



Scripts.com

The Lebanese Rocket Society

By Unknown

I was born in 1969.
A few days after
a man walked on the moon.
The USSR and the US
were fighting over earth and sky.
Space and science reigned.
In any case
that's how I imagined it.
I was born in 1969.
A few weeks after
a man walked on the moon.
The time of revolutions
and militancy
of dreaming and pursuing
those dreams.
That's how the story came to us.
First, we saw the image of a rocket.
Not just any rocket
a rocket with the colors
of the Lebanese flag.
Did the Lebanese dream
one day of conquering space?
Impossible to believe.
At the beginning of the 60's
a small group of students
from Haigazian University
led by Manoug Manougian
a mathematics professor
launched rockets
into the Lebanese sky.
They produced the first
rocket in Middle East.
Oddly we had never heard
anything about their story.
It is like a secret
hidden, forgotten story.
The Strange Tale of the
Lebanese Space Race
Under "Lebanese rocket"
this is what we get.
And if we typed "rocket"
or "conquest of space"?
It's not exactly the same thing!
And no trace of our rocket.

At the University
where this project started
the Armenian Haigazian University
we search through the archives.
We find several editions
of Armenian newspapers of the time
but we can't decipher them.
We ask a student
to translate them for us.
There aren't many details.
But there are some dates
of relatively successful
rocket launches
that seem to soar higher and higher
going gradually from 12 km to
more than 450 and eventually 600 km!
It is hard for us to believe.
Even the student is surprised.
So it was not a joke!
We find few images of the rockets.
In the University's yearbook
from the 60's
a surreal photograph.
Manoug Manougian
founder of the space project
that's him.
Over there, some of the students
who worked with him on the project:
Garabed Basmadjian
Hampar Karageozian
Hrair Antablilian
Simon Abrahamian, John Tilkian
Jean-Jacques Gubekian
Hrair Sahagian...
These faces, these gazes...
These young students
are maybe the children
of Armenian orphans who by
the thousands, in 1915, fled Turkey
crossed the desert
settled in Lebanon
after their community's genocide.
Gradually, they integrated
political and cultural life

becoming one of Lebanon's
most important communities.
And now a new finding:
they dreamt of a rocket and built it!
We search.
In dailies and newspapers.
Indeed the Lebanese space project
captivated front pages often.
It seems serious, ambitious
totally in synch
with the research of the time.
At the outset of the 1960s
while NASA in the United States
was readying to send Apollo
its first rocket, into space
and the USSR, to launch
its first manned spaceflight
with Yuri Gagarin
Manougian and the students
of the modest Haigazian College
began exploring
spacecraft propulsion.
What was this wild challenge
for such a small country?
How is it possible
that we've never heard about it?
Why hasn't anyone
ever told us their story?
Stranger still, is the fact that
images of the rockets
were never part
of our collective imaginary
but absent from the nostalgic
roster of Beirut's 1960s
the so-called Switzerland of the
Middle East and its Dolce Vita.
This absence surprised us.
How can we forget
Harry Koundakjian's impressive images
we had first come across
at the Arab Image Foundation?
There are only about ten.
When Harry left Lebanon
he might have taken

the others with him.
We find other photographs
that yet need to be indexed
like photographer
Assaad Jradi's images.
2, 4, 6, 8, 10...
Are these the only images?
Thank God, we have these ones.
I'm from Khayzaran, North of Saida.
I had important archives.
When Israel occupied the town
my brothers burned half of them.
Out of fear.
When did you last see this photo?
About...
50 years ago.
Maybe 60.
You see, that's it, rocket number 4.
Look at this crowd...
Can you see Harry?
I'm looking for him.
I'm looking for all of them.
That's a cameraman
filming for the news.
Do you remember anyone?
No, I don't know.
I look at this photo and I think:
"What an idiot!"
I photographed the moving smoke
and not the rocket.
But it's artful.
Artful would be to show
at least part of the rocket.
But I cut it off.
This one is perfect.
This is the good picture
this is the one.
The others can't work.
This one is the one for the cover.
This one or the other one.
Of course, we should crop it.
So there might be news footage
of the rocket launches.
Full of hope, we head to the Lebanese

