

HABAP FOUNTAINS

THE STORY OF A RESTORATION
MAY 2009 - NOVEMBER 2011



HRANT DINK VAKFI
HRANT DINK FOUNDATION
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Istanbul, May 2012

HRANT DINK FOUNDATION

Hrant Dink Foundation was established in 2007 after the painful event on January 19th, in order to avoid similar pains and to continue Hrant Dink's legacy, his language and heart and his dream of a world that is more free and just. Democracy and human rights for everyone regardless of their ethnic, religious or cultural origin or gender is the Foundation's main principle.

The Foundation aims for a Turkey and a world where freedom of expression is limitless and all differences are allowed, lived, appreciated and multiplied, and conscience outweighs in the way we look at today and the past. As the Hrant Dink Foundation 'our cause worth living' is such a future where a culture of dialogue, peace and empathy prevails.



A khachkar in the cemetery next to the Habap Mosque

Only a small number of those who were able to survive the 1915 disaster ever returned to the land they were born in. They continued their lives in different parts of the world, but they never forgot about their native land, the towns and villages they were born in. They shared the memories of their land with their children and grandchildren; some committed their memories to paper. These oral and written narratives shed light on a past that has since been covered with a thick veil. This work is dedicated to their memories.

My village! 67 miles west of Palu, between the mountains of Ağacar and Anabad, where three-thousand people were alive and breathing in two hundred and thirty homes, before 1915. (...) The history of Havav dates back to the 10th century. I know that a manuscript dated 1293 mentions Havav. Arisdages, Lasdiverti and Madteos Urkhayetsi also talk of this village. It is also known that the village was called 'Hav' and 'Havk' during the 15th century. (S. Papazyan, p. 220)

Habap is the largest and most beautiful village, surrounded by purple-hued mountains set in a lowland extending as far as the eye can see. This village, named 'Havav' in Armenian, was home to Armenians for centuries and, until 1915, it was the largest and most advanced village in its region, with its monastery that overlooked the vast lowland, its two churches and nine watermills, as well as the skilled workers that helped to maintain it, including stone masters, carpenters and blacksmiths.

The village's two neighborhoods each had one big drinking fountain, built skillfully by Armenian craftsmen. The drinking fountain of the Lower Neighborhood was called the 'Lower Fountain' and the one in the Upper Neighborhood was called the 'Upper Fountain'. The people of Havav believed that the crystal clear, good-tasting water streaming forth from these fountains, which ran lukewarm during winter and cool during summer, came down from heaven. Each spring they would open up the canals carrying water and clean them out.

The writings of Boghos Natanian, a man of the cloth, who visited the region in 1878, explain why the Surp Asdvadzadzin Monastery, situated on the hill in the upper part of the village, is often called the 'Kaghtsrahayeats' (literally meaning 'looking-out-sweetly' in Armenian):

"The view from the monastery is such a delight; wherever you turn your head, you are surrounded by gardens, forests, many different types of trees and red roses. Clear waters run, (...) sweet breezes blow. Each morning and evening I hear so many birds and nightingales sing." (Yarman, p. 89)

Following the 1915 disaster, the only thing left of the Armenians was burnt down, torn down, and plundered houses, and 'leftovers of the sword' who were spared as odalisques, in-house maids or adopted kids. One of those people was my grandmother, Heranush, the daughter of Isguhi and Hovannes, of the Gadaryan family from Havav... She grew up as the adopted daughter of Corporal Hüseyin, in Çermik, a town of Diyarbakır, after

being renamed Seher. She grew up, got married, and had children and grandchildren. One day, after keeping it to herself for so long, she told her heart-wrenching story to her grandchildren.

I put my grandma's story down on paper. A short time after it was published as a book (*Annean-nem*, Metis, 2004; *My Grandmother: A Memoir*, Verso, 2008), some residents of the Havav village, where my grandma had left at the age of nine and never returned, called and even visited me. One of these people was Hanifi Bekirgil, who said "We heard about a book you wrote, but we cannot find it here. Is it possible to send us a copy?" I sent it right away. Then, he sent me some pictures of the fountains via the Internet and invited me to the village. The photos were very small and so it was not possible to see the condition or the architectural qualities of these fountains. However, these correspondences were enough for me to understand that these fountains meant so much to the residents of the village, at least to Hanifi. Later, a young colleague from Habap sent me an e-mail, saying "I would love to be your guide if you ever decide to visit our village one day." I decided it was time to go to Habap, walk on the trails that my grandmother once walked on and drink the water that she was no longer able to drink as she could never return to that village. It was just around that time that they took away Hrant Dink from us. I postponed my visit to the village.

A while later I learned that a retired prosecutor, Feyzullah Demirtaş, was trying to contact me. I called him and we met. He was a *bey* (local landlord) from Palu. He had brought pictures of the fountains along with him. When I saw the pictures, I was mesmerized. Although some of the fountains' arches were completely broken, some were partially destroyed, their gargoyles broken, their stones moldy and their floors completely covered with mud and slime, both fountains were surprisingly beautiful; I had never come across such fountains in Anatolia.

The village accommodates three historical structures. One of them, a human-made hill, is found outside the village, in the middle of the lowland. Another of the historical structures, the door-sized khachkars [carved memorial steles] carved by St. Tateos, surround the village. The last one is the S. Asdvadzadzin Kaghtsrahayeats Monastery, a stone structure built by St. Partoğomeos. All these structures were intact until the Great Disaster. (D. Papazyan, p. 11)

I am trying to recreate the monastery in my mind: This was the arachnort's [archpriest] room, there is the school; the monks, the mill, and the fountain... There was life there in the summer of 1912. The people from Istanbul came together and started a summer school. Professors from Yeprad College [in Harput], teachers from Havav and the neighboring regions were teaching on school management, instruction methods and Western Music. (...) An agricultural expert named Kharakhanyan was giving applied training on the productive use of soil. They had even started to grow potatoes. Today none of these exist. Where are these things? Where are the girls, brides and grooms who were dancing and jumping over the fire in Trndez ['fire celebration' for the Armenians, celebrated on February 14]. (S. Papazyan, pp. 229-230)

Feyzullah Bey said that if the fountains were not restored within a short time, they would be destroyed. From that moment on, I started to dream. These fountains had to be restored; the clear, good-tasting water had to come streaming out again. They had to be restored so that the souls of all those people brutally murdered, uprooted from their land, or unable to go back to sip the water coming out of the fountains they held so dear, or the souls of all the Heranushes, Maryams and Horens, could rest in peace; so that at least their grandchildren would be able to drink from this water that they could not...

Yes, we had to do this, but not like a regular restoration project, but rather as a process involving working with the villagers, talking of the village's past and all the events constituting its history, breaking the silence that dominated a hundred years, and reviving memories that have been repressed and that were on the verge of being erased.

We had to restore what we broke and let the water run from dried fountains together. To do this, we had to have the villagers, and the young people in the village, young Turks and other young people outside of Turkey work together; Turkish, Kurdish and Armenian youth had to come and voluntarily work here, touching each other, facing the pain of the past. We had to draw close to one other, produce together and as a result, as Hrant Dink put it, heal together. We had to produce together and then protect our output.

If he were alive, I am sure that he would be the most excited of all. Therefore, we started the project with the Hrant Dink Foundation. Arat Dink, who is an architect himself, talked to his colleagues involved in restoration projects. Our dear architect friends Nihan Sağman and Mehmet Erkök, and art historian Özge Erkök, said that they would volunteer for this project.

