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REASON AND UNREASON IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SCIENCE





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Professor Werner Arber, University of Basel, Switzerland

European Review

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When the Academy was founded by Queen Lovisa Ulrika on March 20, 1753, it was named Kongl. Swenska Witterhets Academien (the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters). When Gustav III reconstituted the Academy in 1786, it was given the name that is still current.

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- to publish academic writings in the Academy's domain;
- bestow support and awards on deserving researchers and others who have furthered the objectives of the Academy;
- to issue statements in matters related to the domain of the Academy's activities at the behest of the government or a public authority or if it serves the interests of the Academy.

Sponsor Information



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Origins

The Family

Calouste Gulbenkian was born in Scutari (now Üsküdar), Istanbul on 23 March 1869, the son of Sarkis and Dirouhie Gulbenkian, members of an illustrious Armenian family whose origins date back to the fourth century.

Their ancestors were the Princes of Rechduni, who owned lands south of Lake Van, in Armenia. The Rechduni settled in Caesareia, Cappadocia, one of the earliest centres of Eastern Christianity, in the eleventh century, when King Senekerim of Vaspurakan was on the throne. They adopted the family name Vart Badrik, a Byzantine noble title, replacing it with the Turkish form Gulbenkian when the Ottomans came to power in the seventeenth century.

During the 400 years that the family stayed in Cappadocia, every generation was involved in patronage of the arts and in welfare work. Our research has further shown that from 1800 the successive Gulbenkian generations played a major role in supporting both the Armenian community and the wider Ottoman community in which they served as loyal citizens (they funded hospitals, schools, churches, artists and intellectuals, food distribution in time of famine and, later on, after the genocide, they provided housing and granted property for refugees in Mesopotamia).

In 1880, Sarkis Gulbenkian, Calouste's father, settled by the Bosphorus. He was an affluent merchant who had recently acquired concessions in the oil fields of the Russian Caucasus.

The Foundation

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is a Portuguese private institution of public utility whose statutory aims are in the fields of arts, charity, education and science. Created by a clause in Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian's will, the Foundation's statutes were approved in 1956.

The Foundation actively pursues its statutory aims in Portugal and abroad through a wide range of direct activities and grants supporting projects and programmes.

The Foundation has an orchestra and a choir that perform throughout the year within a regular season, and organises solo and collective exhibitions of work by Portuguese and foreign artists. It also organises international conferences, meetings and courses, awards subsidies and scholarships for specialist studies and doctorates in Portugal and abroad, and supports programmes and projects of a scientific, educational, artistic and social nature. Moreover, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is actively involved in publishing, especially through its programme for university textbooks. It also fosters cooperation projects with Portuguese-speaking African countries and East Timor pursuing the Millennium goals, promotes Portuguese culture abroad, and operates a programme to preserve evidence of the Portuguese presence in the world. In addition to the activities pursued in Portugal and abroad for the promotion of Portuguese culture, the Foundation supports the Armenian Diaspora worldwide in order to preserve its language and culture.