

Armenian Studies Program
California State University, Fresno

For Immediate Release:

New Book Published
David of Sassoun: Critical Studies on the Armenian Epic

David of Sassoun: Critical Studies on the Armenian Epic (The Press at California State University, Fresno, 2013), 228 pages, a collection of essays by the world's foremost scholars on the great oral epic of Armenia, edited by Dickran Kouymjian and Barlow Der Mugrdechian, has just been published as the newest addition to the Armenian Series of Fresno State's Armenian Studies Program. *David of Sassoun* is the fourth title in the Armenian Series established through The Press at California State University, Fresno.

The essays, by Charles Dowsett, Dickran Kouymjian, Aram Ter-Ghevondian, Earl R. Anderson, Chaké Der Melkonian-Minassian, Frédéric Feydit, Arpiné Khatchadourian, Aram Tolegian, Chaké Der Melkonian-Minassian, Vahé Oshagan, as well as an original poem on David by Ashough Hovnani, were presented at a Symposium organized by Dr. Kouymjian the year after he was invited to the campus to establish a new Program devoted to Armenian Studies. He saw it as Fresno's contribution to the commemoration of the centennial celebration of the discovery and publication of the epic poem, which had survived until the 1970s orally, passed on, generation after generation, for more than a thousand years by anonymous village bards.

Every serious scholar from Armenia, France, England, Canada, and the United States who had published on the Armenian epic was invited to participate in the International Symposium entitled "David of Sassoun: The Armenian Folk Epic after a Century."

In addition to the papers of the conference, the current volume contains an introduction outlining the history of the epic as well as a concise summary of all the episodes of the official version established by a team of scholars in Erevan in 1939. The essays are as fresh today as they were when they were written despite the decades, which have passed.

Also included at the beginning of the volume is a new variant, the only known version of the epic recorded anywhere in the Diaspora. Because of the publicity generated by the Symposium, Lilyan Chooljian of Fresno, present at the conference, who had recorded a recitation of the variant some years earlier, brought it to the attention of Dr. Kouymjian.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fund and the M. Victoria Karagozian Kazan and Henry S. Khanzadian Kazan Fund, and the efforts of Professor Der Mugrdechian to include the volume in the Armenian Series of monographs the Program sponsors, the book is now available to the general public.

The critical brilliance of many of the essays, at times challenging traditional views held on the epic and how it should be presented and understood, will provide much source material for scholars.

David of Sassoun: Critical Studies on the Armenian Epic is available from The Press at California State University, Fresno through its website <http://shop.thepressatcsufresno.com/>, email at press@csufresno.edu, by post at The Press at California State University, Fresno, 2380 East Keats Avenue M/S MB 99,

Fresno, CA 93740-8024, or by calling 559-278-3056.

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