In May 2009, we travelled to Habap with our architects. Before we left, I got in touch with the people of Habap who had contacted me earlier, and I let Mahmut Dindar, who had wished to be



Habap ('Havav' in Armenian, and 'Ekinözü' officially) is a village with a population of 1000 inhabitants, in the Kovancılar District of the Province of Elazığ.

my tour guide, know the date of our arrival.

Feyzullah Bey and his brothers took me from the airport to the village. Mahmut had taken time off from his work; we met him and Mustafa Balaban, who had come there from Elazığ, in Habap. Mustafa, who was the city of Elazığ's representative for the Foundation for the Protection and Promotion of the Environment and Cultural Heritage (ÇEKÜL), was trying to obtain protection for artifacts on the verge of perishing. We strolled around the village under the guidance of Mahmut and Mustafa, and we visited the fountains.

The old houses and schools were barely there. One of the two churches had completely broken down, and a house and yard was sitting there instead. The other church found between the Upper and the Lower Fountain was not demolished, since it was used as a mosque until the 1960s, but its dome had caved in and it was in ruins. The monastery was in rubble, with only its two walls left standing.

There were two churches in the village; Surp Asdvadzadzin and Gatoghige. The second was used especially during Gaghanat [Christmas] and Zadig [Easter] celebrations. Surp Asdvadzadzin [Mother Mary] Church, the school and its playground, surrounded with stone walls, were found in the upper part of the village, on an expanse of land across from the harvest field. The school was a structure with two floors, high-ceilings and big windows, situated at the corner of the field, facing the busy street. It had classrooms, a principal's office and a nice hall. The school was equipped with writing desks, chairs and all kinds of furniture. The architects of the village used every means available for this school. (D. Papazyan, p. 100, 148)

12 *In the center of Havav there were two churches separated by approximately half a mile. They were both built around the 13th century. During the massacre of 1895, the Kurds tried to destroy one of them by burning it down, but they did not succeed in fully destroying this solid structure made of stone. The lower church, on the other hand, was not harmed; and the villagers continued their congregation in that one. After the Constitution was announced, our village grew bigger and reached a population of one thousand, and then a second church was needed. That's how the reconstruction of the ruined church had begun, but after the deportation, it could not be completed. (S. Papazyan, p. 21)*

One of the arches and the walls of the Upper Fountain were completely destroyed, the other wall was collapsing and many of the stones were taken away. Two of its arches were standing but they were leaning to the sides and had a slope. Due to the accumulation of mud, grime and dirty water in the front, it was hard to reach the water that was coming out of one of the holes. The epitaph of the fountain was scraped off, but the location of the cross was still visible, albeit it was placed at a slope.

The Lower Fountain was older, yet more glorious. However, its gargoyles were broken and they were replaced with a pipe, which was running dry except for a little leak. Its stones were moldy and the water accumulated in the sink was full of trash. There were holes everywhere on it, and when we asked about them, they told us it was “the treasure-hunters’ work”.

Including our architects, we were five. Villagers Hanifi Bekirgil, Hanifi Kılıç and Mehmet Kılıç opened their homes for us. The architects began working right away, preparing their survey and restoration projects. They worked by the fountains during the day, and in the evenings, they talked to the elderly about how the fountains looked before they were ruined, and they made their drawings according to the descriptions they obtained. Kids were running circles around the architects, racing to present them with bracelets, rings and tiaras they had made from chamomile flowers.

When we were invited to dinner. Villagers Resul, Hayati, Muhittin, and Mehmet, as well as the village guard, Hadin and the village headman joined us most of the time. We explained to them our reason for being at the village and what we were hoping to achieve. The food was served to us, the male members of the house, as well as other male guests in the biggest room of the house, whereas the women ate in a separate room or in the kitchen. Although the tablecloth set on the floor was full of exquisite dishes of all sorts, we did not enjoy the ways in which the men’s quarters were separated from the women’s quarters. However, since we



Church Gatoğice. It was used as a mosque after 1915 up to the 1960s. Today it is in ruins.

could not change this, most of the time Mehmet and I joined and conversed with the male guests at dinner, while Nihan and Özge ate with the women.

I had brought many copies of the book *My Grandmother*, and I gave it as a gift to everyone I met.

Although some villagers had opened up their homes for us, a majority of them kept their distance, and watched us and our work with a mixture of unease and curiosity. When we were walking around the church whose dome had collapsed, we realized that a hole was dug at one of its outer walls, and a stone with designs on it had been removed. The villagers told us that this hole was new. My heart was fraught with pain and I wanted that hole filled. There was a young villager who was watching us with curiosity but not with the most amicable expression. I kindly asked him to help us fill that hole, but he rudely refused. This hole, dug by treasure hunters, was then filled by Mehmet and Hanifi Kılıç’s efforts.

The next day, we travelled 10 minutes away to Kovancılar District, the municipality under which

They say that Ğevont from our village, may he rest in peace, went to the fountain before he started his trip to the United States. He drank and drank, and could not get enough of it. When Baron Bağos saw him in this state, he said “Drink, drink, don’t hold back! Who knows if you will ever drink from this water or see this place again? So, go on, and drink!” Truly, none of them ever saw their native land or drank of its water again. (S. Papazyan, p. 207)

14 *The first rays of the morning sun began to light the village after the passing of a black night that witnessed inexpressible pain, sobs and desperation. The villagers had left their homes and started to the meeting place near Hoghapert [Toprakkale] towards the valley, the fountains. After an initial greeting, the only thing talked of was what the future held for them. A deadly silence prevailed around the fountains. The dirty swear words coming out of the mouths of the soldiers and policemen filling the gardens deeply contrasted with the clear water of the fountain pouring forth from heaven... As the Lieutenant gave the order "Get ready, we are setting off", everyone understood this was a matter of life and death. Crying, begging or kindly asking for mercy was no use as all they got was the same answer: "March." The soldiers were content on carrying out the District Governor's orders word by word. The village was completely evacuated. Almost a thousand people were amassed. A deep silence hung over the group. Nobody had the courage to speak. They only marched. They were leaving behind their fields which they had cultivated with such care, their fountains which had given them life with its ice-cold waters, their trees which had given them such delicious fruits, their vineyards and gardens, left behind like orphans. They did not once look back as they could not find the strength to do so. The elderly who had a hard time marching were lagging behind, but they were using all their might so the soldiers would not run them over. Some of them would stop and pray to God, ask Him for help, but He was insistent on remaining silent. The prayers of the elderly, and the cursing of the women were suppressed by the soldiers' order "March!", and those who resisted would get whipped, which made everybody's steps a little faster.*
(Gadarigian, pp. 19-23)

the village was registered and visited the District Mayor Bekir Yanılmaz and the District Governor Selçuk Aslan. I told them about our project and presented them each with a copy of the book, *My Grandmother*.

Our architects wanted to see the platform in front of the fountains, therefore we needed to clean the dirt and grime that had accumulated there. I asked the Municipality's help for this. That very day, they sent a digger to the village. While the digger was at work, a villager, Salih Çeker went and grabbed his rubber boots, and went into the grime with his brother and began to help cleaning. Other villagers who had been watching us from above also came down and started to clean off the mold on the stones.

As children also began to help out, enthusiasm for the project grew. Zülfü, the young villager who had earlier declined our request for helping us fill the hole, was always nearby, observing us from a distance. His friends told me that Zülfü was actually a relative of mine; this meant that his grandfather, like my grandmother, was Armenian. Later, they introduced somebody else to me as my "relative". On the second day I seemed to have even more relatives.

