

A report prepared for a workshop on "State of Armenian Studies" organized in 2011 by Prof. Gerard Libaridian.

## **Origins and Development of Armenian Studies in Europe**

At the request of Professor Gerard Libaridian in the pages below I have prepared what can only be called a summary update to an earlier article done some forty years ago. Such a resume of four decades of research and development in Armenian studies in Europe necessarily will suffer from two major defects: the omission, by force of circumstance and tricks of memory, of many scholars, institutions, and support groups in this domain, and, the near-tabular form of the presentation. Furthermore, the achievements and publications of the scholars and institutions mentioned must be omitted for the most part, except in cases where important research tools were created. Furthermore, unlike my remarks in presentations and publications on the subject of 1981,<sup>1</sup> 1995,<sup>2</sup> and 2002<sup>3</sup> in which analytical discussions were engaged on the past and the future of the discipline, its purpose and direction, and its future needs, this report is essentially factual. I have also concentrated on linguistics, philology, history, art history and early literature, while contemporary or even twentieth century matters, including the genocide, have not been emphasized even though in recent decades such studies have been aggressively engaged by younger scholars.

Outside of or beyond the scholarship affected within medieval and post-medieval Armenian monastic establishments, Europe was the cradle of Armenian

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<sup>1</sup> See note 6 below for full references to this and the earlier article of 1972.

<sup>2</sup> In this year at a NAASR conference in Watertown on Armenian studies I presented a paper entitled "Armenian Studies: Looking toward the 21st Century," though submitted the paper was never published, but is available at NAASR. Fifteen years earlier at another NAASR conference on Armenian studies I discussed the status of research and publication on Armenian art.

<sup>3</sup> Again at the major three-day conference on Rethinking Armenian Studies, sponsored again NAASR the following papers were presented and later published: Dickran Kouymjian, "The Role of University Chairs," and "The Future of Armenian Studies," *Journal of Armenian Studies*, vol. VII, no. 2 (Summer, 2003), respectively pp. 31-35 and 185-190.

studies whether embraced by the Catholic Church, universities, or Armenian monasteries and institutions (such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, Portugal) in the west.

### **Central Europe**

The Armenological tradition in Europe continues and even flourishes in this second decade of the new century. The thirtieth anniversary General Conference of the Association internationale des études arméniennes (AIEA), which will take place in Budapest from 6-8 October 2011, will host some one hundred plus scholars with about 75 papers scheduled, mostly on medieval and early modern studies. Though ten papers will be presented by members who reside in the United States and seventeen or eighteen by scholars from the Armenian Republic, the others represent some fifteen European countries with France (10), Italy (8), and England (7) the best represented, but with nearly a dozen scholars from central Europe, the majority from Hungary, Poland, and Romania.

Most interesting about this recent phenomenon is the number of young scholars who have recently finished or are preparing their doctoral thesis on an Armenian subject, especially in philology, art history, history, and literature. This was apparent at major conference on the Art of the Armenian Diaspora organized in April 2010 in the medieval Armenian town of Zamość, Poland with some 25 papers during three days of sessions held in the Museum of Zamość, itself housed in one of the old Armenian mansions on the main square, which also hosted a major exhibit on Armenian art from Poland and the Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> The driving force behind the conference was Waldemar Deluga, a professor of late Byzantine Studies at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński

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<sup>4</sup> Waldemar Deluga, editor, *Ars Armenicaca. Sztuka ormiańska ze zbiorów polskich i ukraińskich*, Zamość: Muzeum Zamojski w Zamościu, 2010.

University, Warsaw, editor of *Series Byzantina*, in which the papers will be published. His graduate students, many of them presenting papers on their doctoral work, were the active organizers of the event with further support from the Foundation of Culture and Heritage of Polish Armenians. Similar support groups among the Armenian communities in Hungary (The Hungarian Armenian Cultural Society), Romania, and the Ukraine, made up of both the descendants of the old Armenian communities as well as the thousands of new Armenian immigrants to all of eastern Europe. The intensity of the scholarship issuing from this awoken interest has recently been made available in a very long bibliography of works circulated by Andras Riedlmayer of Harvard University and the Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) devoted to the Armenians of Transylvania (Romania and Hungary).<sup>5</sup>

The Central European countries with their active centers of scholarship on Armenian history and art are only the most recent manifestation of a centuries old tradition of Armenian studies in the older centers of the European Union: France, Italy, England, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Holland, as well as Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, and Portugal. I have already discussed the historical record from the founding of the first centers of Armenian studies in Europe up to the early 1970s in a long and detailed earlier article,<sup>6</sup> but it is certain that the last forty years have seen a remarkable strengthening of the field.

