (36) in the Armenian alphabet, as well as their order, – is not a result of free creativity, but a strict system, bound to certain laws and created long before Mashtots. And the fact that the Great Illuminator had brought these letters back to life in the beginning of the 5th century does not mean that he had created them out of nothing. The assumption that the Armenian alphabet is just an improved version of

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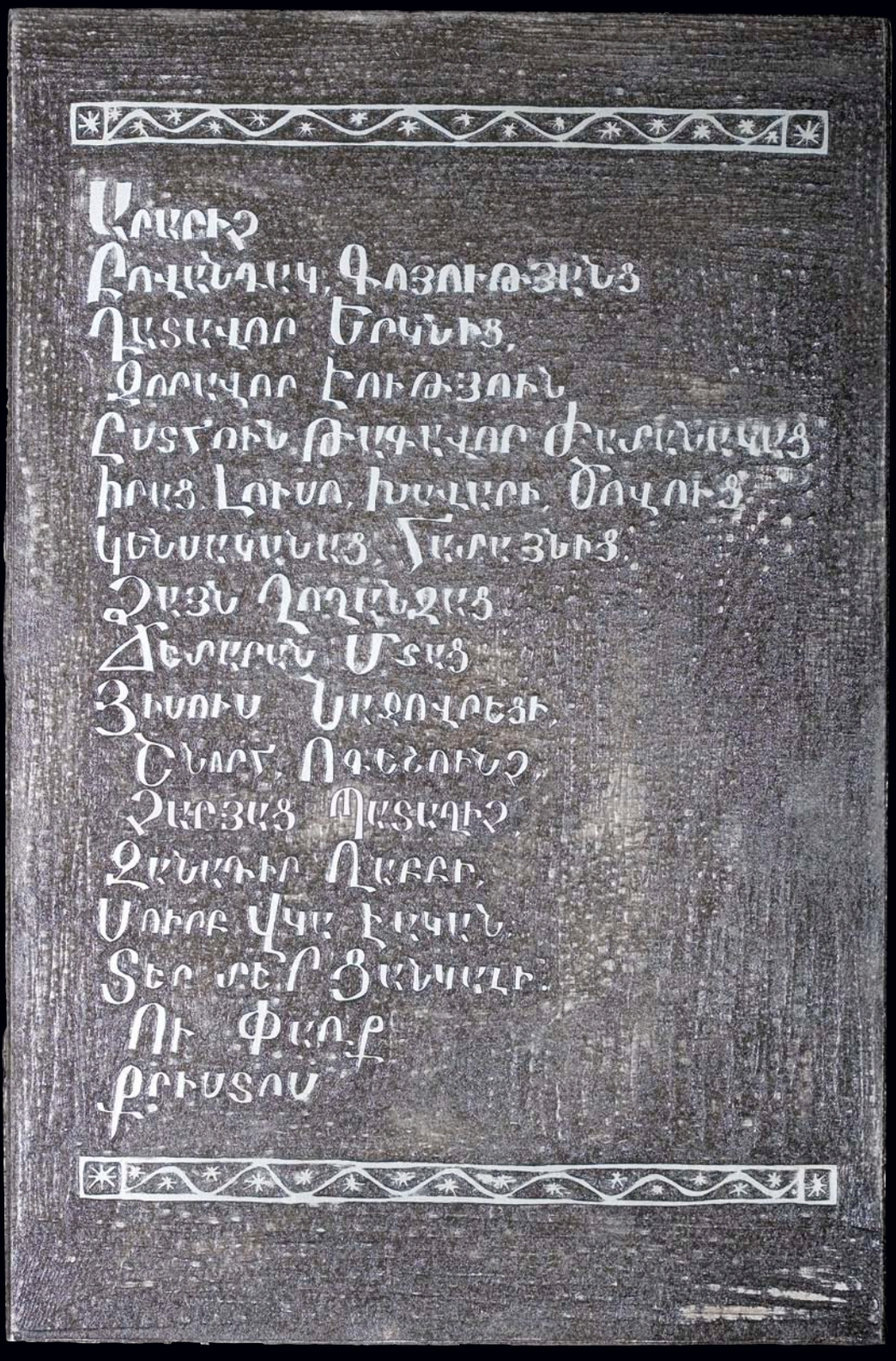
Creator,
the beholder of all the existing,
the heavenly judge,
the almighty source,
The true king of living
creatures, of darkness and
waters;
Universal and eternal,
Alarming voice,
School of wisdom,
Jesus of Nazareth,
Gift of Inspiration,
Obstacle for evil,
Tireless teacher,
Holy teacher of existence,
Our beloved master…
And Praise to Jesus…



Arthur Hakopyan

Alphabet-prayer of Mashtots.
Completed by Armen Agoulian

Phoenician, Greek, or Ethiopian, is shattered by an undeniable fact, that the Phoenician alphabet contains just 22, Ethiopian – 26, and the Greek alphabet – 24 notations.

Here we come across another very important question: why are the letters of the alphabet sequenced in this particular order? Is there a certain code, some kind of formula to it? Vast numbers of studies have been conducted, papers written, and hypotheses posed, both convincing and less so...

For example, an acrophonic method is applied to the order of the letters – in this case each letter is assigned to a certain word starting with that particular letter, and their sequence constructs a logically formed phrase. In such manner, the alphabet appears as an abbreviation of that phrase. Some of these phrases have long history. The Armenian alphabet also has its acrophonic reading. However, the ambiguity and inconsistency of such methods are evident: the same order of words can be "read" differently, each time "extracting" a different meaning. Moreover, there is no guarantee that the parallels between letter and word reached us in their unaltered form or did not enter into the active speech circulation during the early Christian period. In addition, there is also a danger of confusing cause and effects. Acrophony helps to memorize the letter order, but that kind of order must have existed initially.

Coming back to the "metallic" phenomena, we can state that the Armenian alphabet is a strict system, which connects the words and their inscriptions with logic and meaning.



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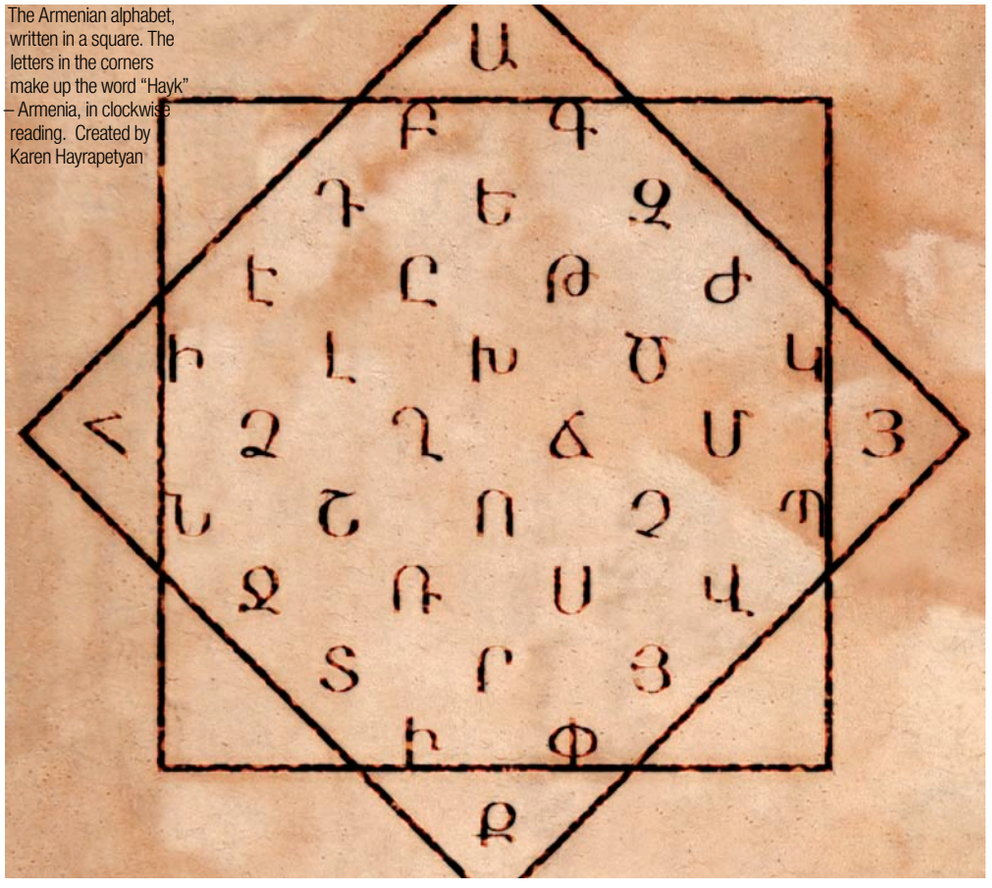
IF THESE NAMES ARE GIVEN FROM "THE HEAVENS ABOVE", THEN WE CAN ONLY WONDER AT THE CREATIVE GENIUS OF THE SOLUTION – INDEED, LANGUAGE IS THE MOST RELIABLE MEAN OF PASSING AND PRESERVING THE INFORMATION.



The Armenian alphabet, written in a square. The letters in the corners make up the word "Hayk" – Armenia, in clockwise reading. Created by Karen Hayrapetyan

Therefore, most probably, Mashtots's task was to reconstruct that system, not just come up with some abstract symbols. Indeed, anybody can create graphic symbols and connect them with corresponding sounds in a matter of minutes. Why would Mesrop Mashtots spend years in the greatest libraries of the ancient world, and why would he meet with the scientists and transcribers? What was he looking for? What was he asking for in his endless prayers and what did he eventually receive? In fact, according to Khorenatsi, the Armenian letters were granted to Mashtots as a grace from heaven: "…He saw not a night dream and not a day dream, but within his beating heart he got a vision of a hand writing on a stone. And that stone, like snow, preserved the imprints of these inscriptions. It was not just envisioned before him, but its details remained imprinted in Mesrop's brain, like in some kind of a vessel..."