National Cinema Center's archives.
We'd never been to the Center
even though several of our 35mm films
are kept there.
We're received by Zafer Azar
a critic, writer and cinephile
who's in charge of printed
documentation of Lebanese cinema.
But the head of the film archives
isn't there.
He resigned.
And considering the state
of the site, we understand why!
Unknown
Look at this.
It's stupid.
It's a crime.
Some of the films
are originals without copy.
Unique documents
that can no longer be found.
There are old films
I remember them well.
There are newsreels.
- All those are newsreels?
- Yes.
They were shown in movie theaters.
Before the film.
It was before the war.
We were young, we loved cinema.
That's how it starts.
We would see this at the movies.
It's the same period.
The 60's.
These reels are newsreels?
Perhaps, we have to look inside.
We finally come across some current
events footage from the 1960s.
But our joy is cut short...
What about our own films?
Around The Pink House
They are still here.
Manougian doesn't seem to have
forgotten about this adventure.

Today, a professor at University
of South Florida's math dept.
which he chaired for 10 years
he dedicates a significant part
of his website to the space project.
Another headline draws our attention:
"Peace through education".
To Manoug, science and education
are a life mission.
The hopes that transpire
from all this
prompt us to board a plane for Tampa.
Manoug is moved by our interest.
He's been waiting to share this
since he left the Arab world
more than 45 years ago.
Rockets are his life's passion.
As a young child in Jerusalem
where he was born
at the St. George school
he used to draw rockets on his desk.
His dream could come true only once
he arrived in Lebanon, at Haigazian.
Even the choice of Tampa
was dictated to him by Jules Verne.
Yes, Jules Verne!
In "From the Earth to the Moon"
Verne sets his rocket launch there
in Tampa.
He discovered a century before NASA
that it affords the best latitude
for that purpose.
How did he know?
Manoug still can't explain it.
So when he received
the invitation to teach in Tampa
he saw it as a sign.
On the table
we find an unexpected treasure:
the first rockets
the very small ones
and also the Cedars:
Cedar 2A, Cedar 2B, C, 3...
up until Cedar 8.

From the smallest to the largest
photographs, articles
loads of films.
Manoug saved everything.
For over 50 years, carefully.
We're overwhelmed.
And Manoug gives us his treasure.
He longs for us to tell this story
that is gradually coming together.

To say:

We'd love to fly rockets in the sky.

To say:

Propellant?
We don't have any.
So let's make it.
The rocket? We build it.
We make bigger rockets
launch them higher and higher...
To dream and believe it is possible.
To want to do it and do it.

To say:

this dream of space with others.
Manoug and his students
were driven by this.
The world then
was a world of possibilities.
In any case
that's how we imagine it.
Soon the project of conquering space
will be shared by another man.
I met Manougian
at a hotel
owned by a friend of mine.
He called Manoug and said:
"I want you to meet my friend
a young lieutenant
specialized in ballistics."
Manoug asked me to work
with the Haigazian's students
who had begun their experiments.
The students had pooled

their meager savings.
I don't even know
if the University chipped in.
They used pipes found in shops
which did not exceed 5 or 6 inches.
They were restricted by the size.
If I had not joined
them at that point
they'd probably have come up
against financial problems.
But also problems arising
from the fact that some products
made in France or in the US
were only available to the army.
Their sale to other users
was prohibited.
Lt. Wehbe, in charge of overseeing
Manoug's enthusiasm for ballistics
develops a passion
for the Lebanese rocket.
The army sends him to Cape Canaveral
where he receives training.
Then he attends test launches
of a 10-meter-French rocket
in the Algerian desert.
When he returns
he and Manoug share a goal:
to make the rocket bigger.
He knows it's possible.
The problem
is the rocket's main part:
the tubes available on the market
are too small.
The rocket they draw
is to be built at the army factory.

All cooperate:

the students of Haigazian
army mechanics
and Pierre Mourad
professor at the American University
who is to guarantee its solidity.
It's now a collective effort.
The space project featured

on front news.

"The boys and their rockets"

were a good story.

"Behold the Lebanese rocket!

The Lebanese rocket's future"

"Bravo to the Cedars!"

"Cedar 3, total success"

"Moment of pride for the Association
of Spacecraft Studies"

"Yesterday, the Cedar took flight".

The fervor around the Cedar emerges

in the era of the great Arab dream

that inspires people

to shape their own destiny.