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<sup>5</sup> Some thirty titles were listed, mostly in Hungarian, published in the last decade or so; the detailed bibliography was distributed on the MELANET List on August 15, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Dickran Kouymjian, "The Status of Armenian Studies in the Diaspora," *Shirak* Beirut, vol. XV, no.10 (Beirut,1972), pp. 29-58 (in Armenian). See also D. Kouymjian, "The Purpose and Direction of Armenian Studies in the Diaspora," *La Struttura Negata, Cultura Armena nella Diaspora*, Milan, 1981, pp. 97-104, reprinted in *Hay Endanik*, Venice, no. 1-2 (Venice, 1981), pp. 42-47; reprinted partially in the *Society for Armenian Studies Newsletter* (vol. VI, no.3), pp. 6, 8, 9.

## Italy

Perhaps one of the most remarkable advances in terms of numbers of scholars and graduate students engaged in Armenian studies has been with the Italian university system. In my earlier study I had mentioned the role of the Mekhitarist Brotherhood on the island of San Lazzaro, Venice, the work of specialists in Armenian architecture spearheaded by Paolo Cuneo (1936-1995) and his collaborators in Rome and Adriano Alpagò-Novello (1932-2005) and Herman Vahramian (1939-2009) with a large group of architect-scholars in Milan, and the training of young scholars by the linguistic and philologist Giancarlo Bolognesi (1923-2005). During the ensuing years, though accomplishing important work, especially the publication of four more volumes of the Master Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts by the late Fr. Sahak Djemdjemian (d.1994), the Mekhitarist Brotherhood has been in decline because of financial problems and a shortage of young monks. This is also true of the Mekhitarist Order in Vienna; unfortunately, the union of the two centers under a single Abbot has done little to turn the tide.<sup>7</sup>

Yet, Armenian studies flourish in Italy thanks to the second and third generation of scholars and their students. At Ca' Foscari University, Venice, Fr. Levon Boghos Zekiyan, formerly of the Mekhitarist Brotherhood, continues to teach, holds his annual summer school in Armenian studies, and advises graduate students; among his colleagues at Ca' Foscari working in Armenian studies is Aldo Ferrari.

Gabriella Uluhogian, now emerita professor of the University of Bologna and a student of Bolognesi, continues to publish,<sup>8</sup> and has the satisfaction of seeing former student holding her position in Bologna (Anna Sirinian), while another student of both

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<sup>7</sup> Both institutions continue to publish their annual Armenological journals, *Bazmavep* in Venice and *Handes Amsorya* in Vienne thanks to the aid of the Gulbenkian Foundation and participation of many scholars from Armenia.

<sup>8</sup> Most recently, G. Uluhogian, *Catalogo dei manoscritti armeni delle biblioteche d'Italia*, Rome, 2010.

Zekiyán and Uluhogian, Valentina Calzolari, holds the Chair of Armenian at the University of Geneva and is also the President of the Association internationale des études arméniennes. In this group must also be counted the historian and Armenologist Giusto Traina; after professorships in Lecce and Rouen, he has just been appointed as professor at the Sorbonne. At the University of Pisa, Alessandro Orenco works in virtually all areas of Armenology as professor of Linguistics and Armenian studies; in Milan Andrea Scala continues the tradition of Bolognesi in the Department of Linguistics of the University; and in Rome, Marco Bais is Associate Professor of Armenian Language, at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, and M.-A. Lala Commeo carries on the work of Paolo Cuneo. It is impossible to list all the graduate students preparing doctorates or the tens of professors who also work in Armenian subjects; suffice it to say that there are more than forty Italian members of the AIEA.

A major exhibition commemorating the 500th anniversary of Armenian printing will open at various localities on the Piazza San Marco in Venice in mid-December 2011 on Armenian culture; it is organized by Levon Zekiyán, Gabriella Uluhogian and Vartan Karapetian in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of Armenia.