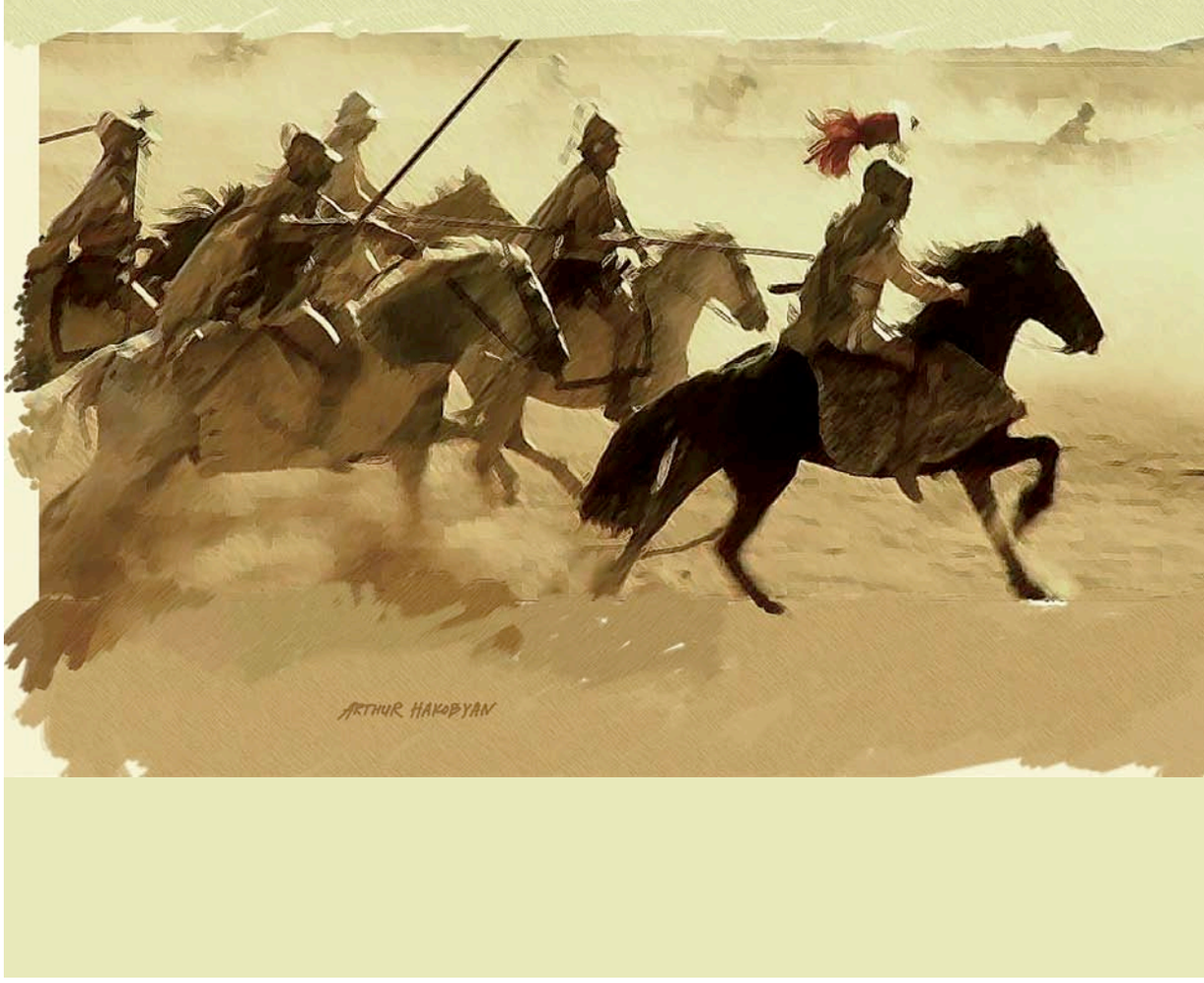
Whether it was created in the 5th century or much earlier, was a gift from above, or a creation of a human genius, the Armenian alphabet, an ordinary and customary part of our lives, even today remains one of the greatest unsolved mysteries of our civilization, and how many more sensational discoveries will be related to it – nobody knows. ■

THE KING OF KINGS

The reign of Tigran II was a period of a forceful outward expansion in the history of Armenia. The great Armenian king, a clever politician and strategist, transformed his country into a powerful state which even threatened the mighty Rome.

text : **ERNA REVAZOVA**
Illustrations : **ARTHUR HAKOPYAN**


ARTHUR HAKOBYAN



THE DIE IS CAST

The prisoner stood by the window and silently looked into the distance with a furrowed brow.

It was not his imprisonment that bothered the heir to the Armenian throne; he had been a captive for a long time. Taking over the Medians and Babylonians, Parthia frequently invaded Armenian lands. Unable to subdue them, it nevertheless acquired substantial means of applying political pressure on Armenia by holding the nephew of King Artavazd captive.

Standing by the window, Tigran reflected on the news of Artavazd's death which he received from the messenger from Armenia. That news radically changed Tigran's status – from that of a hostage to the designated King of Greater Armenia. It goes without saying that Parthia demanded vast territories in return for his freedom – seventy valleys in the South-Eastern provinces – all native Armenian lands. Tigran had to make his first decision as a statesman – to become a King or not, at such a dear price.

Tigran was aware that the aged King of Parthia, Mithridates II set this high ransom knowing that the new King of Greater Armenia might become a dangerous adversary. The years in captivity at the royal court of the Parthians weren't spent in vain – Tigran was well acquainted with all its internal affairs and could foresee the upcoming turmoil in Parthia. Moreover, he was wise, audaciously intelligent, talented in military arts, and very experienced. These extraordinary qualities could upset Mithridates in his attempts to weaken Armenia and destroy Armenia's independence.

The Parthian King, however, could not destroy Tigran physically – the murder of an unarmed prisoner, particularly one of royal descent, was against the noble principles of the time period and would negatively affect the international reputation of Parthia. Mithridates knew how to gain a two-fold advantage. The ransom he set would open direct access to the very heart of the Armenian Kingdom – Ararat Valley, where Armenia's capital, Artashat, and its largest cities were located. Armenia wasn't just losing land, it would have a great impact on the economy of the country – part of the ransom included the Kapoutan Sea (Lake Urmia). This meant that Armenia would lose the opportunity to get and export to neighboring countries a strategically important natural resource – salt. In addition, the annexation of Armenian territories would inevitably discredit Tirgan in the eyes of his own people, and, most importantly, the nobility - without their support there would be no real power. Tigran was well aware that giving up the territories would inevitably weaken the economy and defense capacities of his country. He also understood that he might lose the trust of the people if he were to cede these lands.

The prisoner stood by the window and silently looked into the distance. The deep wrinkle on his brow disappeared; Tigran had made his choice.

THE EMPIRE

The King stood on the fortress wall overlooking the surroundings. His lips were curved into a slight smile.

Tigran recalled the time when he returned to his country for his coronation. It was there, in the Greater Armenia's province of Aghzdnik, where he later established the new capital - Tigranakert. Tigran the Great's empire could afford to maintain three capital cities simultaneously: the numerous vassal states properly paid their taxes, and the country prospered.

The construction of the new capital wasn't a whim. Neither of the historic capital cities were suited to be political and cultural centers. Artashat, founded by Artashes I during the first years of his reign, and Antioch, the Seleucid capital that was conquered by Tigran, were located on the outskirts of his country.

In contrast, Tigranakert was located at the very heart of the empire. Tigran thought that he chose a very good location for his capital – it was safely protected by the steep slopes of Tavr from the North, and the royal road of the Achaemenids passed by to the South, connecting the large trading centers of the Empire to the capital.

The King believed that his empire was unbeatable, just like the walls of Tigranakert –fifty cubits (300 feet) high with stables built into their lower ramparts. The city bustled with life: he ordered the relocation of the residents of the twelve conquered Hellenistic city-states as well as the Armenian nobility (some of whom were forced to move under a threat of property confiscation). In addition, Antioch, with its population of 500,000, became the main residence of the Armenian King in the South. Tigran's famous coins were stamped in Antioch and spread throughout the Armenian Empire.

Tigran greatly extended his domain in the course of his twenty-five year reign – by the end of the first century B.C., the Armenian

Tigran's thoughts came back to the news about Artavazd's death, delivered by the messenger from Armenia. The news radically changed Tigran's status – from a hostage he was about to become the King.



The Armenian Kingdom stretched from the Caspian Sea to the Red and Mediterranean Seas, from the Great Media to the mountainous Cilicia and Cappadocia. Tigran's authority was acknowledged in Judea and Nabatea.

Kingdom stretched from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean and Red Seas (to the border of Egypt), from the Great Media to the mountainous Cilicia and Cappadocia. Tigran's authority was acknowledged even in Judea and Nabatea. The Empire was prospering – it was not only a period of victorious wars, but also decades of a peaceful life, a blooming economy, culture, and arts.

All of these accomplishments did not exist in 96 B.C., when he took the throne. There were only hostile neighbors – Parthia, with whom Tigran had his private reckonings, and Rome, which was making every effort to dominate the entire Eastern Mediterranean region.

First of all, the King of Greater Armenia added to his kingdom the Sofena (Tzophq) – one of the three historically formed independent Armenian states. The best Armenian craftsmen lived in this unified land, rich with metal resources. It took Tigran only a year to create a combat-ready army. Soon he also had an advanced military industry. The more countries were annexed into his empire, the more generously he paid his soldiers.

They were excellent warriors, but sometimes they were left without action – some countries voluntarily expressed their intention to become Tigran's protectorates. For example, this was the case with Syria and Phoenicia. The King of the Greater Armenia had many supporters in Syria. After the subjugation of the Northern Mesopotamia, the trade route that connected Central and Eastern Asia with the Middle East was under Tigran's control. Wealthy cities, whose interests involved security, continuation of their privileges, and international trade, wanted to be under Tigran's protective shield. It was during Tigran's reign that Syria was able "to breath freely, and enjoyed peace for fourteen years" (Justinian). One of Tigran's wisest political moves was the treaty with Arabian nomadic tribes about guarding the trade routes along the southern borders: they charged custom tolls to enrich the royal treasury – the main collection was done at the crossing of the Euphrates River.

Even the proud Eupator Mithridates VI, King of Pontus, sought a treaty with its mighty neighbor, Armenia, during the confrontation between Rome and Pontus. It was the only way to stop the expansion of Rome. Tigran accepted the ambassadors and the luxurious gifts of Mithridates. The signed treaty was enforced by the marriage of Tigran and the daughter of Mithridates, Cleopatra. The bride was seventeen, and the groom was forty-seven years old. In fact, thirty years later, when the union with Pontus was not needed anymore, Tigran divorced Cleopatra. "They came to an agreement, according which the cities and lands belonged to Mithridates, and people and all that could have been transported – to Tigran" (Justinian).

