



**ARMENIAN GENOCIDE SURVIVORS**  
AND  
**THE WOVEN ARTS**

A CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY  
**THE ARMENIAN RUGS SOCIETY**

**SUNDAY MARCH 30, 2014**  
3:00 P.M.-7:00 P.M.

Glendale Public Library  
222 East Harvard Street, Glendale, CA 91205



The Armenian Rugs Society, a nonprofit organization founded in Washington D.C. in 1980, is dedicated to the identification, preservation and dissemination of knowledge of Armenian rugs.

In pursuit of this mission, the Armenian Rugs Society has held symposiums and exhibitions in numerous venues including New York City, Philadelphia, Richmond, Memphis, Ft. Worth, Fresno, San Francisco, Boston, Worcester, Montreal, London and Geneva.

To support these efforts, we maintain a data bank of hand knotted oriental rugs, carpets, kilims, bags and trappings bearing inscriptions woven in the Armenian alphabet.

All who share an interest in these endeavours are warmly invited to join our membership. We would also encourage those among you who own hand woven rugs with Armenian inscriptions to contribute their photos to our data bank.

**Armenian Rugs Society**

P.O. Box 696, Palo Alto, CA 94302-0696

Phone: (650) 343-8585 / Fax: (650) 343-0960. / eMail: [info@armenianrugssociety.com](mailto:info@armenianrugssociety.com)

© 2014, Armenian Rug Society



### LEVON DER BEDROSIAN

Born 1947 in Beirut Lebanon. Graduated 1966 from Neshan Palandjian Jemaran. After which in 1968, attended Junior College of San Mateo. 1973 Transferred to Cal State Chico, Graduated in 1974, BA in Anthropology, minor in Arts. 1975 to 1977 Intermittently attended UC Berkeley's Graduate Folklore Dept.

1976 participated with Land and Culture Organization, in the campaign of renovation of the St.Thaddeus Monastery in Northern Iran. Not wanting to be lost in Academics nor wanting to be a starving artist, in 1979 founded La Mediterranee café restaurant in SF. Married in 1980 to Annie Sayrin in Paris. Has two children, Vanick and Laurice. From 1993 to 1999, lived almost half the year in Paris.

After the 1988 Earthquake, went to the village of Gogaran summer of 89 and 90 with Land and Culture Org. Since then, returned to Armenia every year, most often twice a year. Interested more in living folk culture than academic one.

For 10 consecutive years (1990's) Served on the board of Bay Area Friends of Armenia, ( providing help to the elderly, soup kitchens, children's education, medical help etc.)

Attended the ARS conference in Memphis in 2000, became a member and realized his long held addiction to rugs. Participated to the "Passages" exhibit/ symposium in 2002 in SF.

Planning to open a Folk Arts center in Yerevan soon to provide a space for the revival of our folk arts traditions and arts. "Land, Language and Culture" remain to be his main focus, his indivisible Holly Trinity, among others.

Most beautiful memories of his childhood, summers in the village of Shtaura with his grandparents, to this day they serve him as inspiration. Planning to open a Folk Arts center in Yerevan soon to provide a space for the revival of our folk arts traditions and arts.

"Land, Language and Culture" remain to be the main focus of his indivisible Holly Trinity, among others.





**GEVORK NAZARYAN** was born in Yerevan, Armenia. His family immigrated to Los Angeles in 1990. He received a B.A. in History from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He received his M.A. from the Near Eastern Studies Department of UCLA specializing in Armenian Studies. He has published articles, conducted television programs and participated in academic conferences dedicated to Armenian Studies.

In 1997 he created an extensive website: "Armenian Highland" ([www.armenianhighland.com](http://www.armenianhighland.com)). It is dedicated to his research and studies on Armenian topics in general and Armenian History in particular. The site has received a number of awards for its content and presentation.

### Armenian Weaving Centers in the Ottoman Empire on the Eve of the Genocide

In the late 19th and early 20th century Armenians had many important weaving centers across the Ottoman Empire, including Western Armenia. These centers produced some of the most exquisite and world-renowned hand-made rugs and carpets. A rich, millennia-old cultural heritage and experience enabled the painstaking hand-made production of Armenian rugs to reach superb levels of craftsmanship. Each Armenian region, town or city was also known for its distinct patterns that were often used to identify and name the particular rug style.

The extermination of the Armenian people during the Genocide almost completely wiped out the many thriving Armenian rug-making centers of the Ottoman Empire. In few instances, some Armenians (often as crypto-Armenians) remained and continued the ancestral tradition of rug making. This was especially the case for the relatively few remaining Armenians of Constantinople and its adjoining areas. The Genocide survivors took their ancestral knowledge and heritage to the new centers throughout the Near East, most notably Syria, Egypt and Lebanon, that sheltered them after World War I.



**HAROLD C. BEDOUKIAN** holds a B.A. (1961) from Concordia University, Montreal. He is the owner of Ararat Rug Company since 1961. His professional qualifications include: ORRA certified Oriental rug appraiser; insurance claims expert; expert witness for Oriental rug claims in court proceedings; Oriental rug inventory auditing for Bank of Montreal; researched Oriental rug and carpet weaving in Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, India and Nepal.