### **France and Belgium**

It is tempting to say that France has the oldest tradition of Armenian studies in its university system, if we do not count the Armenian section in the Propaganda Fide in Rome with an Armenian section already in the seventeenth century. But the first university chair of Armenia was established by Napoleon in what is now called the Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (Inalco) and still has an active Armenian section led by Anahid Donabedian with half a dozen instructors teaching a large number of students on undergraduate and graduate levels, including Krikor Beledian, the authority on modern Armenian literature, and Anna Leyloyan, professor

of Armenian art. The adult community also participates actively in these courses. For higher studies, Jean-Pierre Mahé, member of the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres and formerly head of Armenian at Inalco, continues to give his seminars at the École pratique des hautes études housed at the Sorbonne, while courses in Armenian are still given by Agnès Ouzounian at the Institut catholique. A regular seminar on modern Armenian history at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales by Claire Mouradian; also at the same EHESS is historian Kegham Kevonian. Giusto Traina has already been mentioned as professor of Roman history at the Sorbonne.

Charles de Lamberterie, professor at the Sorbonne in Greek, recently elected to the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, is a specialist in Armenian linguistics. The leading Armenological journal the *Revue des études arméniennes* continues to appear annually, now under a new editor, Aram Mardirossian, an assistant professor at the University of Paris. Director of the Nubar Armenian Library of the AGBU in Paris, Raymond Kévorkian, also teaches at the French Institute of Geopolitics (Paris-VIII) and is editor of the journal *Histoire arménienne contemporaine*. The young research scholar and teacher (Inalco), Mikaël Nichanian, a specialist in early Byzantine Armenian relations, has been head of the Armenian section of the Bibliothèque nationale de France for some years. There are also a large number of independent or retired scholars very active in Paris including Claude Mutafian, the authority on Cilician Armenia, whose exhibit and catalogue of 2007 *Arménie: la magie de l'écrit* was the finest along with that of the Louvre during l'Année de l'Arménie, Jean-Michel and Nicole Thierry, the leading historians of Armenian art and architecture, Dickran Kouymjian, former Director of the Armenian Section of Inalco (1988-1991), Hervé Georgelin (modern Armenian history and literature), Aram Kerovpyan (Armenian

musicology), Bati Chetanian (classical Greek and Armenian), and Yves Ternon, the distinguished genocide scholar.

Two other university centers in France are also notable for the large number of students both undergraduate and graduate prepared in their faculties. Gérard Dédéyan has been responsible for Armenian studies at the Université of Montpellier. In addition to his own impressive scholarship and the two-decade exchange program with Yerevan State University, he has advised a number of doctoral students, one of whom Isabelle Augé, is already appointed assistant professor and set to replace her mentor after his retirement next year. At the Université de Provence, Aix-en-Provence, after the retirement of Robert Der Merguerian, now emeritus, the noted historian of Armenian architecture, Patrick Donabédian, heads the program while publishing and conducting excavations at Ererouk in Armenia. Bernard Outtier continues to give courses in Georgian and Armenian at the Institut catholique de Paris while serving as Director of the Bibliothèque du Caucase located in Burgundy. Maxime Yevadian, active in Lyon, directs a major publishing venture, "Sources d'Arménie."

One should note that from September 2006 to fall of 2007, the French Ministry of Culture sponsored l'Année de l'Arménie en France. Most of the scholars mentioned above were engaged in many of the nearly 800 activities held in cities and towns throughout the country, and scores of exhibitions, including major ones with sumptuous catalogues at the Louvre, Centre Pompidou, the Petit Palais, l'Institut du Monde Arabe, le Musée des Beaux-Arts, La Conciergerie, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, le Musée des tissus et des arts décoratifs in Lyon, the Musée Arlaten in Arles, La Vieille-Charité in Marseille, and a dozen others.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A bibliography of this rich material can be found in Dickran Kouymjian, "L'Année de l'Arménie (2006-7): 26 Exhibition Catalogues," AIEA, *Newsletter* no. 44, June 2008, pp. 59-62.

France as well as Belgium benefits from the work of scholar monks. Among those from this tradition who are still active is Fr. Charles Renoux, famous for his Armenian liturgical studies following in the tradition of his older, but recently deceased priestly colleagues l'Abbé Jules Leroy (1903-1979), the Dominican Jean Maurice Fiey (1914–1995), the Jesuit Maurice Tallon (b. 1906), as well as the Belgians Père Louis Leloir and the Bollandist Michel Van Esbroeck (1934-2003).

