

Armenian Easter in Jerusalem: 'The Great Journey'



Armenian House hall was packed and overflowing onto the staircase on 18 March 2006 as Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian gave a detailed and moving presentation on the oldest living community in the Armenian diaspora. As this event fell during Lent, Hratch focused on the services and ceremonies observed

during Holy Week in Jerusalem, giving theological explanations and Biblical references for each of the weeks preceding Easter. A former student of the Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Hratch worked as Rector of St Nerses Seminary in the United States before moving to the UK to complete his doctorate in the Sociology of Religion at the LSE.

The enthusiastic audience showed great interest in more events that highlight communities in the diaspora as well as more information about Armenian religious traditions and beliefs.

Photographic Exhibition: Armenians in Jerusalem

Jakob's Deli hosted a exiting photographic exhibition between March 19 and April 2, 2006. Photographer Gianni Soglia, born in Belgium of Italian origin, displayed stunning photographs of Armenian pilgrims, priests and Jerusalemites celebrating Easter in the Holy City. The photographs highlighted three major Easter ceremonies, the Washing of the Feet in the Cathedral of St. James, the Ceremony of the Light in the Holy Sepulchre, and the Benediction of the four corners of the world (see photograph), held in the courtyard of the Armenian Convent on Easter Sunday. All photographs, indoor and out, were taken with only the available light giving a luminous atmosphere to the works. Gianni is a professional photographer with experience in fashion and portraiture, as well as other studio work. His website displays these and others: www.giannisoglia.com.



We are very grateful to our generous donors who have made it possible to have exciting events, such as the exhibition at the Brunei Gallery and the party to welcome the *Cilicia* to London. Other gifts have enabled the Armenian Institute to buy needed items as varied as office equipment and children's books for the library.

- Jakobs Deli (Festival, Jerusalem photo exhibit, and other events)
- Krikor Didonian (*Cilicia* Medieval Ship Welcome Event)
- Hagop and Alice Kaprielian (donation to celebrate their grandchildren's christening)
- Panos and Diana Katsouris (Layered Lives: Iranian Armenian Contemporary Arts)
- Shakeh and Hratch Tchilingirian (donations in lieu of wedding gifts)

Grants: The Benlian Trust, St. Sarkis Trust, Arts Council England, Awards for All.

Partnership: The Brunei Gallery (SOAS), London Middle East Institute (SOAS).

As every year, we are also completely dependent on the goodwill and energy of our many volunteers who make the events happen. Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard over this past year.

Library Volunteers

– Mimi Heghoyan, Lana Kapikyan.

A big thank you to both who have generously donated their free time to help catalogue and shelve the 4,000 plus books.

Lana has regularly spent many Saturdays at the Institute library labelling and shelving books according to their class number and Mimi has sorted various categories of books preparing them for shelving.

Armenian Institute Library List of Donors

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**Thank you to all who have contributed
books and journals to the Library**



Hamaink's editorial team would like to express our grief and convey our deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the Armenian airplane crash on May 3rd, 2006. The passenger plane of Armavia airlines was on its route from Yerevan to the Black Sea town of Sochi when the tragic air crash took place, claiming 113 lives. According to the RA Central Administrative Board of the Civil Aviation, 8 members of the crew and 105 passengers, 6 of whom were children and 36 - women, were on board the A-320 air liner.



ARMENIAN
INSTITUTE
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LECTURE: ARMENIAN EASTER IN JERUSALEM

The lecture in Hye Doon on Saturday 18th March 2006 saw Hye Doon packed beyond its capacity. Dr Hratch Tchilingirian, who has studied in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, gave a brief history of the Armenian community in Jerusalem before explaining the various services and ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter. The Jerusalem Armenian community, the oldest community outside the homeland established since the Roman Empire and the time of Tigran the Great, provided the context to the spiritual journey of Holy Week.

Armenian monks from Greater Armenia established monasteries in the Holy Land and some of the Queens of Crusader times were even of Armenian descent). This original community expanded due to the intake of post-genocide orphans and Armenian refugees from the Arab-Israeli wars. The Armenian quarter of the Old City is a huge

neighbourhood living within the religious eco-system of the walled monastery with schools, libraries and the printing press established in 1833. The community in numbers approximately 20,000 with 8,000 people living inside the monastery walls, which has a curfew from 10pm to 5 am. Enclosed within the walls is St James' Cathedral, still lit by hanging oil lamps, which is one of the wealthiest churches after the Vatican due to its treasures and artifacts. The treasures from Crusader times are still guarded by a team of five monks, called the "religious soldiers", who are the only ones to have access to them and who are sworn to secrecy.

Dr Tchilingirian then went on to describe the spiritual journey of Easter from the beginning of Lent - the forty days of cleansing and spiritual awareness leading up to Holy Week. Week by week, the theological and symbolic

meanings of the services were explained from the first Sunday of the Great Barekandan ("Good-life") through to Palm Sunday and the Holy Week. The Service of the Light in the Holy Sepulchre, where the light is brought out of Christ's tomb, is infamous for the fights which usually break out between the Greek Patriarch and the Armenian Patriarch who each try to be the first one to pass the flame out!

The enthusiastic audience were held captivated by an eloquent and highly informed and interesting speaker! And in the run-up to Easter, the lecture provided a fitting reflection on the services going on in the Armenian Church and a very suitable preparation, especially set in the backdrop of Jerusalem! Attending the lecture was like a virtual pilgrimage to the Armenian quarter in Jerusalem.

Louisa Culleton