On the other hand, I also learned that many of the people who had been staying away from us were telling others "These people have different motives than what they say; they want to bring back the Armenians, to ask to return their goods; don't let these people in the village", and that they had put a lot of pressure on our hosts, especially after I left. I also learned that the Gendarmerie Commander had yelled at the village headman...

The architects were able to make measurements for both of the fountains in three to four days, but although they had worked for a week, they were still not done. Therefore, they travelled to the village again in August to work for another week. While we were away, we learned that a heavy rainfall had flooded the stream that ran next to the fountains and had flooded the Upper Fountain.



Lower Fountain before restoration

The flood had dragged tree branches and stones and filled the platform in front of the fountains. The streambed, not cleaned for a hundred years, had been filled with stones and rocks brought by the flood, and the retaining walls built by Armenian craftsmen had become useless. Therefore, it became evident that, along with the fountains' restoration, a stream restoration was also necessary.

In order to start the restoration project, the projects prepared by the architects needed to be approved by the Diyarbakir Council of Monuments. The drawings were presented to the council. The projects were approved in their second submission, but it had taken a year for the approval, as the time period between the meetings was inordinately long and some meetings were cancelled. Our architects had to travel to Diyarbakir a few times for bureaucratic proceedings, as well as for meetings.

After we returned to Istanbul, we kept in touch with the villagers through phone and e-mails. We shared all the developments with the villagers who

The villagers cared greatly about the fountains in the lower and the upper neighborhoods. The water reservoirs were covered with stone covers to prevent soil from going in. Once a year, these covers would be removed and people would go down and clean the reservoirs. Therefore, we would have clean water in the summer and winter; cool and good-tasting water... We got our water from the fountains, but twenty-five to thirty of the homes in Havav also had their own wells. The villagers would dig down into the soil three to four meters until they reached water, and then they would construct a wall around the hole. They would use a bucket with rope to draw water from the wells, water which they used for taking baths, doing laundry, cleaning their homes or providing for their animals. Although the well water was good water, it was not potable. The villagers knew that stagnant water was dirty and that flowing water was clean.
(S. Papazyan, pp. 17-18)

16 *The fact that the restoration work was carried out with the villagers, and not despite the villagers, allowed the villagers to embrace the fountains more. The fountain represents an emotional part of my life, whereas for the villagers it serves as an emotional and necessary part of their lives. It is hard to get anything accomplished in rural Turkey, and on top of that another controversy was impacting the situation. The word 'Armenian', as everybody knows, is considered taboo everywhere. It is even harder to overcome this taboo in the rural areas. However, a visible change has taken place in the village; and most importantly, people can speak openly about the past now. (Devın Bahçeci, İstanbul)*

I am very happy to be a part of this project. Because there is history here. Many settlements here have such fountains, churches and monasteries. I hope our work will set an example and the history in these other settlements can also come alive. The residents of the village believed that the Armenians who migrated from here in 1915 were hiding gold in the fountains, churches, monasteries and other places. In the beginning they believed that we 'had come to look for gold'. However, slowly we broke down this perception. In time, the villagers also embraced this project, because this is their fountain. I hope that they continue to embrace it after our restoration work is completed, protect it, and that this project leads to other historical artifacts in the region to come back to life. (Önder Şen, Kocaeli)

had opened their homes to us and with the village headman. We met Mehmet Kılıç and Hanifi Bekirgil in İstanbul, where we wandered about and conversed for long hours.

In the mean time, we applied to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to gain their support in the restoration works. Months later, a decision was made: They projected a total aid package of thirty thousand Turkish Liras for the fountains. However, even the lowest quote we got from construction companies was six times this amount. Since we were sure that the restoration costs would be covered by the Ministry, we were now faced with a problem that we had not even considered before: we had to find funding for the restoration.

The Hrant Dink Foundation had acquired enough funding to cover the participation of volunteers from Turkey and abroad for the restoration process. These young volunteers were going to work on the restoration work, join in on the meetings held with the Habap villagers, where the village's history would be discussed, and organize art and play workshops for kids.

All this work was very hard, very time consuming and very demanding, but Zeynep Taşkin, a Hrant Dink Foundation volunteer and project coordinator, who from the very first day had enthusiastically shared my dream, was planning all the details, knitting the project one loop at a time, and always aiming for the best. The Foundation started on its search for sponsorship and found it within a short amount of time.

In June 2011, Zeynep and I headed back to the village. Mahmut and Mustafa Balaban picked us up at the Elazığ Airport. We met with the Elazığ Governor and the Special Provincial Administration General Secretary and gave them information on the restoration. Moreover, we told them about the flood risk caused by the stream running next to the fountains, and talked about the stream restoration and bridge construction projects.

While we were in İstanbul, we had talked to the village headman Hayati, as well as Hanifi and



Nihan and Özge from the restoration team sitting with the village kids in the Lower Fountain, performing surveys and sketches.

Mahmut, about a place where we could stay in the village with our architects and the volunteers. They had asked around and finally found a building that had been evacuated due to an earthquake and was awaiting demolition.

We travelled from Elazığ to the village and went to the house they had mentioned. This house had three large rooms, a big kitchen, a balcony off the kitchen and a very pretty garden. However, the house consisted of only walls, and nothing else. Also, some walls were cracked, and the garden had been completely neglected. We talked to the village headman and the villagers that looked after us about how we could make the house livable. We had the taps hooked, and the villagers said that they would bring and install our kitchen counters, sink and a refrigerator. They took some carpets from the mosque to lay on our floors and had them washed. After we gave the place a rough cleaning, we left our key with our neighbor Salih, who, during our first visit to the village, had put on

We had no photos showing the original state of the fountains. Therefore, we constantly spoke to the elderly in the village. They described the fountains to us, saying "This used to be like this, that used to be like that", and I was sketching some three-dimensional pictures to show them, asking "Was this how it looked?" A long time after, the drawings reached an acceptable level. We used these sketches in the restoration project. (Nihan Sağman, Architect)

18 *I am from Habap, I spent my childhood there, but that's all; the rest is blurry. The reason I am involved in this project is to help establish a dialogue there. But as a matter of fact, I was looking for my own history. What was the past of the village I grew up in? How did people live there, what was their livelihood, what did they produce? Since the present-day population of the village is constituted completely of people brought there from neighboring villages, there was a disconnection from the past. The people living in the village spoke two different languages; Kurmanji and Zazaki. Even this was different. There were many question marks in our minds when we were children. As the half-told stories unfolded and pieces came together, the picture became clearer. (Mahmut Dindar, Malatya)*

his rubber boots and overalls and jumped into the water and grime that had accumulated in front of the Lower Fountain.

That day we travelled to Kovancılar to visit the District Governor and District Mayor, and we informed them on the developments of the restoration work. Then we went back to the village and visited the fountains. We realized, since the last time we had seen them, that they had deteriorated even further. The villagers said that treasure hunters had been even more aggressive lately and that they had made more holes at the fountains and nearby. When we talked more to them, we found out that these treasure hunt diggings sometimes lasted a few days and some villagers, especially the younger ones, helped the treasure hunters. That night, Zeynep and I stayed at Mehmet Kılıç's house, but after hearing what we had heard, we could not get to sleep until the early morning hours. We had a hard task ahead of us, but we were not going to let despair prevail.