In French speaking Belgium, the major center for teaching and research in Armenian studies is the Catholic University at Louvain-la-Neuve, where for years the veteran philologist Gérard Garitte (1914–1992) trained dozens of young scholars in classic philology and Armenian. Among the most famous of those who studied with him are the late Charles Dowsett and Robert Thomson. Today the head of the program is Bernard Coulie, a philologist and expert on patristic literature and for the past five years president of the university, an experience shared by his older Danish colleague, the Armenologist Henning Lehmann, president of Aarhus University for twelve years. In addition to Bernard Coulie, Andrea Schmidt is professor of both Armenian and Syriac at the Oriental Institute at the University of Louvain. Among the most active of the few remaining Bollandist fathers is Ugo Zanetti, who continues to publish in a variety of oriental language disciplines. Among independent scholars, Sarah Eftekarian Laporte has done a major study on the internal decoration of the Armenian Cathedral of New Julfa.

### **The Netherlands, Germany, and Austria**

At various times chairs of Armenian have been functioning in Holland, Germany, and Austria. The most notable scholars are now retired from active teaching; one should mention especially Jos Weitenberg, a veteran professor of Armenian at the

University of Leiden and one of the pioneers of the AIEA. His student Theo Maarten Van Lint holds the chair at Oxford. Still active at the University of Leiden is Uwe Bläsing in comparative linguistics. In Amsterdam, René Bekius continues to publish studies on the late medieval Armenian colony in that city; Albert ten Kate, of Bergen Op Zoom, works on Armenian biblical studies.

In Vienna, Helmut and Heidi Buschhausen, for years professors and researchers in Byzantine and Armenian art, are still active in retirement. Also at the University, Werner Seibt, the distinguished numismatist and Byzantinist continues to be active in Oesterreichisch-armenische Studiengesellschaft. In Salzburg, Jasmine Dum-Turgut, a pillar of the AIEA, continues her research and publishing in a variety of subjects and conducts research in Erevan regularly. Herbert Maurer, who is fluent in Armenian, works on Armenian literature and its translation and is a frequent lecturer at the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Berlin has become a very active center of Armenian studies. Meliné Pehlivanian is in charge of the important Armenian collection at the State Library (Staatsbibliothek) in Berlin. Most recently she prepared an exhibition on Armenian printing (2012) with Armenuhi Drost-Abgarian in Mainz and Gutenberg and organized a one-week workshop (March 14-18) on Armenian Manuscript Studies at the State Library. Vahé Tashjian, along with others, has established the Hushamandyan site, tracing the history and culture of the annihilated Armenian towns and cities of Ottoman Turkey. Gabriele Winkler continues her work on Armenian and Oriental church theology at Tübingen; Christopher Burchard in Heidelberg continues research on the critical text of the Armenian Bible, while Armenuhi Drost-Abgarian is faithful to her work on Armenian literature while directing the "Mesrop" research center and serving as Chair of Christian Oriental Studies at the Martin Luther University in Halle,

where her very active colleague Herman Goltz passed away last year. Folker Siegert pursues his work in early biblical studies at the University of Münster. The young Hungarian scholar, Balint Kovacs, is extremely active in East Central European studies at the University of Leipzig, preparing a major exhibit on Armenian printing there in 2012. Anders Hultgaard at the University of Uppsala has been a specialist of early religions including Zoroastrianism in Armenia. There is also in Uppsala the Association of Armenian Academicians in Sweden headed some years ago by Ereboundi Arakelian.

### **Great Britain and Ireland**

As would be expected the major university centers in the British Isles support the leading centers of Armenian studies. At Oxford, the Calouste Gulbenkian Chair of Armenian Studies, occupied for the first time by Charles Dowsett (1924-1998), recently saw a transition from Robert Thomson, formerly Mashtots' Professor at Harvard, who is now emeritus but continues to produce an endless stream of translations of early Armenian historians and primary texts and write monographs on Armenian, Georgian, and Syriac studies, to the current incumbent Theo M. Van Lint, who continues his examination of medieval Armenian literature while guiding graduate and undergraduate students in the various domains of Armenian studies. One should also note Judith McKenzie at Oxford's Centre for Late Antiquity, who has a strong interest in paleo-Christian art and archeology including that of Armenia. At Cambridge, where the memory of Sir Harold Bailey (1899-1996) is still fresh, today Bert Vaux, Fellow in Linguistics at King's College and James Clackson, Senior Lecturer of Classics with major interest in the Armenian language, often work together to continue both the language and philological tradition. Also very active in theological studies at the University of Cambridge is Hratch Tchilingirian.