Tigran's armies made three campaigns to Cappadocia. The alliance with Mithridates was beneficial for the Armenian king. He secured the western borders of the country, where the King of Cappadocia, Ariobarzanes I Romanophile, created an outpost for the Roman expansion into Asia Minor. Eight years later, Tigran easily solved his conflict with

> "With his governance and reasoning he (Tigran) excelled all of our kings, and with his courage he surpassed everyone else. He extended the borders of our residence to their ancient farthest limits. He was the object of envy of his generation, for us - he and his time are the objects of aspiration. <…> He ennobled our people, and we, who were under the suppression of others, became the ones who put the yoke on many, forcing them to pay us the tribute. He multiplied the stocks of gold, silver, and precious gems. <…>
> The infantry climbed on horses, the sling bearers became marksmen. The club bearers were armed with swords and spears; the unarmed were covered in armory and iron shields. Just the sight of this army, dressed in their brightly shining armors, was enough to put the enemies to flight."
>
> **MOVSES KHORENATSI**
> History of Armenia



Parthia. The long anticipated moment to return the "debt" - territories, paid in exchange for his freedom, arrived. Crushing the Parthian army, he took over the seventy valleys, conquered Adiabena and Media-Atropatena. (And by the way, the King of Atropatena, Mithridates, was married to Tigran's daughter.) The Parthian Arshakids were doomed – Tigran's troops continued their march and reached Arshakids' summer residence, the capital city of Ecbatana. Tigran burned down the royal castle known as Adrapana, located ten kilometers away from the capital, and destroyed the Ninevia and Arbela districts of Adiabena. Usually, he forbid destruction (there being no need to damage his own lands), but in this case the feeling of revenge took over. The Parthians surrendered Mesopotamia, along with Migdonia and Osroena, to Tigran as well as the title "The King of Kings." The authority of Tigran was accepted by the regions which had been the "vassals" of Parthia before its fall.



The Phoenician citadel Ptolemaida was also subjugated by Tigran. It seemed that nothing could threaten the peace and prosperity of Armenia.

The King was standing on the wall of the fortress and looking over the vicinity. His lips were tightly pressed together – Tigran just got a report that Lucullus laid siege to Tigranakert.

THE SON AGAINST THE FATHER

Tigran stood across from Pompeus and looked at his son. There was pain in his eyes.

In his mind one picture of the Roman invasion was followed by another: the Battle of Tigranakert, the retreat of the Armenian troops to the North, the Battle of Aratsani… When Tigran took over the Cilician Plains and Comagena, he closely approached Mountainous Cilicia. Even prior to that the Roman Senate was concerned with Tigran's kingdom, which rose so high in its power. Tigran already had confrontations with the Roman troops in Cappadocia, now a new source of conflict was Eupator Mithridates VI – after a heavy defeat from the Romans, he made an escape to Armenia and found sanctuary in Tigranakert. Tigran refused Rome's demand to surrender the refugee, saying that he does not betray his relatives, "The whole world and my own conscience would condemn me if I should surrender the father of my wife to the enemy." In spring of 69 B.C. the Roman troops laid siege to Tigranakert. The garrison of the fortress defended the city for five months under the pressing attacks of the Romans – their arrows were showering the attackers, and burning oil was destroying the siege machines of the Romans. The warriors were not only defending the city; the outcome of this battle determined the outcome of the war. The royal treasury was still in Tigranakert – money that would allow hiring soldiers and provide weapons and food supplies for future battles against the Romans. Fortunately, the group sent by Tigran successfully completed the daring operation of getting the royal treasury and Tigran's harem out of the city. Romans did not understand what had happened: the Armenian horsemen dashed like the wind through their lines, the gates opened for them and were shut just as swiftly. Later at night, they repeated the same maneuver, with the King's wives, concubines, children, and part of the royal treasury.

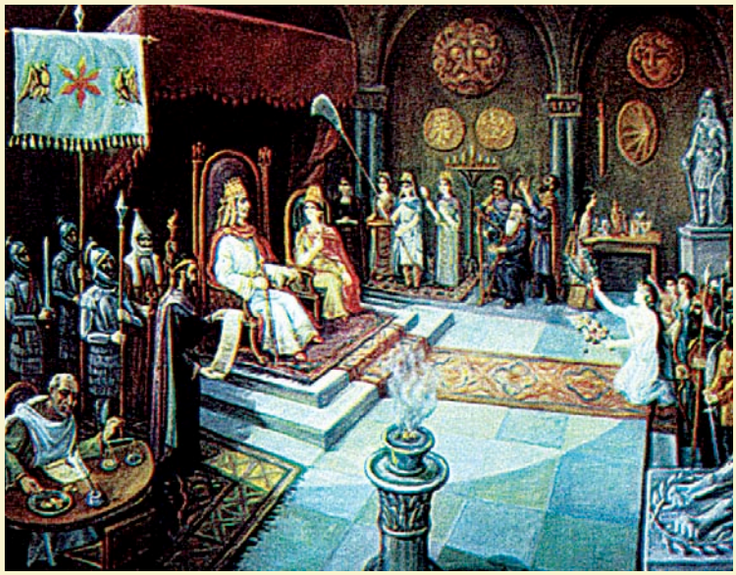
Romans did not understand what had happened: the Armenian horsemen dashed like the wind through their lines, the gates opened for them and were shut just as swiftly. The daring operation was completed.

Nevertheless, on October 6, 69 B.C., the God of War turned away from Tigran – the Battle of Tigranakert was lost. His army was gathered too hastily, and Lucullus was too sly. He had sent against Tigran's front lines a single cohort of cavalrymen, and Lucullus himself, with the complete army of the Roman infantry attacked from the rear. It's true that Lucullus later ordered his biographers to write that he fought in the battle with an open sword. The Armenian forces could not reposition quickly enough on the rough terrain, and the unexpected attack from the rear became the critical decisive factor. Fortunately, Tigran with his guards were able to escape. Mithridates later wrote in his letter to the Parthian king that "the Romans present misfortunes of Tigran as their own victory." As a result of Tigran's defeat Tigranakert was lost. The Greek mercenaries, who were following the course of the battle, came to an agreement with the Romans and surrendered the city. The invaders mercilessly looted it, Lucullus took the remaining treasures, and his legionnaires got eight thousand talents.

Tigran, in the meantime, sought an alliance with his former foe, Parthia. But the Parthian King, Phraates, had already received an offer from the Romans: to take their side, or to keep his neutrality. Naturally, he preferred not to get involved in a conflict between the two empires. The whole winter Tigran and Mithridates spent in hasty preparations. This time the

THE CHRONICLES OF TIGRAN II (140 – 55 B.C.)

140 B.C. – the future King of Armenia, Tigran the Great, was born.
112 B.C. - the heir of the throne was given as a hostage to Parthia by the Armenian king Artavazd I.
95 B.C. – Tigran II ascended the throne.
94 B.C. - The annexation of the Sofena and alliance with the King of Pontus, Eupator Mithridates VI.
93 B.C. - First campaign to Cappadocia. Tigran dethroned Ariobarzanes I Romanophile and established Gordius on the throne, whose candidacy was supported by the local nobility.
92 B.C. - Second military campaign to Cappadocia. The Romans, under the commandership of Sulla, invaded Cappadocia and defeated Tigran's army, which arrived to support Gordius. The establishment of diplomatic relationships between the Rome and Parthia – Euphrates was determined to become a dividing line between their spheres of influence in the region. Parthia offered Sulla to sign a military pact against Tigran.
91 B.C. - Third campaign to Cappadocia. The beginning of the inner break-up of the Parthian Empire.
90 – 86 B.C. – Tigran was preparing for the war with Parthia. He established his higher authority and control over Iberia and Albania.
86 – 85 B.C. – the victorious war with Parthia. The rulers of Adiabena, Media-Atropatena, Gorduena and Osroena acknowledged the higher authority of Tigran II. He accepted the title of the "King of the Kings".
83 B.C. – by the request of the Hellenistic cities of Syria, Tigran II ascended on the throne of the Syrian Kingdom (83 – 69 B.C.)
77 B.C. - Tigranakert was established as the new capital of the Armenian State.
69 B.C. – War with the Rome. The Roman troops under the commandership of Lucullus invaded Armenia. The battle of Tigranakert. The break-up of the Empire of Tigran the Great.
68 B.C. - The march of Lucullus to Artashat. The defeat of the Roman troops at Aratsani.
68 – 67 B.C. – counter-offensive of Tigran II – restoration of the control over Nizibis and Sofena, Tigran's troops reached the Euphrates. Pompeus arrived to the Cilician Plains. The rebellion of Tigran Junior, the grandson of Eupator Mithridates VI.
66 B.C. – military alliance of the Rome and Parthia against Tigran II the Great. The Parthian King Phraates III accompanied with Tigran Junior invaded Armenia and besieged Artashat. The Armenian troops crash the Parthians. Peaceful treaty with Pompeus. Avoidance of the war of two battlefronts. The end of the Roman-Parthian alliance.
64 B.C. - agreement of Tigran II and Phraates III – the Armenians and Parthians came to a resolution not to get involved in wars against each other ever.
Autumn 55 B.C. – Tigran II the Great died.
Based on the book by Ruben Manaserian - *Tigran the Great: The Struggle of Armenia with Rome and Parthia* Yerevan, 1987.



army was organized on the Roman model – Tigran believed that large military divisions lack mobility. The Roman system of maniples was more flexible and mobile. Lucullus, who was hoping that Tigran would be the first to either ask for peace, or to move into a battle, was forced to start advancing in the springtime - the Roman people preferred winners! Artashat was in Lucullus' way. The Romans crossed the River Tuvr. Here they encountered the first surprise – the wheat fields were still green. When they started their march in the South it was the start of the harvest. Now Lucullus realized that he was going to have problems with his food supplies. And that was not the only problem – the Armenian army was waiting for him by the River Aratsani. Tigran was the first to attack while the Romans were still crossing the river. The light cavalry of Tigran used a well-known strategy - the simulation of an escape. The Romans began chasing the horsemen, and the Armenians shot their arrows back at them. On the opposite bank the main forces of the Armenians were waiting for the Romans. Lucullus was forced to retreat: his losses were much too great. Soon, it unexpectedly got colder – it started snowing in September, and his army began revolting. Under pressure of his soldiers Lucullus was forced to move back to Mesopotamia. Chasing the Romans, Tigran got engaged in one more battle and returned his Southern provinces. The Roman Senate, dissatisfied with the actions of Lucullus, transferred the "exclusive authority" for the Eastern Campaign to Pompeus.

