



UNIVERSITÀ
CA' FOSCARI
VENEZIA

DIPARTIMENTO DI STUDI EURASIATICI



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ASSOCIAZIONE CULTURALE PADUS-ARAXES

PRESS RELEASE

CELEBRATIONS FOR THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUMMER INTENSIVE COURSE OF ARMENIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF CA' FOSCARI UNIVERSITY OF VENICE

The 25th anniversary of the Summer Intensive Course of Armenian Language and Culture of Ca' Foscari University of Venice, organized in collaboration with the Cultural Association Padus-Araxes, was celebrated with solemnity on an international level August 13th through 15th. The following special guests arrived for this silver occasion in Venice: Prof. Vladimir Barkhudaryan, Academician Secretary of the Department of Armenian and Humanitarian Studies of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences (ANAS), and Dr. Haroutiun Kurkjian, from Athens, literary critical and author of textbooks for Armenian language and literature, who also was the keynote speaker at the academic celebration. Many other guests came also to Venice from Italy, Armenian, France, and Turkey.

Congratulatory messages were sent on this happy occasion by the following religious and civil authorities: H.H. Aram I Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia; H.B. Nerses Bedros XIX Catholicos Patriarch of the Catholic Armenians of Cilicia; Mr. Gagik Harutunian President of the Constitutional Court of RA; Mrs. Hasmik Boghosyan Minister of Culture; Mr. Armen Ashotyan Minister of Education; Mrs. Hranush Hakobyan Minister of Spiurk, Mr. Ruben Karapetyan Ambassador of Armenia in Italy, Prof. Radik Martirosyan President of ANAS; Prof. Aram Simonyan Rector of Yerevan State University; Prof. Henrik Bakhchinyan Director of E. Charents Museum of Literature and Art; Dr. Davit Sargsyan Director of the National Library of Armenia; Dr. Levon Ananyan President of the Union of Armenian Writers; Prof. Alide Cagidemetro Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures of Ca' Foscari University Venice; Prof. Giuliano Tamani Director of the Department of Euro-Asian Studies of Ca' Foscari.

The celebrations formally began on August 13, Friday afternoon, in the magnificent *Sala degli Specchi* (Hall of Mirrors) of the Moorat-Raphael College. Augural messages were read after which the Pro-Rector of Ca' Foscari University Prof. Ettore Cingano greeted the public on behalf of the Rector, Prof. Carlo Carraro, emphasizing the importance of Oriental Languages at Ca' Foscari with special reference to Armenian for the secular ties of all kind between Venice and the Armenians. This was followed by Prof. Barkhudaryan's speech who expressed the appreciation and support of Armenia's intellectual's and cultural institutions for the work being achieved in Venice at Ca' Foscari to preserve and develop the Armenian language and culture especially among diasporan Armenians. Then Prof. Gabriella Uluhogian, a co-founder of Padus-Araxes, expressed concisely her satisfaction for being present and her deep conviction of the value and multiple functions of this course. The floor was then taken by Prof. Haroutiun Kurkjian, keynote speaker of the day, who spoke alternating Armenian and French on the necessity of bilingualism and biculturalism for diasporan Armenian with a special reference to the West Armenian reality. This first day celebration was concluded with a concert by soprano Rosine Tachdjian Manougian, from Paris, and baritone Mkrtych Mkrtychyan, formerly a solist of the Yerevan Opera and now in Paris, accompanied at piano by Justin Rapaccioli, from Venice, and Laurence Anahid Mekhitarian, from Bruxelles, who also attended the Course. A jubilee dinner was offered on August 14 Saturday evening at the Iris Restaurant of Venice. Two books published for the occasion present a press review of articles concerning the Course and a concise exposé of the goals and activities of Padus-Araxes,

The conclusive celebrations were held on August 15, Sunday of our Lady's Assumption Feast, on the island of San Lazzaro in the early after-noon, following the Pontifical Liturgy celebrated by Father Abbot, and the dinner offered by the Mekhitarist Fathers. The solemnity for the Course's silver jubilee, which took place in the monastic church, was opened by a speech of Fr. Levon Zekiyan, the founder and director of the Course, who emphasized its meaning in the frame of contemporary Armenian culture with its various problems not only in the diaspora but also in Armenia, as being basically inspired by Abbot Mekhitar's ideals. A concert of Armenian religious and popular songs was then executed by the above mentioned artists who were alternated by the Padus-Araxes choir, formed on this occasion by participants in the Course under the direction of Maestro Mkrtych Mkrtychyan. A recital of duduk of Armenian popular and religious melodies was offered, between the songs, by Aram Ipekjian who held his diploma from Yerevan State Conservatory.

The 25th Summer Intensive Course of Armenian Language and Culture ended on August 19. Registration for the next course of August 2011 will open on 1st December 2010. The traditional press release about conditions and modalities will be published by mid-November.