Pan-Arabism is steered

by Egyptian president Abdel Nasser

with the creation

of the United Arab Republic

which unites Egypt and Syria.

It generates internal

conflicts in Lebanon

and almost a civil war in 1958.

One side of the population

has a pro-western ideology

and the other side endorses

Nasser's Arab nationalism.

To block the influence

of the USSR that supports Nasser

15,000 American marines

land in Lebanon.

A few months later

the new President Chehab

strives to rebuild state and nation.

The space research that began

just after the 1958 conflict

was used to unite a country

that had difficulty

considering itself a nation.

The rockets were turned into symbols.

For Manoug, it was something else.

He dreamt of mathematical teachings

and space exploration.

Students came from Jerusalem

Jordan, Syria

Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon...
And their project was contemporary
with the research of those times.
Yet all these images have lapsed
from the collective imagination.
History has erased them.
It was recorded without them.
The man who made most of
the images of this space adventure
is Harry Koundakjian, one of
the first Lebanese photojournalists.
The first photographs
of the baby rockets are his.
He was in Sannine as well.
Harry was there for all the launches:
Cedar 2B, Cedar 2C
Cedar 3 and 4...
The first photos published
by L'Orient and Al Jarida were his.
Images that adorned front-pages
with the success of the project...
still Harry's.
"Harry the Horse"
traveled the world
witnessed revolutions
and wars, met celebrities.
The images of the 60's
and 70's he shows us
are imbued
with the spirit of the era.
They are moving and linked to us.
They resonate within us.
While those of the rockets
have no trace in our imagination.
What is history's memory?
Harry is happy to hear that Manoug
kept traces of his photographs.
Like many photographers
he lost most of his negatives
during the civil wars.
He had not seen the images
of these rockets for ages.
When you read in the eyes
of these youngsters

how happy they are
with their project and its success
you're so proud of them.
You can never forget it.
It's amazing how this project, in
an Armenian university, evolves.
It is endowed with a spaceport
in the heights of Dbayeh.
The army is participating in it
the State, subsidizing it.
Still, it is
at Haigazian University's lab
that students continue mixing fuel
fabricating it from scratch
with their own hands.
It's seems even more
unbelievable today
that Rev. John Markarian, head of
the Protestant university he founded
did not halt the momentum
that went beyond them.
Now 93 years old
John lives in Pittston, Pennsylvania
with Inge, whom he met in Beirut
where he lived for over 25 years.
We didn't go wrong
with the measurements
but with the trajectory.
We took an ordinary map
to study our position
and the rocket's trajectory.
And we noticed
that the South of Cyprus
was on the same level as Syria.
From Dbayeh
if we had launched
the rocket straight
it would have fallen in Cyprus.
So we decided to deviate it slightly.
But the degree of deviation
was obviously not enough.
We received a letter from
our Ambassador in Cyprus, Ghossein
saying that the British Ambassador

had called him
about a rocket launched from
Lebanon which had fallen near a boat.
That could have sparked
a catastrophe.
At that time, in Lebanon
No radar was capable of following
a rocket at that speed and distance.
When I was in England, I trained
on the Decca Navigator System
which used transmissions
from different fixed stations.
The resulting triangulation
of pulse frequencies and phases
enabled us to track
and locate a boat.
So I had the idea
to use the same model
to track the rocket.
And this is what we did.
Some Arab scientists who founded the
Association for Spacecraft Studies
began launching rockets
that fell a bit too close to Cyprus
triggering an international outcry.
Cyprus protested at the UN
the UK expressed concern
and neighboring countries panicked.
Things verged on a diplomatic crisis.
Joseph Sfeir was in charge
of recording and analyzing
the rocket's trajectory.
An engineer specialized
in telecommunications
he adapted PAL/SECAM to Lebanon
invented the Lebanese
Central Bank security codes
placed radars on tankers
from Famagusta to the Red Sea
and participated in the
construction of this cable car.
I made this.
The batteries were here.
Then the receivers