It was at exactly this moment that Tigran got stabbed in the back – his son, Tigran Jr. raised a rebellion against him. His son hoped to receive the crown of Armenia from Pompeus as a reward for his treachery. Tigran was forced to interrupt his victorious march to Cappadocia. The son couldn't overthrow his father, although Phraates III gave him his soldiers. Being defeated at Artashat, he escaped to Ctesiphone, where he married the daughter of Phraates. For the Romans, however, the father was a more appropriate ally than his son – the Rome was on the verge of war with Parthia. The army of Pompeus was standing at the walls of Artashat. And Tigran decided to take an unprecedented action. The Armenian King, crushing the army of the Parthians at Artashat, in his position as the victor decided to offer a "peace treaty" to Pompeus. He, alone, without any guards went to the Roman camp. On the border of their camp he was asked to surrender his sword and get down from his horse. He complied. And when he entered Pompeus' tent he put down his royal crown. Pompeus understood Tigran's goodwill gesture; he immediately acknowledged Tigran as the King of Greater Armenia and placed the crown back on Tigran's head. The young traitor was sitting to the left of Pompeus. He did not even stand up, upon seeing his father. He just followed the crown with a predatory glance. A peace treaty was signed between Rome and Armenia, with the surrender of all territories that had been annexed to Armenia, but keeping its sovereignty and royal power. Tigran, probably, foresaw all of these; the only thing he did not expect was the possibility that all three of his sons with Cleopatra – Mithridates' grandsons – would betray him.

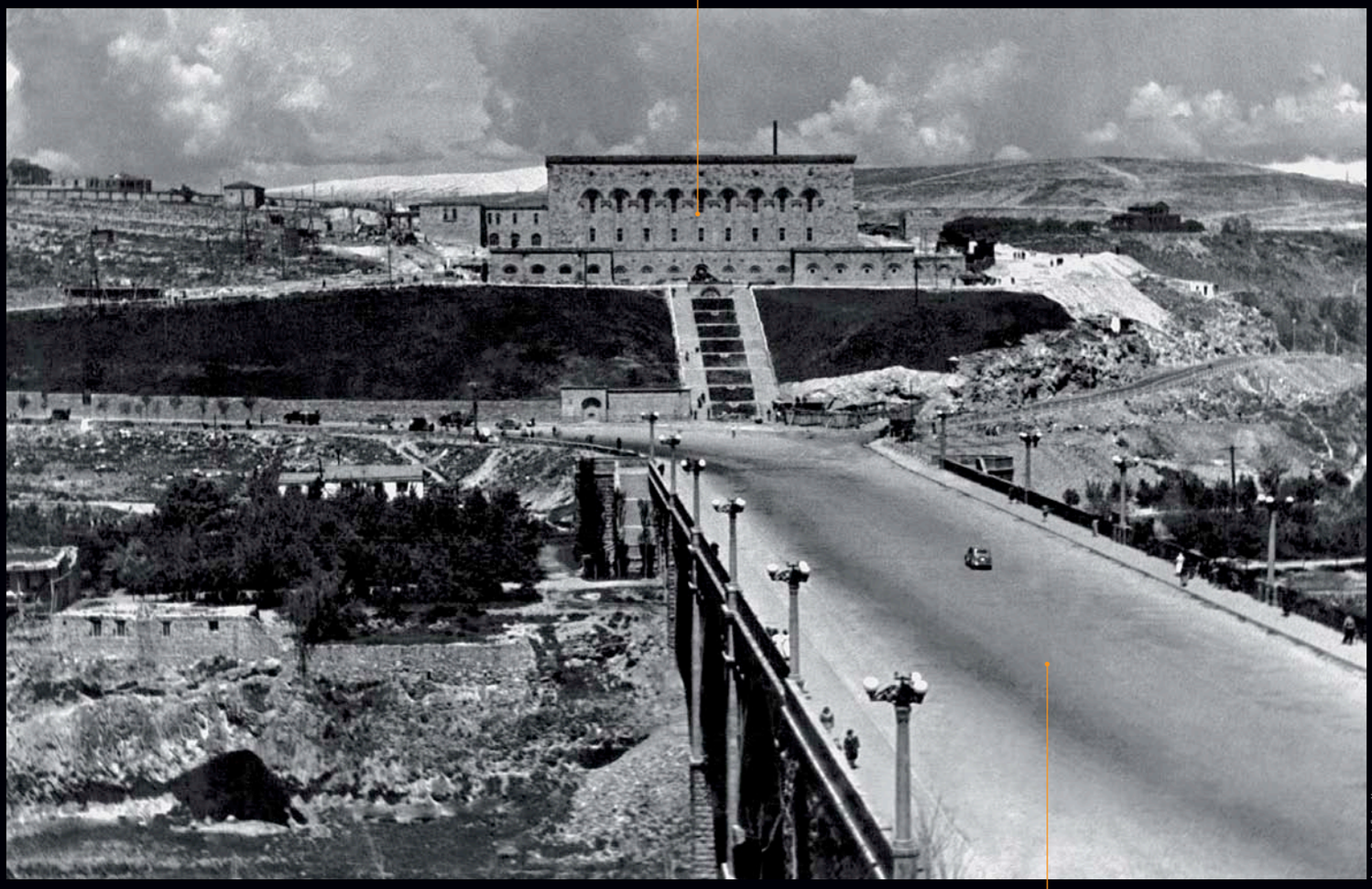
Tigran stood in front of Pompeus and looked at his own son. There was a great disappointment in his eyes – his heir betrayed not only his father, but also his father's whole life's work.

Tigran went to the Roman camp alone. When he entered Pompeus' tent he put down his royal crown. Pompeus understood Tigran's goodwill gesture and immediately acknowledged him as the King of Greater Armenia.



Tigran the Great put all his efforts into making his empire wealthy and powerful; an empire where the Armenian people could live in peace. In becoming Rome's ally, he avoided a devastating war on two fronts – with Rome and Parthia; and by doing it he preserved the wholeness of the Greater Armenia. ■

The new building of the Yerevan Brandy Factory (architect Hovaness Markarian) **was built** in 1947-1953.



Armenian Brandy Factory Yerevan.

Yerevan, Victory Bridge

The Pobeda (Victory) Bridge **was built** after World War II. It was opened to traffic on November 25, 1945. German prisoners of war took part in the construction works.

1952

The new buildings of the Yerevan Brandy Factory appeared in the **beginning** of the 1970s.

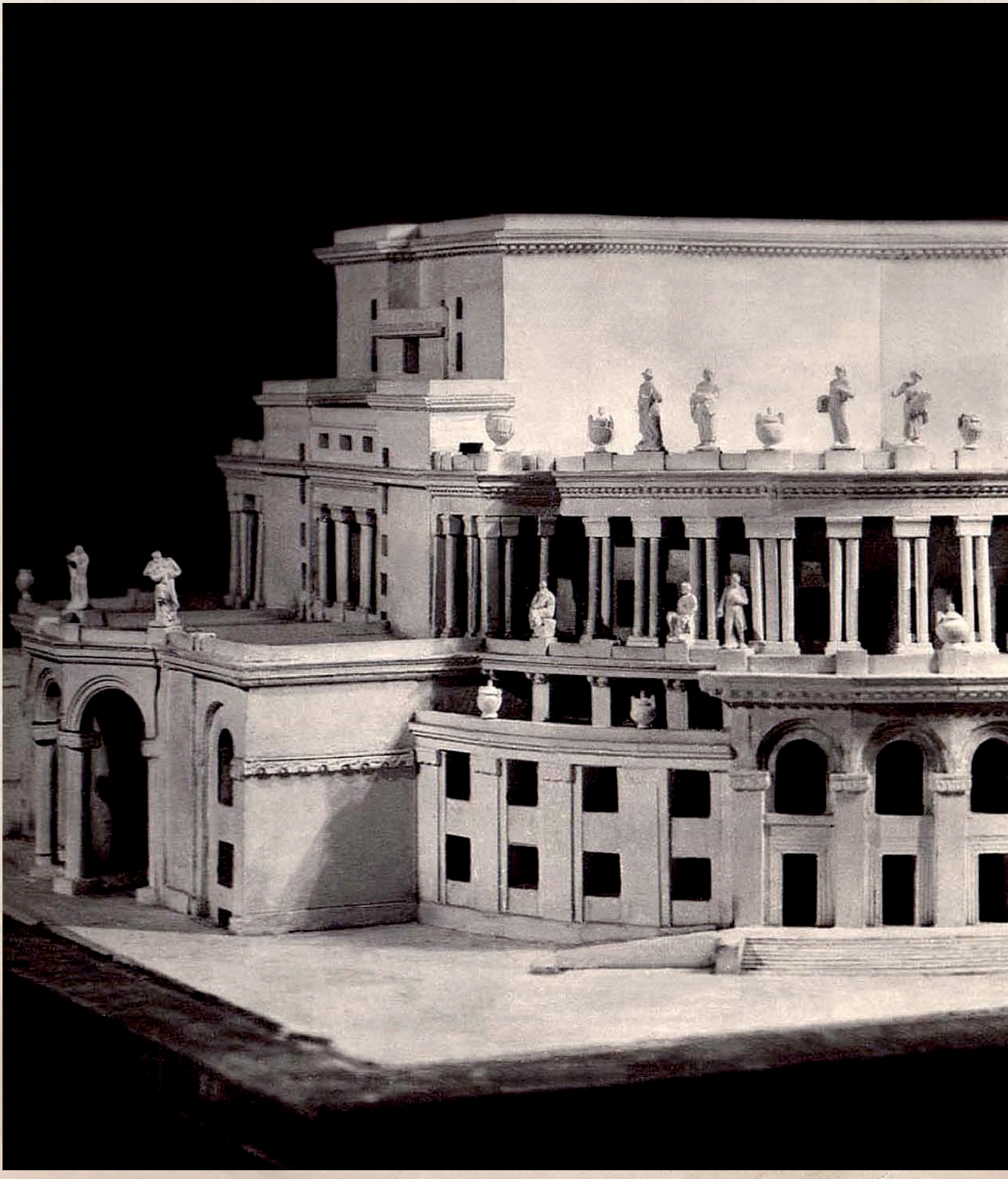
The light masts of the Razdan Stadium (built in 1972) **were erected** in mid 1980s.



