

**GAGIK SARGSYAN**  
**(1926-1998)**



Gagik Sargsyan was a prominent Armenologist and expert in ancient Near Eastern civilizations whose studies became benchmark for evaluation of ancient Armenian history, especially its early periods including Hellenistic period.

G. Sargsyan was born in 1926 in Yerevan. In 1943 he entered the Historical Faculty of Leningrad University. In 1951-1954 he as a postgraduate student studied in the branch of the Institute of History (Leningrad) of the Academy of Sciences of USSR, under the supervision of leading Soviet orientalists – I.Diakonoff, V.Struve, I.Meshshaninov and others. In 1954 he was awarded the degree of Candidate of Historical Sciences (“The city of ancient Armenia”). In 1954-1971 he worked in the Institute of History of Academy of Sciences of Armenia (in 1962-1966 as deputy director of that Institute). In 1967 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of History (“Armenia of the Hellenistic period and Movses Khorenatsi”).

In 1971-1994 G. Sargsyan was the Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Together with several outstanding orientalists (H. Inchikyan, N. Hovhannisyan, P. Muradyan, N. Harutyunyan) he founded a number of periodicals dealing with general problems of oriental studies as well as that of its specific fields; some of these periodicals still continue to be published (“The peoples and Countries of the Near and Middle East”, “Ancient Orient”, “Eastern Source Studies”).

G. Sargsyan paid special attention to the direct contacts of Armenian orientalists with their foreign partners. During that period the scholars of the Institute regularly participated in international conferences and were studies were published in European, Oriental and other international journals. In fact, Armenian Oriental studies successfully entered the international arena from the early 1970s and was truly one of the leading centers of Oriental studies of the USSR. One of the main goals of G.Sargsyan became the creation of scientific personnel and their training at the leading Soviet academic institutions.

Scientific interests of G.Sargsyan included several directions: 1) ancient oriental urban community, 2) Mesopotamian social-economic life of the Hellenistic period, 3) publication and study of cuneiform texts of the Late Babylonian and Hellenistic periods, 4) social-political history of ancient Armenia, 5) Hellenism in Armenia, 6) historicity and chronology and of Movses Khorenatsi’s “Armenian history”, 7) Pre-Mesropian Armenian historiography, 8) the problem of Urartu-Armenia and issues of the formation of the Armenian people etc.

In 1974 G.Sargsyan was elected Corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia. He was also Professor of Yerevan State University. In 1984 he was elected the chairman of the Armenian Branch of the Soviet Orientalists’

Association. In 1985 he was awarded State Prize of the Soviet Armenia and Honorary Member of Syrian Historical Society, in 1986 Full member (academician) of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia. In 1988-1990 he was Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia. In 1995-1998 he was Vice-President and Academician-Secretary of the Division of Armenology and Social Sciences of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia.

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