We then signed a contract with the construction company that had given us the lowest quote, and we travelled to the village in August to bring our projects to life. This time, Dilek Aydın, who was going to record every step of the process with her video camera, and Shushan and Maral, who had travelled from Paris to volunteer in this project, were with us. All together, we cleaned the house. We laid down the carpets and the mattresses collected from the villagers' homes. With our refrigerator, kitchen counters and taps, our house was now in usable condition.

It was very hot and it was Ramadan; work had ceased in the village, in the district and in the province, and the workers were all sleeping. For that reason, we returned empty-handed a few times from the trips we took to handle bureaucratic work in the districts and the province.

In the meantime, we heard that a fiery discussion was going on between the villagers. A considerable number of people believed that we had come back to the village to collect the Armenian



The 'welcome' surprise prepared by the village kids for Fethiye Çetin, at the door of the house where the restoration team was staying.

inhabitants' belongings, and that we knew where the gold was hidden that they were looking for, and that we were going to take the gold away with us. A few times we chatted with the villagers who were sitting under the tree across from the mosque and killing time until the breaking of the fast. We often wandered inside the village, visited homes and made use of every chance we had to form a relationship with all the villagers, women, men, kids and teenagers alike.

Our neighbors came to visit us, and we promptly returned their home visit. Young villagers were coming over to have tea with us after fast breaking, before the night-time Tarawif Prayer. It made us happy to see them engage in friendly relations with the young volunteers. The number of people who started visiting us after the Tarawif Prayer began to increase. Therefore, since either they visited us or we accepted their invitations to visit them with the volunteers, each evening we got to spend time with the villagers and chat about the village's past condition.

It was very important that we got to know the people, to dine with them and work with them. The work being done did not only consist of the work at the fountains; it required talking to the villagers, and not only to adults, but to kids as well. If you are doing work at a village, of course you will need to communicate with the residents there. (Lusine Avagyan, Yerevan)

The villagers are very positive. I believe that they have slowly grown used to the work being done here and the project became a real part of the village. It is also so important that the people from the village are actually working at the restoration site; this way, they really feel that it is their own work. Some villagers find it strange that we came here as volunteers, but hopefully it will help them see the importance of the work, and that it is not just some job done for money; it means much more than that. (Shushan Kerovpyan, Paris)

This work ended up being much more than a restoration. What matters most is not for us to work on the fountain in the name of the foundation, but for the villagers to be able to talk about who lived here in the past, and for them to embrace the fountain and the history of their village without fear, to talk with the villagers about the pains of the former inhabitants of the village and their deportation, to learn from the mistakes of the past, and thereby to create a feeling of ownership among the villagers for their own lives. I believe the work is succeeding in achieving these goals. Most of the villagers had initially thought that we were there to find treasure. But as the excavations were made around the fountain and construction work started, I believe they understood that this was not the motive.

Of course it is awful when you think about the people who tried to exploit history, people, the culture of a region and its past this way and to derive unjustified gains from them. I hope that our country is not full of such examples. But even if it was, it is necessary to change it and to make people see it is wrong. As a matter of fact, the residents of this village know it is wrong, too. Because they repeat this sentence "Goods stolen from the crying will not bring good fortune to the happy." The Armenians had been deported from here; they were subjected to so much torture; now the Kurds are facing a similar fate; they are subjected to so many injustices. If the people living here do not recognize the Armenians' pain, tomorrow a generation of people could grow up who will not recognize the Kurds' pains as well.

The fountains are the villagers' own fountains. Hopefully they will embrace them fully, keep them safe from ruin, and perform the necessary maintenance work, and we will visit them from time to time to drink their tasty water.

(Serap Altun, Istanbul)

The villagers brought us all the food and drinks we would be needing every day- bread cooked on sheet iron, milk, butter, heavy cream, honey, 'ayran' [yoghurt drink], 'kultik' melons specific to the region, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, egg-plants and zucchinis from their own gardens... Every time somebody visited the district, they would bring other necessities from there. Mehmet, Salih and Resul would visit us almost every day, their arms full of things for us, and asked how we were doing.

One day, when we had left the fountains to take our lunch break, I learned that the Gendarmerie had come to check on the fountains, saying that "They had been informed that gold digging was taking place", and they talked to Selahattin Bey, owner of the contractor company. As soon as I heard this, I hurried to the district and met the District Governor, Selçuk Bey. I explained to him that such raids would affect the villagers and the volunteers negatively, that it was not in good faith for the Gendarmerie to take this complaint seriously since they knew about the work in the village. I requested legal action against the people who had made the complaint, for criminal slander charges. I gave him a copy of all the official correspondences and approval documents regarding the restoration, and asked him to share these documents with the Gendarmerie in order that they desist from taking such complaints seriously again.

The work finally began. Since most of the young people in the village were unemployed, many of them wanted to work on the construction of the fountains. In addition to the people employed by the contractor company, other villagers came and helped a little, even if this help consisted only in swinging the pickaxe a few times or shoveling a little bit of dirt here and there. The imam of the village joined in on the raking of the stones.

The first few days, many villagers, young and old, watched us work at the fountains from early morning until the end of the day. They watched us and the excavations very carefully. A while later



Construction at the Upper Fountain

their numbers decreased; they must have found answers to the questions they had in their minds, and realized the futility of their suspicions, as they would now only come once in a while to see how the construction was coming along and chat with us in a sincere manner.

We had personal relationships with all of them, and conversed with them. And since we had so many young people with us, we talked about the history of the village. We shared with them our knowledge we had acquired from Süren and Dikran Papazyan's books on Palu written in Armenian and the book *Palu-Harpüt 1878* prepared for publication by Arsen Yarman.

In the meantime, the young volunteers had also arrived. We spared one of the rooms for male volunteers and the other two for female volunteers. We had more female volunteers than male ones. In time, our number grew and we set up a tent in the garden. In addition to working at the construction of the fountain, the young volunteers also painted and played with the kids.

In my opinion, the Habap Project is a big project for Eastern Turkey, for the villagers. This project does not only consist of the fountain restoration, but includes work in many other areas. The villagers claim ownership of the project now. They always visit and help out. Everybody is trying to help in anyway possible. I believe that the prejudices of the villagers are dissolving now. The fact that this project includes the villagers is a big plus. These historical artifacts were ruined and broken earlier, as if they did not belong to the villagers, with the hope to find gold. This project will stop similar attempts, too. When I return to Ankara, I will be talking about the village's history, its inhabitants, and my experiences here, to my own family and the organization I am a part of at school.
(Murat Öztürk, Ankara)



My interest in historical artifacts brought me here. I believe it was a great project due to the co-operation of the villagers and the sensitive hearts of the volunteers. The historical structures around the village, the church, the monastery, they were all very beautiful. Although I live nearby, I never knew that these existed and that they had so much historical value. The care that Fethiye showed to the values of her own village really inspired me. I hope that the villagers look after the work and tell visitors about the history of their village in a pleasant manner. (Ünal Erdem, Kovancılar)

The project is actually a fountain restoration project, but we are in a village overrun with gold digging, where fountains and churches were ruined and destroyed. Therefore the project requires first the creation of awareness amongst the villagers. As everyone knows, in Turkey in general, the word 'Armenian' is taboo. However, the villagers slowly acknowledge that Armenian people used to live in this village, and that this was their land; they admit this and they are trying to internalize this fact. (Enes Demir, Kocaeli)

Seeing that there is still an Armenian heritage in this village was really emotional for me. Working at the fountains was very important for me; I felt like I was doing something for preserving the culture. I hope that our work will change mentalities. I felt that the inhabitants of the village are open-minded to us. I hope that when we leave this place, they will continue this work, and that there will be other projects in this village as well as other villages. A few years ago, I would say that I did not want to come to Turkey because I did not feel like having anything to do with this country, and then I changed my mind because I met some very nice people. My family and my friends were a bit suspicious at first, and I was a bit stressed in the beginning, too, but as soon as I put my feet on the ground, it felt just like home. I will definitely come back one day. (Nanéé Malek-Stanians, Paris)

When the wells behind the fountains appeared after digging, we came across evidence of a very advanced water culture, with all its wells and canals, and we admired the work of these craftsmen who had built the fountains as well as the tunnels and the water channels ('hekukes') that conveyed water for these fountains from kilometres away. We also felt pain and despair after seeing how the wells were broken and contaminated and how the water was wasted due to the holes made by the people looking for treasure and gold.