Sevan Manvelyan

Yerevan,
Victory Bridge

2007





the architect of the 12th capital

History is made in a single attempt; it cannot be rewritten but only revisited. The physical history of Yerevan in the 20th century was written with a bold signature in a swift line and with a new vocabulary, without mistakes or scribbles. First on paper, and then in stone.

The author of this new visual narrative was the architect Alexander Tamanyan. He developed the new master plan for the capital city of postwar Armenia, and it's because of him we have a modern national architectural school as well as the buildings that have become the landmarks of Yerevan.

text : EDUARD AYANYAN
photo : COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM-INSTITUTE OF ALEXANDER TAMANYAN

RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE

Until the 20th century Armenia had eleven capitals. They varied in terms of the length of their status as a capital, and in their significance in the political and cultural life of the region. However, they all had one thing in common – the best architects and builders of their eras were involved in their construction. When Armenia once more became an independent state, it was evident that the new capital should again be built by the best of the best.

In May of 1918 on a small patch of Armenia's historic territories, the Republic of Armenia was born. In spite of the war, economic hardships, and an endless inflow of refugees from West Armenia, it was an independent state – the long-awaited dream of generations of Armenians. Thus, there was a state, but the capital could not live up to the status of a real city, since the Erivan of 1918, was distinguished only by a couple of dusty streets and shabby clay dwellings. This was the Twelfth Capital.

In fact, the new Armenian state was very fortunate – it appeared at that same time period when there was someone who was able to undertake the task of creating a new capital. The Armenia of the 20th century co-existed with Alexander Tamanyan and their meeting, in retrospect, seems pre-destined.

For many decades the official history claimed that Tamanyan arrived in Erivan in 1923 at the invitation of the government of the Soviet Armenia. However, the reality was somewhat different. Alexander Tamanyan moved to Armenia in 1919, during the years of First Republic. At the age of forty-one he already was a professor of architecture, an accomplished and talented architect who had a promising career ahead of him in Russia and Europe. However, his preference was to remain in the broke and devastated Armenia. He was appointed the main architect of the country, and in 1920 he presented a project plan for the reconstruction of Yerevan to the government. When political power was seized by the Bolsheviks in November of 1920, the political crisis forced him to move to Iran and settle in Tavriz.

Nevertheless, the new Armenian State was twice-blessed, because Alexander Tamanyan was not only a distinguished architect, but also a person who was completely devoted to his nation. Soviet or otherwise, the fact was that Armenia had appeared on the world map, and the construction of its new capital could not be taken off the agenda. The Armenian government guaranteed his family's and his personal safety, and in 1923 they returned to Yerevan. Ahead of him was a search for new ideas, moments of despair and inspiration, years of hard and intense work, and, finally, world recognition. However, in 1923 his journey to fame was just beginning.



One of the first projects of Tamanyan – the apartment building of Prince Scherbatov in Novinsky Blvd. in Moscow, 1911-1913.



Alexander Tamanyan was not only a distinguished architect, but also a person who was completely devoted to his nation. The construction of Armenian capital could not be taken off the agenda.

I WILL LIVE AND BUILD IN ARMENIA

Alexander Tamanyan was born in 1878 in Yekaterinodar and received his elementary education there. He moved to Saint Petersburg in 1897. It was Saint Petersburg, its magnificent squares, palaces, and parks that inspired the budding architect. In 1904 Tamanyan graduated from the Saint Petersburg Academy of Arts and became involved in



Project of the Jaroslavl Agricultural Exhibition, northern facade, view from the courtyard, 1913



Saint Petersburg, 1903. Tea party at L.N. Benua's workshop. Standing row, second from the left – Alexander Tamanyan.

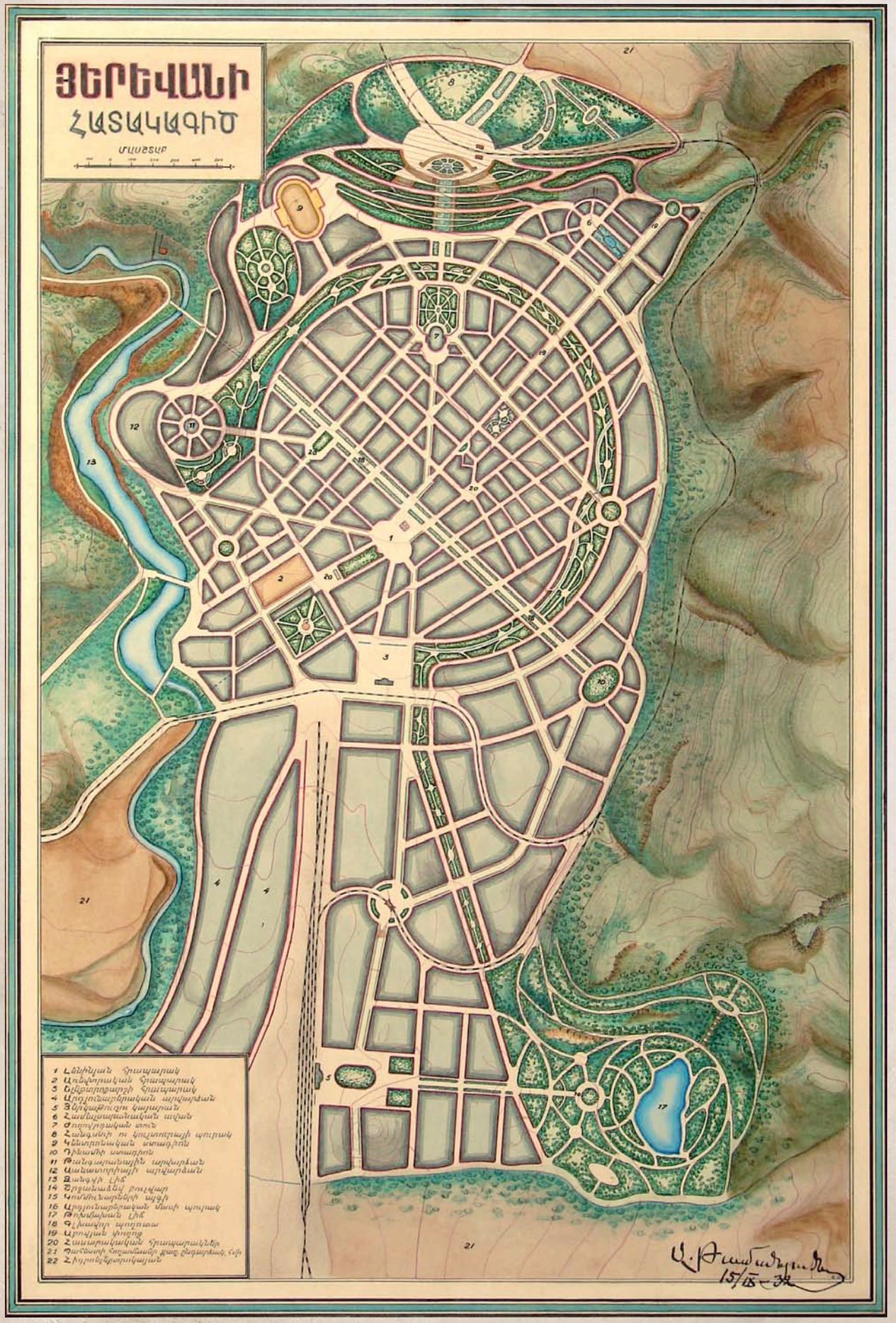
professional activities. Many of his designs were built in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Yaroslavl, and many other Russian cities. In particular, he received wide recognition for his complex of the Yaroslavl Agricultural Exhibition – the pavilions, built in the style of Russian Wooden Architecture, not only recreated the traditional forms, but were functional and responded to their own time period while preserving the splendor of the traditional Russian architectural vocabulary. The implementation of national traditions in the design of contemporary buildings became one of the hallmarks of Tamanyan's work.

In 1908 at the request of Nikolai Marra, who was conducting archeological excavations of Ani, Tamanyan sketched a design for a museum in the capital of medieval Armenia. The first encounter with the Armenian architecture of the past did not pass unnoticed, and it awakened in Tamanyan a vivid interest in Armenian architecture. According to his sister, Magdalena Tamanyan-Shaussen, Tamanyan was in St. Petersburg looking through an album with plans and photographs of the Armenian architectural monuments, and he said to his friend, the architect Shreter, "You will see, I will live and build in Armenia." As it happened, these words were prophetic.