and here is the transmitter.
Here, I'm connecting them.
The idea was to put in
a small satellite.
Before us, the Americans had sent
Oscar 1 and Oscar 2 for Ham Radio.
But the army
was giving them the rocket.
We'd have made the rocket
and the satellites ourselves.
A satellite.
Joseph was dreaming of that.
Manoug too
as well as sending a man
and before that, a mouse
lodged in the head of the rocket
to reach the stratosphere.
Mickey the mouse had been
prepared for the trip
but Manoug's wife, an animal-lover
stood against it,
thus saving Mickey's life.
It may seem surreal
but we have to delve back
to the context of the time
and the obsession to conquer space
that had reached all the region.
"Space fever" spread from Haigazian
to the prestigious
American University of Beirut.
For scientific purposes
the students there built Hannibal
the first liquid-propelled
rocket in the Arab world.
Unfortunately, it ended in failure.
There were others.
Students of the El Hoda school
in Beirut's southern suburb
Shiyyah, also made rockets.
A journalist in "The Adventurer"
reported enthusiastically
on the eve of the launch
of the small El Hoda 2
by four teenagers

between the ages of 13 and 15
led by their teacher, Mr. Maalouf.
The first Hoda rocket
had soared as high as 15 m.
The journalist writes excitedly:
"If these four young people
can build rockets
so can every student
in every Arab country
even if these dreams are achieved
outside the realm of science!"
Other countries became
interested in rockets.
For Egypt and Israel
who were at open war
space research had military goals
rather than scientific ones.
The great concern
worldwide at the time
was the nuclear arms race.
Everyone wanted a bomb.
Egypt received support from the USSR
Israel from France and Iran.
Some 250 German technicians
were at work in Egypt.
Some had collaborated with Von Braun
under the Nazi regime
before he fled to the US
and founded NASA.
In 1962
after the Egyptian program
began its rocket tests
Israel became fearful
initiating Operation Damocles:
targeted attacks, letter bombs
and death threats to German
scientists who worked for Nasser.
The operation was led by a spy
Wolfgang Lotz
who infiltrated the Egyptian program
and sabotaged it.
He was arrested and tried
by Egyptian authorities in 1965
and handed over to Israel

with his wife
after the June '67 War
against 5,000 Egyptian prisoners
9 of whom were army generals.
He was known as "the Champagne Spy".
The Middle-East of the time
was an active hub
of espionage and counterespionage.
Scrutinizing, recruiting
gleaning information...
While Manoug and his students
pursue their research
intrigue is widespread in Lebanon.
Spies rub shoulders at hotel bars
hang around embassies
slip into the offices
of newspaper editors or universities.
All kinds of spies
on the payroll of the US
the USSR, or anti-imperialism.
At the time of the Cold War
the Middle East was a battleground
between East and West blocs.
It was a time when
revolutionary movements were linked
when talk was
about revolutions not causes.
It was also a time
when, in spite of differences
science and the conquest of space
were a stage to compete, emulate
and share of the same temporality.
In any case, that was the fantasy.
Hampar Karageozian
a brilliant chemistry student
very involved in the Rocket project
emerges as a hero.
The accident marks
the end of the carefree climate.
The Haigazian lab doors are sealed
all explosive materials are banned.
There is nothing left on campus.
In the absence of Manoug
the army takes over the project.

Centralizing the rocket construction
as well as fuel preparation.
Things change.
The launches that once
drew huge crowds
become more private
with less press coverage
and a military audience.
The army takes over little by little.
Then in 1964
Manoug returns
with his graduate degree.
A country that wants to build rockets
will not be satisfied
with mere fireworks.
There was a military objective
behind all this.
We had something like a committee
working to transform
the rocket into a weapon.
But in front of Manoug Manougian
Pierre Mourad or Joseph Sfeir
we pretended to be doing
scientific experiments.
To show the people
we could produce rockets.
What can you tell a civilian?
Say something to Pierre and
the whole university knows about it.
Say it to Joseph Sfeir and the whole
area of Jounieh knows about it.
So, officially we pretended
to conduct experiments.
Scientific experiments.
To all appearances
we were producing rockets.
But from the inside, we the army
officers wanted things to evolve.
We wanted not a three-stage
but a two-stage rocket
with one of them full of explosives.
We had a dream
of turning this rocket
into a weapon.

But before we could do so
what was to happen happened.
Then the project stopped.
I didn't attend the meeting, I don't
know if it was a threat or a request.
But if the Lebanese army
hurried up and wrote a letter
saying that come October all
the rocket experiments had to stop
obviously someone was forcing them.
President Chehab
asked us to stop the project.
I knew him personally.
He was our neighbor in Jounieh
I knew his nephews.