We gave a break to the work for the religious feast, and we spent the holiday at our homes. When we got back, we celebrated the villagers' and kids' holidays and visited our neighbors. They told us that while we were away, the treasure hunters came one night, but the young villagers that worked at the construction of the fountains got together and scared them away, and that since then the young villagers had been keeping guard at the fountains. When I learned of this, I was ecstatic. We had finally achieved one of our goals, "Building together, protecting together"... The young villagers who used to co-operate with treasure hunters and looked for gold were now protecting the fountains they had participated in the construction of.

It was very hard to gather the water back to the wells, behind the Upper Fountain, and it took a long time. The contractors, Selahattin Bey and Gündüz Bey, were trying hard to collect the water leaking from the holes pierced in the wells by the treasure hunters and from other leaks that occurred due to neglect, and they were terrified of losing the water that was there already. They would say "If you lose the water once, you will never be able to collect it again", and they put so much effort into fixing this problem. Therefore, the back of the fountains were left open for a long time.

In the mean time, the area around the fountains were serving as a wasteyard. It was not much better around the village in general, either. Garbage was littered everywhere around the village without care. The village was not included in the district



Fethiye Çetin and architect Nihan Sağman, taking a tea break with the workers that worked so hard in the restoration of the fountains.

borders, therefore it did not benefit from district municipality services, and garbage was not collected. We discussed this problem with the village headman and the young villagers, and we asked for help from Kovancılar Municipality. With the help of the District Mayor and the Chief Clerk, we addressed this issue. Along with the young villagers and the kids, we put on our plastic gloves and filled plastic bags with the garbage dispersed all around the village, and we placed all the bags at designated centers. These bags were collected by a truck sent by the Mayor. The women of the village offered some ayran to all those that helped. The garbage was all collected. We then placed some garbage barrels that we had obtained from the Municipality, to locations that the village headman found appropriate, and finally, we sat down under the mosque with the villagers and planned the next steps.

Young volunteers who had come from various places in Turkey and from abroad, from Europe,

There was a natural water source in a large valley, 3 miles away from the village center. The water was very cool, strong and salty, and it could make only a few water mills work at the same time. This water was used for the irrigation of the fields and gardens. There was a pond surrounded by cut stones, where the water sprung, and this pond was cleaned by the villagers every year after Easter. The village also had two fresh water sources. These waters, conveyed in stone pipes, were collected at cisterns made up of cut stones covered by heavy stone lids. These cisterns were also cleaned every year by the villagers. (D. Papazyan, pp. 144-145)

During the first few days, it was overwhelming for me to be here in Habap, because although this is an ancient Armenian village, the whole population now consisted of Kurds. Yet, during my stay at the village, I heard and saw so much that my opinions changed completely. As we worked together and shared our stories, we grew closer to one another; the villagers treated me like I was their relative, and did not see any difference between me and themselves. This process allowed me to understand them better, to get rid of my fears I had in the beginning, and it taught me so much. Most important of all, my prejudices against the Kurds completely disappeared. Now, instead of categorizing people as Armenians, Turks or Kurds, I view them as "human beings".
(Gayane Chobanyan, Yerevan)

I am 62 years old. I have never been to Turkey before, because the idea of visiting Turkey merely as a tourist did not appeal to me. This project gives me the opportunity to go 'back' there now: To stand side by side with the people that live there, to build solid bridges for history, and to contribute to the revival of our common past...
(Astrig Mireille, Paris)

the United States and Armenia, participated in the daily life of the village, and they formed great friendships with the young villagers, kids and those who worked at the construction of the fountains.

Zeynep took care of the daily shopping and food, and she also organized the arrival and departure of the volunteers, as well as, our correspondence, which she managed to conduct despite the difficulties in internet access. One day, she read me an e-mail from France. It was from Astrig Mireille, a 62-year old Armenian living in Paris who had never been to Turkey, explaining why she wanted to volunteer in this project. When I heard her words, I could not speak for a long time, but I also could not hold back the tears that had accumulated in the corner of my eye. Both Zeynep and I cried, and then we told each other how this e-mail confirmed our faith that we were doing the right thing. Astrig came and she worked at the fountains. Like many other volunteers, she did not speak a word of Turkish, but again, like others, she blended in with everyone as if she had known them forever. One day, Gündüz showed Astrig a gargoyle while she was volunteering there, and asked her if it looked better than her ancestor's work. Of course the people translated for her. Astrig looked at Gündüz and answered him with this sentence, which touched him deeply: "What matters to me is the water that will come out of that gargoyle. Let's see if you can make that great water come out of here like my ancestors did."

As autumn began, the weddings in the villages had also begun to take place. A wedding was held almost every week. The weddings still held to many of the traditions from the past, however they did not last seven days like the Armenian weddings, but lasted three to four days only.

We never missed the weddings, the dowry display at the bride's home before the wedding, hennah nights, and of course the celebrations with drum and *zurna*; we participated in all these activities with the volunteers.



The volunteers from Paris, Maral, Astrig, Shushan and Nane, cooking with the women villagers.

When schools opened, we visited the principal, Muhsin Demir. We were happy to come across a young, dynamic and hard-working manager who took his work seriously and had good relations with the parents. We talked to Muhsin Bey, who also was very interested in our work on the fountains, about what we could do for the school together.

The grape season began. The villagers shared the grapes they harvested at the vineyards, and always remembered to bring some to our house. Every time they visited they would share with us the folk songs composed for Habap's grapes and information on the vineyard culture at the time the Armenians lived in the village and the grape varieties that were now extinct.

The problem encountered behind the Upper Fountain was partially resolved. The broken arch, gargoyles, walls, steps and the floor were reconstructed, and they decided that it was I who was going to turn the water on and let it flow from the holes.