Bedoukian is a member various professional organizations. Additionally, he has published articles in professional and trade magazines. For example, he has authored, among other studies, "Natural Dyes in Caucasian Rugs," *Oriental Rug Review* II: 7 (Oct. 1982), pp. 15-17; "The Orphans of Agin Rug," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* XX pp. 457-461; as well writings in and so on. Last but not least, he has presented papers in conferences, the most recent one being "The 'Orphans of Agin' Rug and Other Armenian Inscribed Rug in Public and Private Collections," Armenian Gorg Conference, Yerevan, Nov. 2013.

### **Armenian Orphans: Their Contribution to the Carpet Weaving World**

Hand-knotted carpets have been woven throughout the Middle East. They have been woven by different ethnic groups and by weavers with different religious affiliations. However the one group that has not been properly acknowledged and recognized for their work is the Armenian orphans.

Thousands of rugs were woven by Armenian orphans in orphanages in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Greece, Lebanon, Turkey, Palestine, Iran and Armenia after the Genocide. Rugs woven in Armenian orphanages not only differed from local weaving practices, but were of superior quality as well. In the Aintab orphanage rugs were woven with machine-spun cotton warp as compared to the hand-spun warps used by the local Kurdish weavers. In Harput, orphanage rugs were woven with natural dyes as compared to rugs woven by local weavers who used synthetic dyes. The rugs woven by the Armenian orphans were able to be sold for a dollar as square foot, which was a much higher price than that received for the rugs that were produced by the local weavers. These rugs will be discussed in documenting the importance of the Armenian orphan weavers to the carpet weaving world.







The Armenian Orphan Rug measures 11' 7" x 18' 5" and is comprised of 4,404,206 individual knots. It took Armenian girls in the Ghazir Orphanage of Near East Relief 10 months to weave. The rug was delivered to the President Coolidge on December 4, 1925, in time for Christmas, with a label on the back of the rug, which reads "IN GOLDEN RULE GRATITUDE TO PRESIDENT COOLIDGE."







ARMERIAN WEAVING CENTERS





# ARMENIAN GENOCIDE SURVIVORS AND THE WOVEN ARTS



## Orphanage Rug

Inscription: Orphanage

Size: 4'7" x 9'4"

Collection of Stephan and Heather, Anahid & Taline Isberian

**Levon Der Bedrosian:** *Master of ceremonies / Moderator*  
*Welcoming Remarks & Introduction of Speakers*  
3:00-3:15 p.m.

**Gevork Nazaryan:**  
*"Armenian Weaving Centers in the Ottoman Empire on the Eve of the Genocide":*  
3:20 - 3:50 p.m.

**Harold Bedoukian:**  
*"Armenian Orphans and Orphanages: Their Contribution to the Carpet Weaving World"*  
3:55 -4:25 p.m.

Break 15 min

**Hratch Kozibeyokian:**  
*"The Revival of an Ancient People and Their Crafts in Post-World War I in refugee camps."*  
4:40 -5:10 p.m.

**Susan Lind-Sinianian:**  
*"Stitching to Survive: Handcrafts of Armenian Widows and Orphans, 1896-1930"*  
5: 15 - 5:45 p.m.

**Garabet Moundjian**  
*Why Such Conferences as "THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE SURVIVORS AND THE WOVEN ART" Matter*  
5:50 - 6:20 p.m.

**Question & Answer: 6:20-7:00 p.m.**



## Newly discovered Hajin Orphanage Rug

Size: 2'11" x 4'3"

Original owner: Dorinda Bowman (Missionary to Hajin Orphanage from 1908-1914)

Property of: Bethel College Library, Mishawaka, Ind.  
on loan to: Ararat-Eskijian Museum, Mission Hills, CA







**HRATCH KOZIBEYOKIAN** was born in Aleppo, Syria, and raised in Lebanon in a family with a rich tradition of weaving craftsmanship. He immigrated to the United States in 1977 to join his father in the Oriental rug restoration business. In 1979 he settled in Los Angeles and earned a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology from Chapman College. In 1990 he established KO 'Z' Craft, a workshop to restore and conserve hand-woven antique textiles and carpets, and an exhibit gallery in West Hollywood's design district.

He became the first lecturer on "Armenian Rugs in World Culture" within the Armenian Studies Program at the California State University, Northridge, as well as various elementary and high schools. He has published numerous papers and spoken to groups of art lovers, collectors, and designers.

In 1998 Kozibeyokian joined the Armenian Rugs Society and has often served on its board. He was awarded the "Best Oriental rug restorer in Los Angeles" by the Los Angeles Magazine (August, 2005). Website: [www.ruglink.com](http://www.ruglink.com)

### **The Revival of an Ancient People and Their Crafts in Post-World War I, in refugee camps**

In the aftermath of the Armenian genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire, many survivors settled in Aleppo, Syria and other refugee camps throughout middle east. They lived in refugee camps (such as that of the Suleimaniye district) and squalid structures under dreadful conditions: utter poverty, indescribable misery, and lack of basic sanitation. However, despite the gloom and adversities encountered on a daily basis, these expatriates, stripped of all of their personal belongings, were determined to persevere. They accordingly relied on what they knew best—hard work. With only very basic raw materials provided by the American Near East Relief and other Armenian and non-Armenian charitable organizations, they set up looms and wove carpets and textiles. They also produced needlework, embroideries, and other material goods with a determination to lay the groundwork for a better future for themselves and their children.