So I asked him:

"Mr. President
why are we stopping the project?
"We're not a burden to the State and
we're bringing fame to the country."

He said:

but we've been asked to stop."

I asked:

He said:

the South and faraway."
And then...
and then, oddly enough... oblivion.
Broadcasting from Radio Van, I
welcome you via Lebanese frequencies
or via internet
for international listeners.
Today, we'll talk about a scientific
event that occurred in the 60's
and of which many of us are unaware.
Most people are surprised to learn
that the Haigazian University
and the Lebanese army
had a space program
to launch rockets.
And that Lebanese

and Armenian Lebanese
were doggedly working
on this project.
We'd like to ask our listeners for
any information on the project...
Not just information.
If you have any recollections...
If you've seen or heard anything...
if you were just passing by
and saw a rocket...
If someone told you about this
story... This is important to us.
Let us repeat to our dear listeners
if you remember something
about this project
if you want to know more
call us at the following number:
or 01267657.
We waited and hoped a long time
but no one ever responded
to the call sent out on Radio Van.
No one remembers
the rocket's story then?
No one shares a common memory
of a rocket launch?
No one got married
broke up with a fianc, took an exam
experienced anything
important on the same day
and could recall:
"That was the day the Cedar 4
was launched" or "the Cedar 6"?
When they speak of it, no... it
doesn't ring a bell for most people.
As for our generation
they stare at us incredulous
as if this event, this document
was a piece of fiction
we've made up for fun.
It's like a secret history
buried in the collective imagination
a repressed thing
set apart and never mentioned
even in history books.

Perhaps because
most of the players in the project
have left Lebanon
like a big part
of the Armenian community.
Perhaps because most
of the archives have disappeared.
They reached us only thanks to one
man, Manoug, who saved everything
thousands of km from Lebanon.
Might this also be due
to the Lebanese civil wars
which took with them
swathes of memories of the past
or even before
a consequence of the June 1967 War
between Israeli and Arab armies.
The space program was halted
sometime after the war of June 1967.
The Arab defeat
and the loss of territories
like Jerusalem and the Golan heights
had a very significant
impact on the entire region.
Egyptian president
Abdel Nasser, stepped down
and then returned
under street pressure.
It's the end of a certain idea
of the pan-Arab project.
The shattering of a vision:
an alternative and modernist utopia
that promised to transform
our region and the world.
And what has changed the most
with the war of 1967
is the image we have of ourselves.
We were born in 1969
children of that
disenchanted generation
that felt the loss
of agency of its own fate.
It was harder to envision the future.
Dreaming was confiscated.

The history of the Lebanese space project seems inconceivable today. As if we were severed from that possibility as if we couldn't identify with it forgetting it repressing it from both individual and collective memory. Oblivion. The invisible. We've already faced it. It led us to make images in the aftermath of the Lebanese civil wars. Amnesia...

The interrogation about how History is fabricated and written... Which History is to be shared? What remains on the rocket launch sites in Dbayeh? Monuments were raised along the way by the armies that passed through invading then withdrawing from Lebanon. Parts of history are still tangible to us. But no monument or commemorative stone testifies to the rockets with the following words: "From this plateau in Dbayeh Lebanon launched in 1961 the first rocket of the Arab world." Neither stone nor monument? You can see it on this image. Can you see the tip on the photo? Yes, but it's rather like that in fact. Anyhow, the proportions are good. What about... the welding of the ailerons? What do you think about the welding and finishing? It's up to you. You can decide to follow the photo. Or you can try to slightly improve things.