The workers are not viewing this work like an ordinary construction project; they truly care about the fountains. For example, if they come across a carved stone, they let Fethiye or one of the project managers know about it. And the fountains are turning into these meeting places, where the workers bring people there who can share their stories with Fethiye. They understand the fountains mean more than just 'water'; they are part of cultural heritage. They see the way I look at and handle a piece of khachkar [tomb stone], and I think their approach is also changing. We are sharing the responsibilities and living together with the villagers; creating a new rhythm here. It is like a dream come true. Being a part of this and contributing as much as we can is very special.
(Maral Kerovpyan, Paris)

Before we arrived at the village, I could not predict how the villagers would view us; I thought they would be suspicious of us and not like us at all. After all, we were people who came from the outside; they did not know who we were or why we were there. But that did not happen. Our neighbors treated us very warmly, brought supplies to our home every day and invited us to their weddings. When I saw the condition of the fountains, the church and the monastery, I was very sad but not that surprised because many of the Armenian structures are in a similar condition. According to the villagers, some people started to look for gold around here twenty years ago. There are so many holes in the fountains, the church, the monastery, the cemetery, and many other places around the village. It appears that wherever they saw a sign, they dug it up. They may have been poor and hopeless, trying to create hope for themselves by finding gold, but at the same time, they ruined historical places and structures that were still in use. The villagers tell us "Twenty years ago, the fountain was in good condition. We took our cattle there for water." What I don't understand is how they turned a blind eye towards these people digging around the fountains that they themselves were still using? This is very sad. They also say that the people who took away stones from the fountains and the monastery are from other villages, but yet, there are stones taken from the monastery and the fountains on the walls of most of the village homes. They do, however, confess as we talk, saying "Yes, we took some, too", and some say "If I had known, I wouldn't have". I wish those stones stayed right there, and the people had looked after these structures. However, their sentiments towards these structures are changing now, as many of the villagers are working on the restoration project for the fountains. They will definitely protect the fountains now, because they will have rebuilt it with their own hands, with new stones, with the sweat of their own brows. (Anoush Suni, Ann Arbor - US)

The gargoyles were turned off with stoppers during the construction of the platform and the floor of the fountains. I called the young villagers; we were going to let the water flow together. I was so excited and overwhelmed with emotion that my voice could not help from trembling. When we removed the stoppers and hoses, the water that had been blocked for such a long time started to shoot out. At that moment, that sound, the sound of the water, finally drowned out all the desperate cries, wailings and sobs that were echoing in the back of my head. I drank the water, hoping that the souls of all those who had died or had been killed rested in peace. Me, Zeynep, Dilek, Anoush and the young people who worked at the construction of the fountain all shared a hug together. They washed the fountains and the platform all clean with the flowing water. I lit a cigarette, first time in five years since I quit, and commemorated all the Sürens, Dikrans, Boghoses, Maryams and especially Heranush and Hrnt.

The next day, when the whole team was positioned to work at the Lower Fountain, we heard from Serkan, who at this point had taken over the videotaping job from Dilek, that the women were washing their carpets, rugs and wool at the Upper Fountain. I went running and came across a stunning sight. The women had washed all their carpets and rugs and hung them on the walls of the fountain. The next day another group of women appeared in order to wash their wool, just like the Isguhis, Takuhis and Zaruhs used to do a hundred years ago.

By October, winter preparations had begun in the village. Vegetables were being pickled, fruit preserves were being made and grapes, which were to be made into dried roll-ups, were being boiled and then left to dry on clean white sheets.

One of our last volunteers from Armenia, Armine, was a young artist who occupied herself with art, photography and ceramic works; she was also the one who had sketched the Lower Fountain. When the school principal Muhsin Bey met



The women villagers washed their carpets for the religious feast, at the Upper Fountain after its restoration was completed.

Armine, she asked her if she could make paintings on the school walls. Her and Zeynep travelled to the district and got some paint. Armine drew a picture from one end of the school's front wall to the other end, and she painted it with the students and Mehmet, a young villager.

The back, sides and the front of the Lower Fountain were dug up so much that water was squirting out everywhere, but it could not be put back together. People worked on it for such a long time, including nights. When the same problem had been resolved at the Upper Fountain, some young villagers had enjoyed going around screaming, "Hear my great news!" They were trying hard to give such wonderful news again. A tunnel was found but it was not possible to find out how far this stone-built tunnel, lying behind the fountains, reached. Our architect notified the Elazığ Provincial Culture and Tourism Directorate so that they could detect and protect the historical and cultural treasure found here. However, this finding that

I was excited that the fountain in this village would be restored and put into use again, but I was also looking forward to meeting the people of the village and developing a relationship with them. I had never spent fifteen days in such a village before. It has been a unique experience for me. And it was very precious for me to learn about the history of the village, which goes back a long way and to learn from the people here and to share things with them. (Ezgi Mutluer, Izmir)

Grape harvesting was quite a celebration for the people of Havav. The preparation would start a week earlier, baskets would be prepared, repairs would be made and small hand baskets would be weaved for little ones. Boys would be wandering in the streets, yelling "Aykegudk e!" [grape harvesting time]. When the harvest was a big one, other Armenians would come and help out. There were hardly any families in Havav that did not own a vineyard. Vine cultivation was a favorite work of the Armenians.

However, once the grapes ripened, the trouble would start. The most difficult part of the work for the people of Havav would be the negotiation process with the government for taxes. Local landlords would provoke the bandits to attack the vineyards, and they would also ask the government to make it hard for the vineyard owners. Then the government would often set such a high tax that the people would not be able to afford it and postpone the harvesting. Finally, there would be an agreement; government officials would show up one Sunday, weigh the grapes and take 10% of it for taxes ('tithe'). A week before the arrival of the officers (...) the village crier would announce harvest time and tell people where the weighing would take place. During those days, guards (...) would keep watch of the vineyards day and night, because Turks would go around the vineyards with baskets (...) and attack the vineyards.

After the harvest, the grapes would be crushed, wine barrels and molasses' cups would be filled, and dried fruit roll-ups, walnut roll-ups, raisins, various deserts and jams would be prepared. These foods, stored in the storage rooms of the homes, would be consumed until the carnival, and only wine would stay until Zadiġ (Easter), and sometimes even until Hampartsoum (Ascension Day). After the storage rooms were filled, more experienced women would start visiting homes (...) They would especially visit recently married women, inspect their storage rooms and give them advice. Then, everyone would enjoy great meals and drinks, have fun and even get drunk. During these two weeks where women exchanged visits, their husbands would not mind their wives getting drunk.

(D. Papazyan, pp. 133-135)

excited us so much did not cause such a stir for the official representing the Directorate. Actually, he was feeling quite the opposite; on his face he wore an expression that read "Why did you even bring me here," (Ingilizcede virgöl içeride) and he said, "There are many structures around this region like this, you can close it off". We did close it off, but knew that one day we would be doing some work here, giving this water culture all the care it deserved...

It was November and it was getting very cold. Through the initiative of our neighbor, Salih, they set up a stove in one of our rooms. Then, Serkan set up a wood-burning cauldron with a tap in our bathroom. Now we had hot water and a heater. We were invited over to dinner almost every evening. During these home visits, stories that had not been told or that had been long forgotten would now be told, and the grandchildren of those ladies who were the second-wives to the men, were now more comfortable around us. They now talked about the event they chose to call "the shooting of the Armenians" more openly, which before they were distancing themselves from.

We had finally completed our work at the Lower Fountain. Now, we could have that opening ceremony we had dreamt of since the beginning, but it was late November. The weather was unfavorable and mud surrounded the fountains. Still, we decided to hold a ceremony, inviting the administrators, bureaucrats, representatives from civil organizations from Elazığ, Kovancılar and Palu, as well as a few members of the press and the headmen and villagers from neighboring villages. However, the women of the village were going to have to watch this opening ceremony from afar; although they were in fact the ones that were going to use these fountains the most, they would not be a part of this. Therefore, we met at Hanifi Kılıç's house and decided to hold two opening ceremonies on two consecutive days. The first one would be the official one and the second one would be for the women.



Armine, a volunteer from Yerevan, painting the school wall with Mehmet from Habap.

