

ARS ARMENIAN RUGS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume II, Number 2 San Francisco, California, USA August, 2005

DR. LUCY DER MANUELIAN WILL SPEAK TO ARS

On Sunday, September 25, 2005, the Armenian Rugs Society and the Armenian Studies Program of the University of California at Berkeley will jointly sponsor a talk by Dr. Lucy Der Manuelian, holder of the Arthur H. Dadian and Ara Oztemel Chair of Armenian Art and Architectural History in the Department of Art History at Tufts University. This chair is the first endowed professorship in this field ever established at a university, and Dr. Der Manuelian is the first appointee

She has been a member of the Tufts faculty since 1984, when she was appointed to the Lectureship in Armenian Art and Architecture, the first teaching position in the United States dedicated to this field. The Lectureship was established by Tufts in conjunction with Harvard, McGill University, Boston College, Boston University, Northeastern, and the University of Massachusetts-Boston so courses in Armenian art could be taught at each university in succession. Professor Der Manuelian held the Lectureship post from 1984 to 1989, when she was appointed to the newly-established Dadian/Oztemel Professorship.

She received her B.A. degree from Radcliffe College, and her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in art history from Boston University. She was a fellow at the Bunting Institute at Radcliffe College for two years. Hers was the first Ph.D. dissertation in the United States in the field of Armenian art.

Professor Der Manuelian spent seven months in the former Soviet Union doing fieldwork and research in Armenia, followed by a three-month expedition under fellowships awarded her by the American Council of Learned Societies and the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Since then, she has returned many times to Armenia to do research. She has photographed, studied and written about hundreds of medieval monasteries in mountainous regions all over the country. She is the first American to have done so.

She has authored three volumes and co-authored a fourth for the Armenian Architectural Archives Project. Her publications also include the major articles on Armenian art for the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* and the *Dictionary of Art*, and papers on medieval Armenian sculpture. She



Professor Der Manuelian in Armenia

organized and wrote the catalogue for the University of Michigan exhibit entitled *The Gregorian Collection*. With Dr. Murray L. Eiland, she co-authored the catalogue for the Kimbell Art Museum exhibition *Weavers, Merchants and Kings: The Inscribed Rugs of Armenia*; she was also a consultant and lecturer for this exhibit, which travelled to five museums in the United States. She has been the subject of many newspaper, radio and television interviews, and has introduced Armenian history and art to millions of people including listeners to Voice of America broadcasts. She has made documentaries for PBS and for cable television on Armenian art and architecture and has travelled and lectured throughout the world. She has also been honored by many organizations.

We are proud to co-sponsor her lecture, "Diamonds, Dragons and Crosses: The Story of Armenian Rug Weaving." The lecture will be held in the Toll Room at the University of California Alumni House, at the end of Dana Court just off the Bancroft Way/Dana Street intersection, Berkeley. The event will begin at 3:00 PM with a reception in honor of Dr. Der Manuelian, followed by her presentation at 4:00 PM, after which there will be time for questions. For further information, please visit:

http://www.armenianrugssociety.com/news_armenian_rugs_society.html

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It seems as if this year has gone by very quickly. As we prepare for our fall and winter activities, I would like to tell you about some Armenian Rugs Society events of the past few months.

Since the headquarters of the society officially moved to California, everything we have done has been in the San Francisco area. At the beginning of this year, the board decided to hold a meeting in southern California, home to a huge Armenian community. Leon Alexander, who lives in the Anaheim area, and who has been involved in the ARS since before our 2002 exhibition in San Francisco, offered his parents' shop, Alexander's Rugs and Furniture, as the location. We decided we would also hold elections at this meeting, which we scheduled for March 12-13, 2005. Finally, we made plans to visit Hratch Kozibeyokian's home and rug gallery in Shadow Hills. Just two days before we were to leave, we were saddened to learn of the passing of Hratch's father the night before. Naturally, we changed our plans for Sunday. Our heartfelt condolences go to Hratch and his family for their loss—our thoughts and prayers are with them.

Early on the morning of March twelfth, a group of us met at Mineta San Jose Airport to fly to Anaheim. Soon after landing we arrived at the Alexanders' shop and were greeted by Leon and his parents, Ralph and Sylvia, who had snacks ready for all of us. They had decorated the shop with a number of Armenian rugs, and as people began to gather, we had a chance to admire the rugs and enjoy the food. There were representatives from all over California, and from Denver and the Washington, D.C., area, and we all had a chance to compare travel notes, renew old friendships, and make new friends.

I had the opportunity to open the meeting by reminding people that the ARS has just marked its twenty-fifth anniversary. We are now planning for many more accomplishments in the next twenty-five years—one of our goals is to have a rug exhibition in Armenia. We also briefly reviewed the history of the society and some of the exhibits we have sponsored over the years, the most recent being *PASSAGES: Celebrating Rites of Passage in Inscribed Armenian Rugs*, held three years ago in San Francisco.