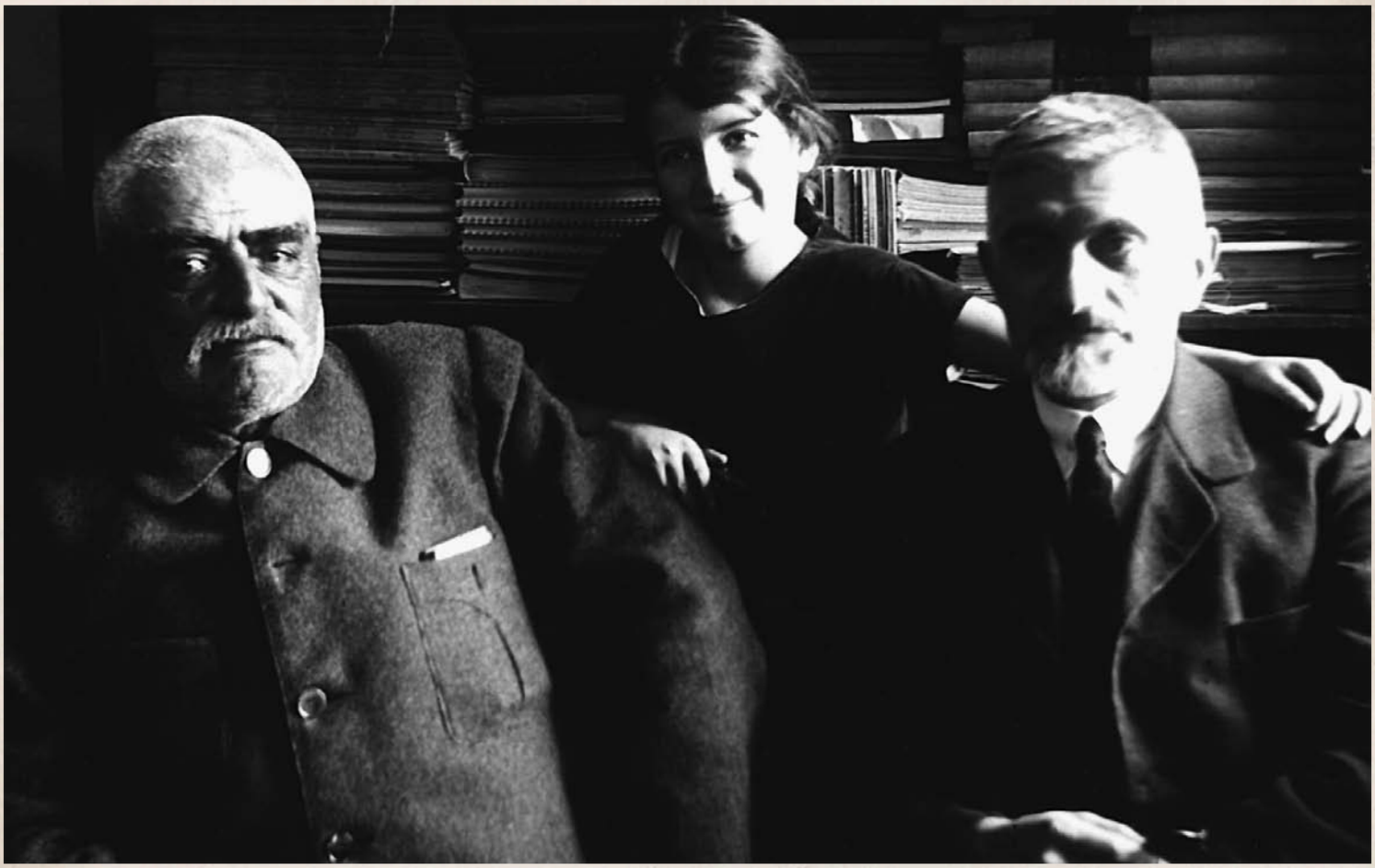
Upon his moving to Armenia, Tamanyan began studying the architectural heritage of his nation. Tireless and constantly seeking – that's how he was characterized by all who knew him. In spite of his vast professional expertise, he was never satisfied with his knowledge, and always found time to study ancient Armenian buildings. He traveled frequently to the sites of ancient ruins in Armenia, where he supervised the reconstruction works along with Toros Toromanyan – the prominent Armenian architect-historian. He made innumerable measurements, plans, and sketches of these sites; and Armenian medieval architecture became the foundation of Tamanyan's design of many buildings for the new capital. Armenia captivated and taught him, but also required stamina – there was a huge amount of work ahead. Tamanyan had such an authority that in February of 1926 he received the title of the People's Architect of Armenia. This title did not exist before; it was especially created for Tamanyan!

Tamanyan traveled frequently to the sites of ancient ruins with Toros Toromanyan. Armenian medieval architecture became the foundation of Tamanyan's design of many buildings in the new capital.

Thinking that Alexander Tamanyan had a prosperous and comfortable life in Erivan would not be fair. His living accommodations were substandard, and his friends continuously petitioned to the government to solve this problem – Tamanyan himself was too modest, and never asked anything for himself. In spite of the strained circumstances, the Tamanyan family was very hospitable. Besides their fellow architects, they often entertained prominent Armenian artists, poets, and musicians – Avetik Isahakyan, Martiros



General Plan of Erivan, 1932
1. Lenin's Square
2. Market Square
3. Streetcar Square
4. Industrial District
5. Train Station
6. University Campus
7. People's House
8. The Park of Culture and Leisure
9. Central Stadium
10. "Dinamo" Stadium
11. Museum District
12. Sanatorium District
13. Lake Zangou
14. Boulevard Ring
15. Park of Communars
16. Park of the Industrial Zone
17. Lake Tokhmakh
18. Central Prospect
19. Abovian Street
20. Public Squares
21. Reserved areas for the city growth
22. Hydro-electro Station



Toros Toromonyan and Alexander Tamanyan with his younger daughter, Varvara

Saryan, Alexander Spendiarov, Romanos Melikyan, and many others. One could also find many famous visitors of Erivan in the Tamanyan home. It was Erivan's most popular meeting place of the creative intelligentsia.

If matters of personal comfort were unimportant for Tamanyan, the problem of having a normal workshop-studio was crucial. Besides the large volume of projects, the problem was deepened by the fact that Tamanyan's eyesight worsened as he aged. He needed assistants. However, the one who implements is not the same as the creator himself. His inability to complete his projects discouraged and constrained him. He often had to compromise and even simplify some of his plans because of his inability to carry them out personally.

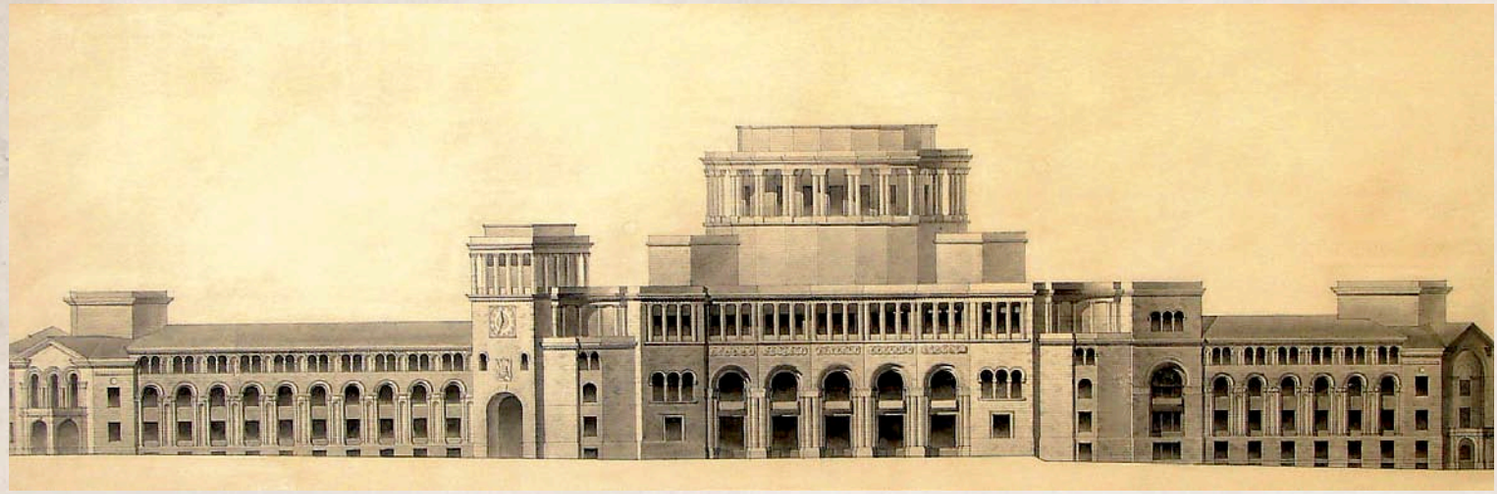
THE TWELFTH

The national idea of the Armenians about the restoration of their independent state and the return to Ararat was realized in Tamanyan's general plan – a city in the foothills of Ararat, facing and reflecting its magnificence. The works of Erivan's reconstruction, interrupted in 1920, were restarted in 1923; and in April of 1924 the general plan of the capital city was approved by the government. Later, in 1929 and 1932, Tamanyan revised the plan, but the main ideas, the basic concepts remained the same. Tamanyan completely changed the historic structure of the city – it was easier to create something completely new, than to improve the existing city plan. Besides, now there was a possibility of implementing the modern concepts of urban planning, to create a new kind of city, convenient and comfortable for all its residents.

It should be mentioned that there were many innovative ideas in urban planning at the beginning of the 20th century. The Englishman Ebenezer Howard offered the concept of a "garden-city". It called for the creation of new towns of limited size, planned in advance, and surrounded by a permanent greenbelt of undeveloped land. The Frenchman Tony Garnier's ideas included the separation of spaces by function through zoning into four categories including leisure, recreation, industry, work, and transportation.

Tamanyan creatively rethought these and other new trends, he filtered them through the prism of the Armenian cultural tradition, and implemented it in combination with the "classical" rules of architecture into his general plan of Erivan. According to his design, the city was divided into zones – "administrative," "university," "cultural," "industrial," and "museum". Each of these zones had an independent planning model with its own center, parks, and boulevards. All the zones were connected by the shortest possible roads. The independence of the zones made the city into one living organism. The central points of the new plan were two city squares – Lenin's and the Theatrical, which should have connected by the Northern Prospect. The wide Main Prospect, like a diameter of the ring

The national idea of the Armenians about the restoration of their independent state and the return to Ararat found its realization in the creative concept of Tamanyan's general plan.



Project of the Government House in Erivan. The central part of the building in which the Auditorium should have been located was not built.

of boulevards passed through Lenin's Square. But the greatest advantage of the new city was the magnificent panoramic view of Mount Ararat, upon which many architectural solutions were grounded. Tamanyan's General Plan accommodated a population of one hundred and fifty thousand, but even today, in a city with a population of a million, it has not lost its functionality and has remained a basis for all further concepts of growing and developing cities in Armenia.

However, the plan was just one of the ingredients of the broader task. Tamanyan was designing not only a new city, but the capital of the new Armenia, one that had to reflect the continuity of the Armenian experience. It also had to serve as the symbol of national integrity of Armenia, of the uninterrupted Armenian history. The residents of the city must not only know and feel, but also should be able to see that they are the successors of the Armenians of Tigranakert and Ani, Dvin and Artashat, Van and Armavir. This called for buildings that conveyed the spirit of ancient Armenia, and were also modern, functional, and comfortable. Tamanyan accomplished this with all his talent and professionalism – the courage and innovation of his ideas in the designs of the new buildings were combined with a careful and accurate use of the Armenian cultural patrimony. The study of all components of the mastery of the medieval architects and its revitalization had a special significance to him. Tamanyan revived the trade habits of builders of the past, and the most ancient building material, stone, was again used in contemporary Armenia. Tamanyan carefully examined each detail and got into conversation with the construction workers and master builders at the construction site. The pillars, arches, and capitals were not simply copied from the ruins of Zvartnots and Ani, but were reinterpreted. Tamanyan was able to preserve the most essential attribute of Armenian architecture – its individuality, as reflected in the artistic perception and attitude towards life of its people, concepts that transcend time.

Alexander completed his works with incredible speed. In 1925-1932 he designed the Medical, Gynecological, Physiotherapy, Veterinary, Chemico-Physical (later Polytechnical), Scientific-Research Institutes, children's clinic, observatory, public library, School of Agriculture, and much more. One of the most significant examples of his work was the Government Building on Lenin's Square (presently the Republic Square) – a notable model of a work with historical material. The aesthetics of ancient architecture were brilliantly translated into a modern architectural language by Tamanyan. This strikingly beautiful building later became the starting point for the development of modern Armenian architecture. However, a creative person is constantly searching and trying to reach the highest, large-scale ideal, implementation of which requires his entire creative potential. For Alexander Tamanyan such an idea was the People's House.