At the University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, a new Armenian Program started recently with the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, continuing the tradition originally start by Charles Dowsett before he went up to Oxford. The program is being directed by Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev, whose specialty is Armenian history and civilization, and Krikor Moskofian, who teaches Armenian; a certificate in Armenian studies is offered and enrollment is enthusiastic.

Vrej Nersessian has been Keeper of Armenian books and manuscripts at the British Library, publishing widely and organizing a number of interesting exhibits at the BL on Armenian art. Also in London Ara Sarafian keeps at his research in genocide studies and heads the Gomidas Institute Press, a major publisher on recent Armenian history. Susan Pattie, as a Senior Research Fellow at University College London keeps publishing and lecturing on sociological aspects of Armenian life, moving freely between the U.S. and England. Also in London, Rouben Galichian, an authority on Armenian cartography publishes and lectures through his Armenian Institute on Armenian geography, but also on modern history and Turkic revisionism.

To the north at St. Andrews University, Scotland, Timothy Greenwood, a senior lecturer and former student of Robert Thomson, continues his work on Armenian epigraphy and early Armenian tests and charters. His colleague Angus Stewart specializes on the Mamluks and Mongols and their relationship with the Armenian kings of Cilicia. In Dublin, Hilary Richardson books and articles on early Irish stone sculpture is often compared to that of Armenia.

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There are other scholars of course working in Europe, such as John Carswell who continues his research on Armenian art, especially ceramics and textiles, between London and his home in Malaga, Spain. Scholars can also be found in Latvia and of course in the countries of the Middle East, such as Sylvia Agemian, Curator of both the Armenian Museum in Antelias and the Surssock Museum in Beirut, who worked so closely in Paris with Sirarpie Der Nersessian in her last years, especially her monumental book on Cilicia and her archives. But I have considered the Middle East, Iran, and even Russian outside the limits of this short catalogue-overview.

In this context Michael Stone, Professor Emeritus of Armenian Studies and former Director of the Program at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, continues to give lectures, as does his art historian wife Nira Stone. In addition to dozens of students that have passed under his direction (Peter Cowe for instance or his former young assistant and ultimately replacer, Sergio Laporta, now Berberian professor at Fresno State), his scores of books, and hundred of articles, he was the driving force for the establishment of the AIEA, the only pan-European Armenian studies professional society to which many North American Armenists belong. Credit must be given to Michael Stone and the early executive committee of the AIEA the for commissioning or sponsoring the publication of a number of primary tools for Armenian research on manuscript collections,<sup>10</sup> architecture,<sup>11</sup> primary sources,<sup>12</sup> and paleography.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Bernard Coulie, *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits arméniens*, Brepols-Turnhout, 1992, with supplements in *Le Muséon*, 108 (1995), 113 (2002), and 117 (2004)

<sup>11</sup> Michel Thierry, *Répertoire des monastères arméniens*, Brepols-Turnhout, 1993.

<sup>12</sup> Robert W. Thomson, *A Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature to 1500 AD*, Brepols-Turnhout, 1995; with a supplement in *Le Muséon*, 120 (2007). Mention should also be made of Kevork Bardakjian, *A Reference Guide to Modern Armenian Literature 1500-1920*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000, originally intended as the second volume to Thomson's work.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Stone, Dickran Kouymjian Henning Lehmann, *Album of Armenian Paleography*, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2002, Armenian translation by Aram Topchyan and Gohar Muradyan, Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, Erevan: Tigran Medzn Press, 2006.

As spotty as this survey is, I hope it reflects the reality of a very dynamic and flourishing discipline perpetuating the centuries old tradition of Armenian studies in Europe. I apologize to those scholars or research centers I have unintentionally forgotten to mention.

Dickran Kouymjian  
Paris, August 2011