This presentation deals with the conditions under which the refugees labored, the types and peculiarities of the art work they manufactured, and their role in the preservation of Armenian culture when the rich Armenian civilization faced the real threat of extinction as a result of the genocide.



Born in Boston, **SUSAN LIND-SINANIAN** holds a B.S. from Northeastern University in Elementary Education, and a Masters' degree from Boston College in the Education of the Visually Impaired. She has had extensive training in textile conservation. For many years she has been working in two careers that she loves; as teacher at Perkins School for the Blind for forty-two years and textile curator at the Armenian Museum of America for twenty-eight years.

In 1986, she created the textile center which was housed in the basement of the First Armenian Church in Belmont. She now oversees the largest Armenian textile collection in the Diaspora and has created many textile exhibitions on costumes, laces, embroideries and carpets. Susan is recognized nationally as a leading authority on Armenian textiles. She assisted Ron Marchese and Marlene Breu at the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul, advising them in the procedures of conservation in preparation for an Armenian museum at the Patriarchate. Another highlight of Lind-Sinianian's career was representing the Armenians of Massachusetts in Washington, D.C., at the Smithsonian Festival of Folklife by demonstrating needlework, cooking, and dancing. In addition to her research in Armenian textiles, Susan is also a specialist and teacher of Armenian folk dance and folk crafts.

### **Stitching to Survive: Handcrafts of Armenian widows and orphans, 1896-1930**

The Armenian Museum of America in Watertown, Massachusetts, houses a vast array of historical artifacts, including materials related to the Near East Relief (NER), women's handcrafts, and the orphan industries that developed to support orphans of the 1894-1896 massacres and the 1915-1923 Armenian Genocide. This paper describes the museum's holdings in some of these areas, including rugs and laces produced by widows and in orphanages in Agin, Malatia, and Ortakiugh (Istanbul). These materials reflect the living conditions of destitute survivors, the social, political, religious, and marketing networks that developed for refugee camps and orphanages, and the strategies used by the NER in the promotion and commercialization of these products. Following the 1894 massacres, American missionaries initiated opportunities for women's commercial needlework to be distributed in Europe and the Western Hemisphere.







**GARABET K MOUMDJIAN** holds a Ph.D. from UCLA in History. Dr. Moundjian has taught at several institutions (University of La Verne, Glendale Community College, CSUN, and UCLA). He is the author of two academic books, several chapters in academic volumes, and scores of articles in academic journals and periodicals. Since 2002, Dr. Moundjian has been employed by federal government agencies as a security analyst and consultant. He is fluent in Arabic, Armenian (Classical, Western, and Eastern), and Modern and Ottoman Turkish.

### **Why Such Conferences as “THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE SURVIVORS AND THE WOVEN ART” Matter**

For the past fifty years Armenian scholarship regarding the genocide was and still is mostly geared toward the historical validity and, hence, the acknowledgment of the act itself. Perhaps Turkish official denial was, and still is, an important reason that scholarship was, and still remains, centered around this theme to the detriment of other, post genocide themes that are as important. It is themes such as this conference explores and why it is important that they become center of attention that will be the topic of my expose.





Qui diuisa della provincia di Turcomania  
Turcomania a tre generazioni q'grate luno grato  
pno turcomany caltano malizalmato. Et pno p'prie  
dieri canno pezo. Inognogge ofanno Jumontangina o  
in allo et diuono aboframe. Cuno q'gano q' et muf q'  
et abgranda baloro et q'halto. pno Arming et grax d'  
admerano. Inuilla anogafolly et diuono d'art admerano  
nfo et quidi: sefanno q' p'uraty tappot. Admendo et a p'io  
bologoro. fanesi. lanono afota et d'utu q'golog' a lero q'p'o  
no q'g' nendi q'g'nto ell. pno a l'artano d'ol'vante et p'at  
come aq'u. candromo alla granda Armezia

### “About the Turkmen Nation

They live in the mountains or other virtually inaccessible places which offer good grazing land for their cattle, their sole livelihood. Here there is an outstanding breed of horses, called Turks, and handsome mules, which are sold at high prices. —The other Turkmen classes are made up of Greeks, and Armenians, living in cities and in permanent settlements and earning their livelihood from commerce and trade. It is here where the best and most beautiful carpets are produced as well as silk of crimson and other splendend colours. Among the most important cities are Konya, Khazar and Sevastopol..”

Marco Polo: El Milione; so called Ottimo Manuscript 1309 , Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence, Italy..

Venetian merchant and adventurer Marco Polo traveled from Europe to Asia from 1271 to 1295. He wrote *Il Milione*, known in English as *The Travels of Marco Polo*.