THE HOUSE THAT THE MASTER BUILT

The thought to create a theatrical building of a new type came to Tamanyan long ago. The beginning of the 20th century was a period of active search for new, unexpected solutions in theatre directing and scenography. One of the bravest and most innovative experimenters was German

ALEXANDER TAMANYAN

March 4 (16), 1878 – February 20, 1936
Born in Yekaterinodar (presently Krasnodar). Graduated Kubansky Alexandovsky School in 1896. In 1898 was admitted to the Department of Architecture of the Highest Art School of the Petersburg Academy of Arts, which he graduated in 1904. In 1914 was elected Academician of Architecture of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Arts. In 1917 – elected Head of the Council of the Academy of Arts as acting Vice-President. Among the most famous of his works of the Russian period are the mansion of Kochubei in Tsarskoe Selo; the house of Prince Scherbatov in Novinski Boulevard in Moscow (Golden Medal in Moscow Contest) ; the village housing of railway employees in Station Prozorskaya (presently Kratovo) near Moscow; central workshops of Kazan Railway in Lyubertsy. Was the Head Engineer of the Sovnarkom of Armenia, was a member of Central Executive Commission of the Armenian SSR (1925-1936), supervised the construction industry, developed the urban and rural planning of Leninakan (Gyumri), Nor Bayazet (Kamo), Kirovakan, Echmiadzin, Hoktemberyan, Stepanakert, and other sites. Created first general plan of the reconstruction of Erivan. Among the Yerevan buildings and structures– Hydro-electro-station on Razdan River, Spendiarov Theatre of Opera and Ballet, the Government Building, and others.



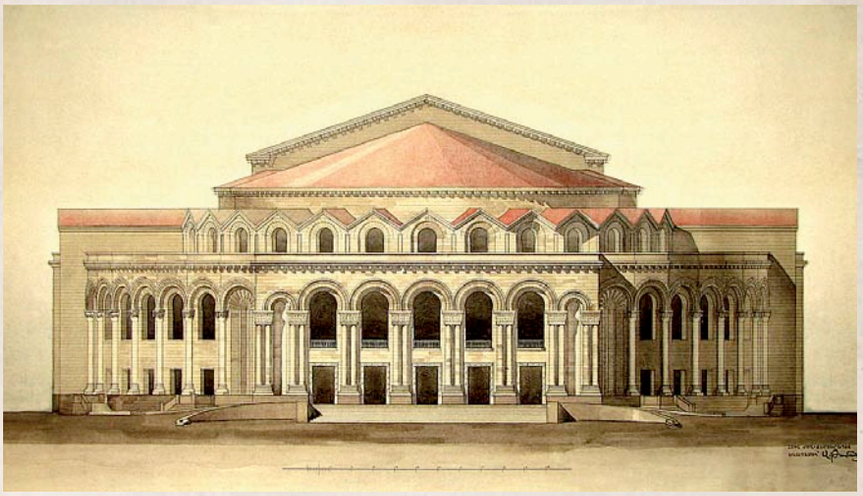
theatrical director Max Reinhardt, whose theatrical group toured in Moscow and Saint Petersburg in 1911. The version of Sophocles' Oedipus the King, which was staged not on a theatrical stage, but in a circus arena, left a strong impression on Tamanyan. It was then that Tamanyan started thinking about an idea of an entirely new type of a theatrical building. His personal notes dated December 31, 1911 stated: "I would like to build a theatre. Classical. A strict facade, like a temple. The performing hall resembling that of the Palladievsky Theatre, without the usual ceilings, meaning the ceiling should belong to the theatre, should be supported by the external walls of the building. The walls should be the outer cover of the auditorium, which would be a special, classical temple without a roof, and the entrances into the foyer would be designed in the form of classical temple porticos…" This note was illustrated by a sketch, resembling the single-hall variations of the People's House plan.

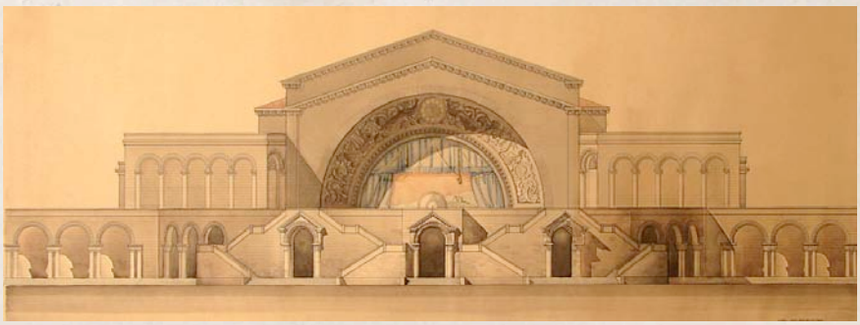
At the end of 1925 Tamanyan brought up a question to start the project of the People's House in Erivan. It had to be a completely new kind of theatre – a theatre for the masses. The January 1926 Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Trans-Caucasian Federation approved the construction project, mainly because Erivan did not have a large theatre, or any other building which could accommodate a large audience. The work began. The artistic intelligentsia of Armenia took an active role in discussions about the project. Martiros Saryan emphasized that the architecture of the new building should be profoundly Armenian. But there were also opposing opinions as well. In architecture, just like in all other areas of life, the political circles had an important influence. However, Tamanyan had already made his choice – to create a new Armenian architecture based on national and international classical models.

The contest for the best project of the People's House announced in 1926 did not bring any results – in spite of many rewards, prizes, and many interesting proposals, there wasn't any noteworthy project for a monumental building which would set the tone for the whole city. Tamanyan's task was to find a solution to this problem. The People's House project worried and exhausted, but simultaneously inspired Tamanyan. For years he made sketches, only to reject them and begin anew. He changed the project many times and was never satisfied. What came out on paper did not match the image he created in his mind. Additional difficulties included regular attacks by critics and ideological bureaucrats. Finally, after multiple changes and improvements the project was ready.

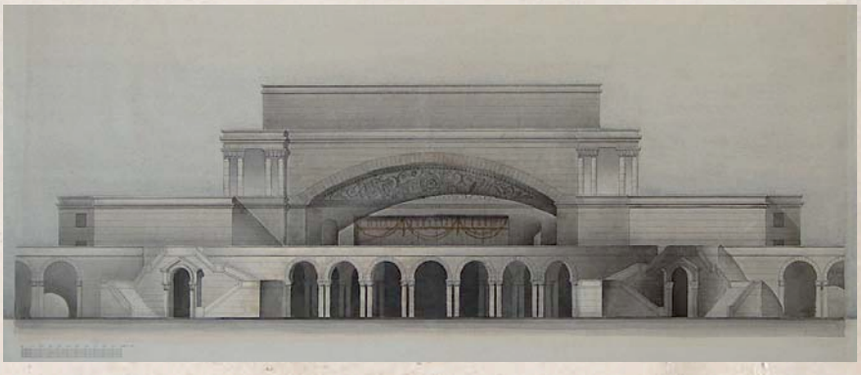
Its solution was non-traditional: two semi-spherical spaces, resembling classical amphitheatre halls (summer and winter), together formed an oval, in the center of which was placed the common stage, elevated above all other parts of the building. If the need arose for larger gatherings, the stages would combine into one, and the audience hall would accommodate three thousand spectators. The building was equipped with mechanisms, allowing for the rotation of both stage and seats, which made it possible to implement various stage effects during the shows. According to Tamanyan's design, the summer hall did not have external walls, and was framed by an archway of pillars open to the adjacent theatre garden.

In the process of work, Tamanyan constantly had to defend the correctness of his concept. It was particularly difficult to preserve the national style of the facade of the building. After multiple "improvements", after they "optimized", "simplified", and cut the expenses, the approval was given to start the construction works. The Committee of the Trans-Caucasian Federation left the approval of the facade design for the consideration of the Armenian government. Fortunately, the government of that time wasn't lacking in national principles, and Tamanyan's version was implemented.





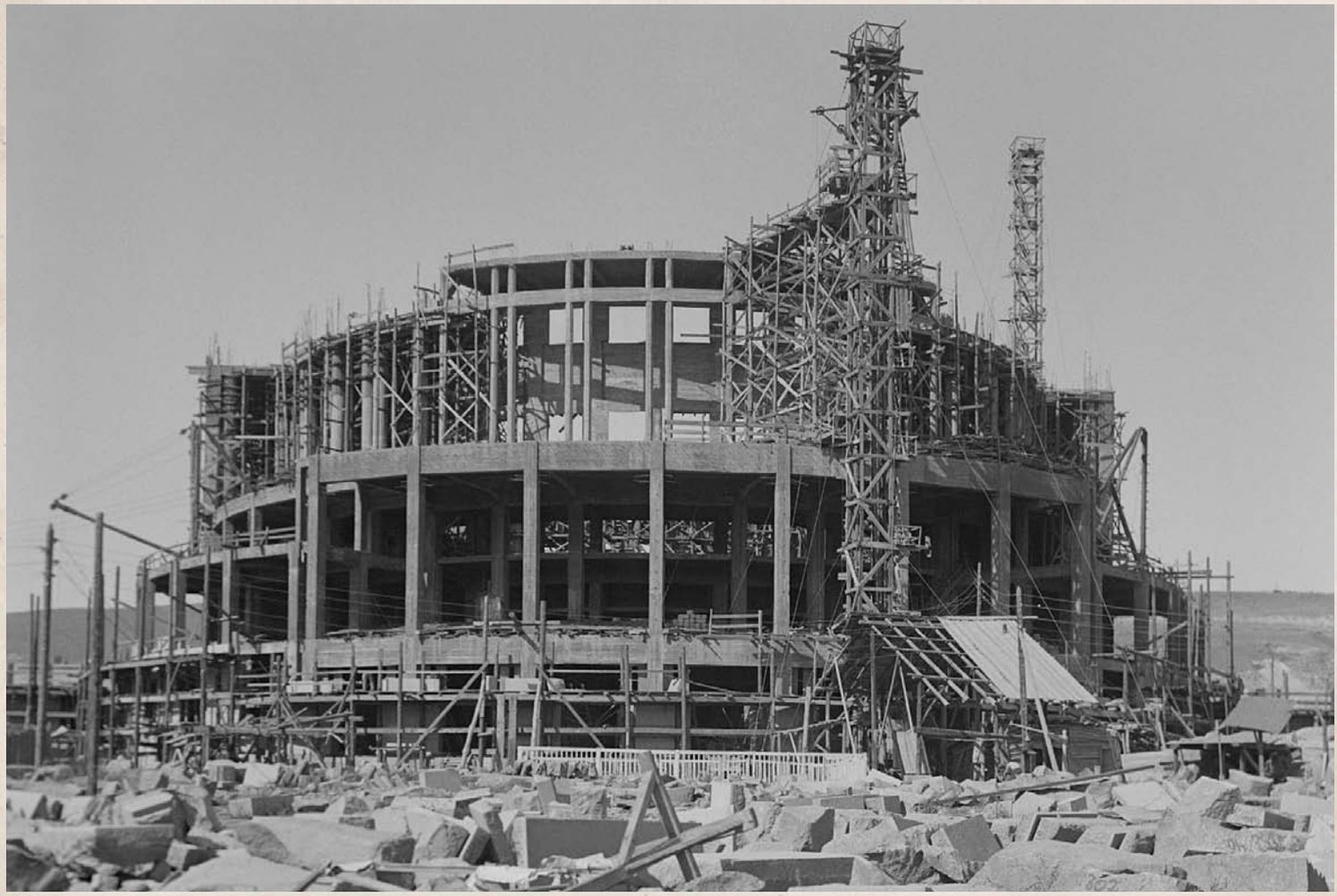
Tamanyan was designing not just a new city, but the capital of new Armenia, which had to reflect the continuity and time succession of the uninterrupted Armenian history. It had to be the symbol of national integrity.



