



Armenian Ministry of Culture



SOPRINTENDENZA SPECIALE P.S.A.E. POLO  
MUSEALE DELLA CITTA' DI VENEZIA E DELLA  
GRONDA LAGUNARE



## **ARMENIA: IMPRINTS OF A CIVILIZATION**

**Venice, Correr Museum, National Archaeological Museum and Marciana National Library**

**16 December 2011 – 10 April 2012**

A major exhibition, entitled "ARMENIA: IMPRINTS OF A CIVILIZATION", will open in the museums of St. Mark's Square on December 16, 2011. Hosting the exhibition will be the prestigious venues of the Correr Museum, the National Archaeological Museum and the Marciana National Library.

The exhibition will mark the fifth centenary of the first book printed in the Armenian language. This exhibition will act as the official launch of the jubilee celebrations taking place in the Armenian capital Yerevan, a UNESCO World Book Capital for 2012.

The organization of the event is shouldered by the Armenian Ministry of Culture and the Foundation of Venice City Museums and is promoted by the National Committee for the Celebration of the Fifth Centenary of the Armenian Press (chaired by the President of the Republic of Armenia), the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia, the Foundation of Venice City Museums, the Armenian Mekhitarist Congregation, the Special Superintendent for Historical, Artistic and Ethno-Anthropological Heritage and for the Central Committee of the Museums of the City of Venice and the Municipalities of the Lagoon Region, the Embassy of Armenia in Rome, and the Marciana National Library.

Curators Gabriella Uluhogian, Boghos Levon Zekiyan, and Vartan Karapetian aim to provide an original approach to many of the exciting aspects of Armenian civilization. The halls of the three museums will be used in order to create a unique exhibition space that will display, through a parallel chronological and thematic approach, two hundred works from the major Armenian museum collections and libraries, both in Europe and Armenia. Particular thematic attention will be paid to: architectural, artistic, economic, religious and philosophical achievements.

A fully-illustrated catalogue, published by Skira, will accompany this unique exhibition and will include contributions from distinguished Armenologists on an international level, and, especially, members of the Italian academy.

Ancient steles engraved with the cross, brightly-colored miniatures, architectural memorials and holy relics preserved for centuries at the Mother See of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Echmiadzin (Armenia) will be accompanied by unique sound installations that recreate the aural landscape of medieval Armenia. Each visitor will, thus, walk along a fantastic path of historic Armenian heritage that will begin with the dawn of Christianity and extend well beyond the medieval period.

A major focus of the exhibition will be to show the long and fruitful experiences of the Armenian people with diverse communities and cultures from Europe to the Far East. In particular, through detailed historical documentation (including manuscripts and works of art), the exhibition will illustrate the development of the Armenian presence in Venice and their position within the Venetian society.

Thanks to the inclusion of several rare and precious manuscripts, another section will offer new perspectives on the development of Armenian historiography, literature, philosophy, science and theology.

An important segment of the exhibition will be uniquely devoted to shedding light on the practical realities of Armenian printing since 1512 and will include fascinating examples of printing in the dense network of Armenian colonies throughout the world. A special emphasis will be placed on the important tradition of the Armenian printing press in Venice, that reached its height of glory with the illuminated enlightened dedication of the academically-minded Mekhitarist Fathers.

Visitors to the exhibition in St. Mark's Square will have the opportunity to continue upon a tour that explores the sights of 'Armenian Venice' according to precise routes designed and designated by the curators.

The exhibition will remain open until April 10, 2012, while the sections uniquely dedicated to printing and to Venetian-Armenian relations (thereafter located at the Museum of the Mkhitarian Congregation on the nearby Island of San Lazzaro) will run until the end of August, 2012.

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