We made a guest list and talked about the preparation of the invitations, sound system for music and the guest speakers, as well as the treats, which were going to consist of the village's traditional dishes. The next day we divided the tasks, during a meeting we held under the mosque, with the participation of even more people than the night before.

As in all organizations we held, first and foremost Hanifi Bekirgil and then Hanifi Kılıç, Mehmet Kılıç, Resul Ülker, Hacı Resul, Hacı Fikri, and the new and the former village headmen put their heart and soul into this opening, expressed their suggestions for it, and took their tasks and performed them with utmost seriousness.

We also talked to the women about the opening ceremony. The one place where I could find all the women in the village was behind the mosque, where the Quran courses were held. I went there, asked the lady instructor's permission and planned our own opening ceremony with the women who were sitting down in rows of desks.

The most remarkable part of this experience for me was working with the kids. When I was painting the school wall, I thought, "A part of me will always stay here"; and I was happy to leave a part of myself here. Working at the fountains and raking stones was like meditation for me. While I was working there, many things passed through my mind; I was wondering how my ancestors had built these, and what prayers they said while working on them... It was a journey through time and space for me.

(Armine Hovhannisyian, Yerevan)

The weddings in Havav were held during November and December and they lasted a week. The church ceremony would be held on Monday. While the wedding took place in the church, outside the church, sword and shield games would be played. Turks and Kurds would also participate in these games and everyone would show their talents; there would never be any fights or conflicts... The bride and the groom would be brought to the church separately, on horses, and a groomsman would hold a sword and a cross above the bride and groom's heads, as required by old Armenian tradition... When the ceremony ended, they would exit the church (...) groom in front and the bride behind him (...) and they would hop on decorated horses. The groom would be handed a sword, and the groomsman would accompany him on both sides of his horse, carrying revolvers. The bride would wear a black veil and she would go around the village with her bridesmaids. The families and guests would also join the bridal procession. People would offer them raisins, dried fruit roll-ups and wine on round metal trays, and they would then sprinkle raisins on them. (...) When the bridal procession arrived at the groom's house, a lamb or a baby goat would be butchered in front of them. Then, the bride, the groom, groomsman and bridesmaids would enter into a room to rest. The groomsman would be very careful not to allow anything attached to the attire of the bride and the groom to be stolen, as it was considered to be a great triumph to steal anything from the groom or the bride. The dowry bag prepared by the bride's family would be placed on a table at the groom's house, and a child nicknamed 'boz' would be placed next to it. This child would not allow anybody to open the bag before he was paid a tip. After the dowry was opened and everybody got to see it, the priest's wife would lift the bride's black veil. Then, the groomsman and his wife and bridesmaids would go to the front of the table and get the bride and the groom to dance to the music of a drum and zurna.

(D. Papazyan, pp. 136-139)

We travelled to the District with the village headman. We talked to the District Mayor Bekir Bey and Governor Selçuk Bey. We told them that we needed to get rid of the mud surrounding the fountains before the opening, and we invited them to the village so that they could see the situation. They said, "Let's go now" and we travelled to the fountains right away. They were also very pleased with the work that had been done. Selçuk Bey asked his assistant to take pictures of the church from the inside and outside. The Mayor and the Governor believed that the second step would be to perform restoration works for the church. Then, they sent some construction teams and equipment, such as diggers and drum rollers to the village, even though these pieces of equipment were needed in ongoing projects elsewhere. The area surrounding the fountains and the road between the two fountains were cleaned of mud and grime, thanks to people like Ahmet, a digger operator at the Governor's office, who took his work very seriously and worked into the wee hours of the morning, despite the cold, the frost and the prejudiced and hostile approach of some other officers. The work was completed on the morning of the opening ceremony.

The Municipality took over the tasks of organizing the sound system and finding an MC and a drum and clarinet band. Cevat Karabulut, Chief Clerk at the Municipality, worked with great enthusiasm on these tasks. We then prepared the invitations and distributed them in the Province of Elazığ and Kovancılar District with the village headman. The students were also going to perform regional halay dances by the fountains, to the drum and clarinet music. These dances were organized by the school principal and teachers.

The morning of the opening ceremony, Nihan and I were by the fountains. We were running around, doing our last errands. We were chilled to the bone, the earth had frozen, and we still had much to do. Finally, through the efforts of those who worked at the fountains, we were ready for the opening. We went in front of the mosque, where



A table prepared including traditional dishes shilliki and komeh

the program was planned to start. The guests were going to be welcomed with drums and clarinet, and then we would all walk through the village, visiting first the Lower Fountain and then the Upper Fountain.

A big group was formed, consisting of administrators from neighboring provinces and districts, village headmen and villagers, as well as members of the press from local newspapers and from Istanbul. After all our guests arrived, we paved our way to the Lower Fountain, behind a drum and a clarinet. The opening ceremony was held here. After the speeches were made, the students performed halay dances accompanied by drum and zurna, and the guests and the villagers went down to the fountains, drank water and had their pictures taken.

After that, we passed by the church and made our way to the Upper Fountain. We drank from its waters all together. Later, we walked to the mosque and our guests and us gathered in the big hall under the mosque where all the attendants

Upon coming here I had known about the history of the village that Armenians had been living in and then of course driven out of. So seeing the fountains is very symbolic and they are reminiscent of the people from the past. Today we climbed up to the monastery where Armenians once prayed. You could still see the Armenian written on the stones. Some were in a state of ruin and covered with dirt but if you swept it off, you could see the inscriptions... I was really touched by this.

I know I have these ancestors from here but if it wasn't for this project I couldn't actually have come here and met the people here. That's why I am very grateful. (Sevan Suni, Ann Arbor - US)

Whenever I visited the Ekinözü village, I was always saddened by seeing the sight, especially that of the Upper Fountain. This fountain looked so unhappy, as a few of its arches were broken down. One of the fountains was half-functioning, but it was filled with mud at every flood. Today our sadness turns into joy. History leaves us with a great inheritance, and it also gives us some responsibilities. Today, we are taking a step, even if it is a small one. We are taking the first step to social responsibility. At this point, I would like to thank Fethiye Hanım from the bottom of my heart. She had told us that her grandmother was from this village. She had not been to this village until a few years back. Now she is the one who travelled here from Istanbul, the one who took the biggest initiative; she assumed the biggest responsibility in all this. By doing this, she has actually shamed us as the administrators of the district and the villagers. God willing, this will be a first step and it will help us gain awareness regarding this matter. (Selçuk Aslan, Kovancılar District Governor)

Nobody should be judged by what they believe in. Today we are showing an example of doing away with such prejudices. And we will continue our exemplary behavior in an even more pronounced way. Our brotherhood and sisterhood will strengthen, and we will enjoy our sisterhood and brotherhood coming together in even happier days, even in better settings. (Bekir Yanılmaz, Kovancılar District Mayor)

were offered regional dishes such as *şilliki*, *köme*, *patile* and *ayran*. Haydar was responsible for the preparation of the tables, furnishing the hall with stoves to keep the regional dishes warm, warming the dishes when necessary, presenting the dishes, clearing off the tables and organizing the final cleaning. Haydar, along with some young villagers he had appointed, succeeded in his task, and following the offerings, he joined the halay dancers at the beginning of the halay row. We all danced together there.

After we bid farewell to our guests, I thanked all the villagers who were in front of the mosque and they thanked me back. When the village headman said, “The church is next”, we all said “Why not?”