An early version of the plan for the People's House

CHAPEL OF GETHSEMANE

One of the most painful questions during the construction of the People's House was the problem of the Chapel of Gethsemane, built in 17th century. It was named after the Bible's famous Gethsemane Garden. The chapel was located on the land that was given for the construction of the People's House by the general plan, and it was impossible to build



Construction of the People's House

around it. It was 1929. At that time, Moscow celebrated a blasphemous event – the Temple of Christ the Savior was demolished to clear the land for the monstrous monument – the 415-meter Palace of Soviets with Lenin's statue on top. Tamanyan, on the other hand, along with other titles, was the President of the Committee for the Preservation of Historical Monuments. He could not possibly allow demolishing the chapel –so it was decided to relocate it. After the stones of the chapel were carefully numbered, it was deconstructed, with the intent of its later reconstruction in a new location. However, because of the constant delays of the construction funding, the reconstruction of the chapel was postponed as well. When, as a result of political intrigue, Tamanyan was fired from the construction of the People's House in 1932, the irreversible happened – the new person in charge of the construction ordered the stones of the chapel to be used for the construction of a house for workers on Byron Street. In spite of the objections of Tamanyan, the architectural monument, raised in 1679, was lost forever to future generations. And so, as throughout the Soviet Republic, old Gods were replaced by new ones…

THAT WHAT REMAINS

The approval of the People's House project was only the beginning of its history. The most important part – the funding of the construction – was continuously postponed. Bureaucrats in Tiflis (where the governing organizations of The Trans-Caucasian Federation were located) and in Moscow were not in rush to provide financing for the construction. Finally, construction started with Armenia's own scanty means. Later, in 1935 the People's House was included in the list of sites which should had been financed by the Soviet government, but the sum that was set aside to complete the project was just 500,000 rubles, instead of the necessary 31.5 million. But even that funding periodically stopped, and the construction process was uncertain with frequent delays, many specialists refused to continue working, and there was a catastrophic shortage of professionals. In 1936 the funding of the construction of the People's House and the Government Building in Erivan was withdrawn. Tamanyan himself altered his project, in order to get some means for the completion of the construction. He offered to postpone the construction of the summer hall and got rid of the mechanisms of the stage and the granite refinishing of the facades of the stage box. It goes without saying how difficult it was for him to agree to these concessions. Nevertheless, Moscow refused to give money anyway. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Tamanyan put his whole life into

The approval of the People's House project was just the beginning of its history. The most important part – the funding of the construction – was continuously postponed by the bureaucrats.

it – completely, with nothing left to it.

Even during the construction works of the People's House, Tamanyan's dream was to see his best friend, whom he met back in Saint Petersburg, Alexander Spendiarov's opera *Almast* in the grand opening of the building. But the two friends would not live to see that day. Spendiarov passed away on May 7, 1928, and Tamanyan – on February 20, 1936. The architect of the new Armenia did not see his project built. Nevertheless, his project has received the highest recognition: the project of the People's House received the Grand Prize and the Gold Medal of the World Exhibition in Paris in 1937. It is also significant that until this day the Theatre of Opera and Ballet carries the name of Alexander Spendiarov.

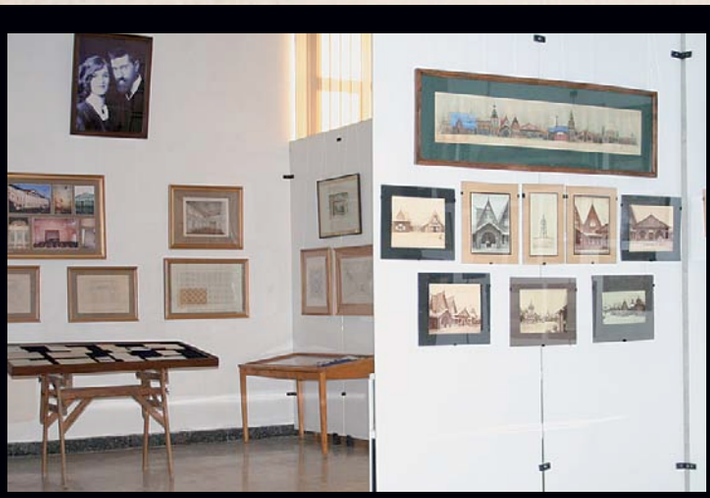
The construction works of the People's House in a much-altered version lasted much longer – in 1939 the theatrical part of the building was opened for opera productions, and the completion of the building as one enclosed structure and the construction of the philharmonic hall was concluded only in 1963. Neither then, nor after the complete remodeling works of 1980 and 2003, was the original project implemented completely – the mechanisms of the stage were installed only partially, and the outer facing of the facades was limited to the two lower tiers.

The genius ideas live longer than their creators. Not only the People's House project, but practically all Tamanyan's projects were not completed in his lifetime. The Central Square and the Government Building, the Boulevard Ring, the Main Prospect, Northern Prospect, many buildings and structures – all were built over many decades, with the Northern Prospect still under construction. Many of Tamanyan's ideas, like those of most great architects, have never been realized.

At times, it seems that Tamanyan's projects have existed for many centuries, even millennia, and simply were transferred from the past to the streets of today's Yerevan. In Republic Square there is a feeling that one is in the very heart of Ani, and the Opera Theatre would be totally in place somewhere in the center of Tigranakert. No one would even think of calling Tamanyan's Yerevan "Soviet", although the master created it in the "Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic." Times and the governments change, only truth remains. Yerevan and Tamanyan stand. ■



Alexander Tamanyan
Saint Petersburg, 1903



MUSEUM-INSTITUTE OF ALEXANDER TAMANYAN

The Museum-Institute was created by the initiative of the Ministry of Urban Planning of the Armenian Republic. It was opened to the public in the fall of 2001. The collection of the museum includes blueprints, Tamanyan's original plans, sketches, pictures, photos of the construction sites, collection of decorative artifacts, and family photos. Presently there is an exhibition, dedicated to the Russian period of Master's work, time of his artistic and professional formation. The museum offers weekly lectures and video-sessions on a variety of topics around History of Arts, and individual artists. The museum organized a photo-contest "Tamanyan's Heritage" with the intention to popularizing Tamanyan's artistic heritage and his contribution to Armenian architecture.

The museum is open daily from 11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. (closed on Mondays and Tuesdays).

Admission is free. Address: Yerevan, 0010 Government Building – 3, 1st floor.



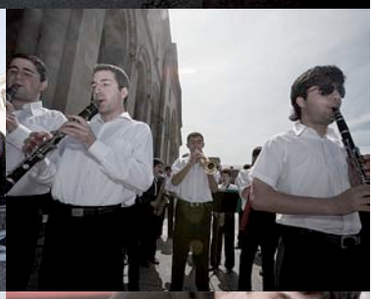
SACRED ENERGY OF WATER

yerevan continues to present gifts to the beloved city. Most recently, the magazine has funded the restoration of the Seven Springs – the central "pulpulak" (public drinking fountain) of the city.

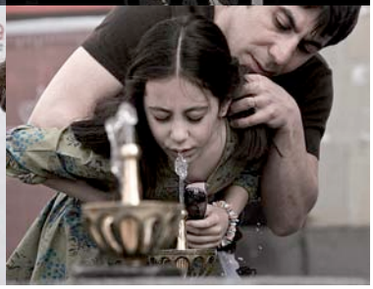
photo : **SUREN MANVELYAN, ARMEN POGHOSYAN**











Drinking fountains first appeared on the streets of Yerevan in the 1920s. Since that time they have become one of the unique urban elements of the Armenian capital. The creator of the central pulpulak of the nation, Spartak Kndekhtsyan, named his fountain Seven Springs (Katnaghpyur). According to Armenian folk wisdom and tradition, people gain power from the Seven Springs. Katnaghpyur was a milk spring that a legendary epic hero David of Sasoon drank from to regain his energy.

The original drinking spouts of the Seven Springs fountain, each designed to resemble a fortress tower, were stolen in the 1990s. Yerevan decided that the city residents and numerous visitors should not drink water from a mutilated fountain, and new spouts were commissioned. The designer of new spouts, the famous jewelry designer Nur, not only recreated the famous fortress towers from the original, but included a special, sacred meaning in his creation. A coded message lies in the ornamental engraving along the perimeter of each structure that charges the water with positive energy which transfers to people who drink from it. Incidentally, the fountain also functions as a sundial - its shadows show the time of day. The magazine would like to thank the Jermuk Group and the Artsakh Brandy Company (representing the Ohanyan vodka brand) for their cooperation and collaboration in this effort. Our thanks also go out to the Mayor's office, the municipality "Kentron" and the Kurazh production group for their invaluable assistance in the accomplishment of this restoration. ■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