Joe and Andre

Another of our plans is to display similar inscribed and non-inscribed rugs to show the rug world that even without inscriptions, there is no doubt that all these rugs are Armenian. Participants expressed an interest in having such an exhibit in Los Angeles.



Barbara and John Chookasian with Levon Der Bedrossian and Jack Quinn

I was also very proud to tell people how *Hali* magazine, in a recent article, used the word Armenian to describe a rug that not long ago would have been credited to the South Caucasus or to Azerbaijan. Bob Bruner, who had come to the meeting from his home in Denver, wrote a letter to *Hali* on behalf of the ARS thanking them for their accuracy; his letter was printed in a more recent issue. This recognition of a rug as being Armenian is due in great part to the efforts of our society and to those who have worked with us over the years.

ARS Vice-President Levon Der Bedrossian spoke next, describing his love of Armenian rugs and the enjoyment he has felt at being part of the ARS, particularly as a result of his involvement in the *PASSAGES* exhibit. Since he travels regularly to Armenia, he has become our unofficial ambassador to the museums there—when we started selling the *PASSAGES* book we decided that a portion of the proceeds would be used to help the rug museums in Armenia. So far, we have bought vacuum cleaners for the museums, and we have given them sums of money toward the restoration of specific rugs. In fact, several of our members have been so enthusiastic about this idea that they have made donations that are also directed towards the repair and conservation of specific rugs, and we are hoping the museums will acknowledge these individual donations when they display the finished rugs. Also, a reader of our newsletter who had visited the Sardarabad Museum sent us a letter suggesting that we provide the museums with UV blocking film for their windows, to shield rugs that are exposed to direct sunlight.

Levon also showed us a copy of the new book by Vahram Tatikyan, someone he met during his travels to Armenia (see our last newsletter, Volume II, Number 1, for Levon's article about his last trip and for more information on Tatikyan--this newsletter is also on our website). The book is called *Ancestral Carpets of Karabagh*; it was published in Armenia, but it does have a short English summary at the back of the book. Thanks to Levon, you can purchase a copy of this beautiful book for \$50.00 (plus shipping) from the ARS. All proceeds from the sale of the book are earmarked for full

English and German translations. Please contact us at our website, <http://www.armenianrugssociety.com> or at info@armenianrugssociety.com for details.

There was also more discussion of rug-related topics and a financial report from our current treasurer, Lorraine Amirian Parker, after which we elected new board members (see list on next page). We then had a fascinating afternoon of show-and-tell. That evening, everyone gathered at the nineteenth anniversary celebration of the Ari Guiragos Minassian Armenian School for dinner and visiting.

On Sunday, the Alexander family opened their weekend home at Huntington Beach to all who wanted to get together for lunch and more show-and-tell. Many thanks to hosts Ralph, Sylvia, Leon and Sousanna for their hospitality and generosity.

If you would like your inscribed Armenian rug featured (anonymously) as the website Rug-of-the-Month, please contact us at info@armenianrugssociety.com.

See you in Berkeley on September twenty-fifth!

—Joseph Bezdjian & Lorraine Parker



Some of the attendees at the Anaheim meeting

NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS

Executive Board

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|----------------|-------------------------|
| President | Joseph Bezdjian |
| Vice-President | Levon Der Bedrossian |
| Secretary | Karleen Hall |
| Treasurer | Lorraine Amirian Parker |

Board Members

- Garbis Bagdasarian
- Harold Bedoukian
- Loretta Boxdorfer
- Bob Bruner, Correspondent
- Stepan Isberian
- Haig Klujian
- Hratch Kozibeyokian
- Joan Quinn, Correspondent
- Jonathan Varjabedian

Honorary Advisory Board

- Lucy Der Manuelian
- Murray L. Eiland, Jr.
- Kevork Ghazarian
- John Sommer

Legal Advisor

- Leon Alexander



Bob Bruner from Denver

RUG EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

On the weekend Oct. 14./15./16.2005 the Volkmanntreffen 2005 will take place in conjunction with the opening of the very important exhibit "Magnificent Legacy of the Imperial Court: Classical Chinese Carpets 1400-1750." Lectures will be given in English and in German. For more information: <http://www.volkmanntreffen.de>.

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The International Conference on Oriental Carpets (ICOC) has announced an educational tour to Andalusia and Lisbon for November 3-13, 2005, called "Architecture, Carpets and Textiles of Moorish Spain and Portugal." For more information and the complete itinerary of this unusual ICOC program, visit the ICOC at <http://www.icoc-orientalrugs.org>, or contact Dennis Dodds at dennisdodds@juno.com.

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If you have undocumented Armenian textiles, let the ARS know; we would like to include them in our rapidly expanding databank.

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