The next day was the women’s opening ceremony. Over thirty women were expected to arrive in minibuses after participating in a meeting held in Diyarbakır, organized by KAMER for ‘November 25th: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women’. We had so much left over food from the first ceremony; many of the trays stood there filled with food. I told the ladies that I could find, “Please don’t cook again, we have so much food already”, but they raised a strong objection. They said “There is no way that we feed our guests food cooked a day earlier; we will make fresh food”.

This time, our meeting place, in front of the mosque, was even more crowded. The women of the village were all dressed up as if they were attending a wedding, and they had put on their snow-white scarves; the unmarried young women were wearing headscarves of all colors. Our guests were welcomed again, to the accompaniment of drums and clarinet, in front of the mosque. Thirty-eight women, who had travelled here from other provinces with Nebahat, a member of KAMER, formed a circle and began dancing the halay right away. Then, we formed a big circle and started to walk towards the Lower Fountain. Our guests and the women villagers were walking arm-to-arm and conversing the whole time. After that, we



The opening day, the women villagers and other female guests at the Lower Fountain (November 26, 2011)

danced more halays by the fountains and drank the waters. While we were passing by the church, I witnessed some of the women villagers directing the guests towards the church and giving them information on the history of the village.

Adnan from Habap, who had been living in Germany for many years, called me the same night and told me: “Today, you have revolutionized the village. The women of this village had never left their homes for any purpose outside of going to their fields. Today, you let them out of their homes for another purpose for the first time.”

Truly, the women of the village had left their homes, walked the village from one end to the other, went to places reserved for men only, such as the front of the mosque and the funeral home, danced the halay in front of the mosque and then all said, “I wish everyday was like this”.

After visiting the mosques, we gathered in the funeral hall under the mosque. We enjoyed our food and drinks, and made speeches. The women of the village sat and listened quietly to a folk song

This project is much more than just videotaping for me. The village of Habap and its people whom I met thanks to this project became a part of my life. And of course, it gave me a chance to face things I did not have the courage to face. Being a part of this work, talking to people, and following Fethiye Çetin, listening to her statements and her interactions with people, changed my perspective on this subject. (Dilek Aydın, Istanbul)

There are a million ways of expressing things. And the one we chose is a nice process where people begin to trust each other slowly and share their stories. The people in the village would see the monastery, the church and the fountains every day, but they had somehow ignored them. I feel that the restoration work here is the beginning of a new era for the people in terms of facing the past. (Aslı Türker, Istanbul)

*I think this project is already unlocking doors on a very personal and human level. One way or another, things have been changing in the hearts of people who are visiting. And the work being done here is performed in a very sensitive and discreet manner, not in a secret way, but not like we were demonstrating something, either. I strongly admire Fethiye Çetin's approach; she goes with the flow and with what she senses to be the right thing to do, not with 'political' concerns. I believe the work here would serve as a good example for similar projects at other locations in the future.
(Vahan Kerovpuyan, Paris)*

sang in Kurdish by a young woman from Diyarbakır; at some points they joined in on the song. Then we showed the painting made on the school wall to our guests, and finally we bid farewell with more halay dances.

The next day, Zeynep, Zülfü and Serkan went to the school garden and to the path that leads to the fountains, to plant some sycamore, walnut and pine tree saplings. Since the earth was frozen, it was very hard to dig it and they spent hours in the cold. Then it was time to go. We decided to plant the remaining saplings on the empty land where you can see the monastery and the fountains; across from the path to the Lower Fountain and from the house we spent all summer.

While we were trying to plant the sycamore, walnut and pine tree saplings with our neighbors, we had such a hard time. Every time we hit the pickaxe, we hit a pile of stones lying under the frozen earth. Only a thin layer of earth was covering a house or ruins of a wall. We tried to put the stones aside and looked for holes between them to plant our saplings. Every time we hit the pickaxe, every time we dug the shovel in, it was as if pain was gushing out of the earth. The area we were working on was right next to Salih's house, whose son had been killed in the mountains. We asked him to take care of the saplings. Our eyes were watery. Somehow, the miseries of a hundred years ago were interfusing with Salih's pain. We were not going to give up; we dug up the holes and named each sapling we planted. We named them after our young volunteers, after Heranush, after all those killed, after all those uprooted from their native land, after all those who were separated from their loved ones forever, and after each of our names. We planted them so that they would grow, so that birds would land on their branches, so that kids would play under their shades and eat their fruit, and so that voices of children and songs of birds would suppress all the pain and cries, and so that *"those days would leave and never come back"*...

THERE

then, a cigarette will burn after five years.
and despite the "dark",
heranush will live in her own village...

the last two that remain of those "who were never here"
they were broken down,
two holes letting water out,
like two outsiders nobody asked after...
they became two neighbors nobody cared for
that nobody ever loved and touched.

we came to them,
now they are no longer two cursed orphans
that even god forgot about.
they are two grand mulberry trees, uncared for a
hundred years
that tell the story which preyed on us.

we came
to give our efforts,
to caress their hair,
and to act as a hand
for those who missed them.
they are gone now,
but their love is not alone
that which happened long ago,
is now packed away in a bag,
after being picked and sorted out,
and those in the bag cry "why is he here?"
another answers, "I was prisoned on their word, away
from my beloved."
"and please remind me again, where was I stolen
from?"

all in one bag...
those existed a while ago, and a long time ago,
just a strut away in the fortress of the "never existed"

and a step further,
in the truth of "they are always here"
in a matter of a day and a night
everything remembered of "That Day",
forgotten and never grieved for
now comes together.
they will raise a toast,
for those not remembered,
and they will multiply without pronouncing names,
only there, where they are at...

*Nihan Sağman
November 23, 2011, Habap*



The Upper Fountain after the restoration

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**HABAP
FOUNTAINS
RESTORATION
PROJECT
May 2009 -
November 2011**

Project Owners

Hrant Dink Foundation
Fethiye Çetin

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AL-BAY Yapı İnşaat

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Supporting Organizations

Toplum Gönüllüleri Vakfı
Organisation Terre et Culture

Sponsors

Republic of Turkey, Ministry of
Culture and Tourism
Chrest Foundation
Open Society Foundation
Genel Energy
Salih Aydın
İbrahim Betil
Yiğit Ekmekçi
Füsün Ertuğ
Yasemin-Bülent İnceoğlu
Osman Kavala
Josef Palombo
Aslı Türker
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We would like to express our thanks to Hanifi Bekirgil, Hanifi Kılıç, Mehmet Kılıç, Salih Çeker, Mahmut Dindar, Resul Ülker, Hayati Sinem, Hadin the Night Guard, Resul Tosun, Sadin Çimen, Mehmet Şerifoğlu and many more of the Habap villagers whose names we did not mention here; and Muammer Erol, Governor of Elazığ Province, Nazif Bilginoğlu, General Secretary of Provincial Special Administration of Elazığ Province, Selçuk Aslan, Governor of Kovancılar District, Bekir Yanılmaz, Mayor of Kovancılar District, Cevat Karabulut, Chief Clerk of Kovancılar Municipality, Hüseyin Erdem, Technical Works Director of Kovancılar Municipality, Feyzullah Demirtaş, Hamza Demirtaş, Hayati Yarmadelen, Headman of Ekinözü Village and Mustafa Balaban, Elazığ Representative for Foundation for the Protection and Promotion of the Environment and Cultural Heritage (ÇEKÜL).





HABAP FOUNTAINS

THE STORY OF A RESTORATION
MAY 2009 - NOVEMBER 2011



HRANT DINK VAKFI
HRANT DINK FOUNDATION
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