It's up to you.
The shape will be more like this.
I'd like Jana to tell me
what authorizations we need
to be allowed
to reproduce the rocket.
Even if we're just
building a mock one
which cannot be launched.
What authorizations
do we need to rebuild it?
To assemble it in our factory
put it on a truck
and get it out in the streets.
When you're building it
inside the factory
before it gets out
nothing can happen, right?
The guy who is now
producing the screw, the pivot
he's only working on separate pieces.
But when you begin to assemble?
You're afraid?
Of course, I am.
Not for the rocket.
I don't want them
to close my factory!
I don't care about the rocket!
The other problem is with the...
The countries around.
This is why they have to know
that it's a work of art.
You could be hiding behind it
preparing something.
I don't think
they'll really do anything.
No, but you'll
be surrounded by cameras
Smile! You're being filmed!
And your phone
will emit weird sounds...
That's reassuring!
Mr. Minister, for our project
we are reproducing a rocket

that we'll install
close to your office.
What authorizations should we have?
Can it be a problem?
Whom should we inform?
As you know, rockets as missiles
are not a simple thing in Lebanon.
We've had enough rockets
specially during war times.
But this is another kind of rocket.
For a weapon, you would
have needed authorizations
from the Ministries of Defense
of Finance and of Interior.
But as you're presenting it
we just need to inform
everyone in advance.
They need our help.
They'll write a letter to us
that we'll transmit to the Ministries
of Defense and Foreign Affairs
to the municipalities and the police.
And we'll synchronize everything.
With Miss Jana.
Now, what's going to happen?
We will film in Dbayeh.
Then, we'll put the rocket on a truck
and we'll move it through the streets
to Haigazian.
We'll have to see
how the army can cooperate.
Ok, now the army
services are informed.
But you'll have to decide
how you want to transport it.
This is the point.
Are they aware
that the rocket will be uncovered?
No. We were not clear about it.
Minister's office
You're afraid
of it being bombed? No...
We're not really afraid.
We want to do it in an artistic way.

But at the factory...
some of the people we were talking to
frightened us.
We need your advice, Mr. Minister.
Everything that is made public
becomes immediately less dangerous.
I don't think there
will be a problem.
We must communicate.
Yes, and you must give some details:
"We'll have a big truck...
We'll transport a rocket-shaped
sculpture from Dbayeh..."
We will appear on TV
write in newspapers, to explain it.
To avoid any possible ambiguity.
Any misunderstanding.
Any misunderstanding.
We now welcome the filmmakers
Khalil Joreige and Joana Hadjithomas
who are currently working
on a documentary film:
"The Lebanese Rocket Society".
I'm talking about
an 8-meter-rocket, it's not small.
We took some pictures of it
and decided to reproduce it.
General Security agreement
for the script.
Official copy
of General Security publications.
Text authorizing the transfer of
the rocket to Haigazian University.
Authorization from the Beirut
municipality for a documentary film.
Also from the Mount Lebanon
municipality to shoot a documentary.
Authorization from the town of Bourj
Hammoud to shoot a documentary film.
Authorization
from the Ministry of Defense.
Agreement about authorizations
from the Internal Security Forces.
It was a space project

meant for research.
They were all contributing
to a project
that was closely linked
to the modernity of the times.
Everyone will be surprised
many people won't remember.
Some won't know whether
it's about rockets or weapons
and will think that
you're talking about the war.
We consider that art and film
are places where things
can still happen today.
If someone comes and says:
"We're going to reproduce a rocket
and take it on a truck
from Dbayeh to Kantari"
people will laugh
and say it's impossible.
It's only in places
like art and cinema
that such a project can take place.
Our territory, the place where
we're trying to live, can expand.
So, there is a message here...
in a certain way.
Our project is to offer a replica
to scale of the Cedar 4 rocket
8 meter long
and weighing nearly a ton
to the university where it all began.
A sculpture that pays tribute to the
Rocket Society and its dreamers.
Paul Haidostian
the university President
accepts and understands that there
only on the university grounds
can this rocket
be interpreted accurately:
as an artistic
and scientific project.
All our condolences
The government falls again!

Wednesday, January 12, 2011
the government falls.
The Joumblatt bloc
can topple the government
Ben Ali makes concessions
Last chance to save Lebanon
Day after day, tension persists.
A new cabinet
does not seem to see the light.

Hariri:

The revolt of the Egyptian people
"legitimized" by the army
Dignity
Arab and Iranian regimes threatened
Egypt - Bahrain - Lybia
Tunisia-Iraq - Yemen
The region is boiling
Lebanon is snoring
Meanwhile
throughout the region and beyond,
things are changing profoundly.
Like an awakening after a long sleep
a sleep without dreams
in societies that hailed dictators
who narrowed horizons
and our yearning for space.
An extraordinary wind of freedom
is blowing in most of the region.
Strength, courage, dignity
are invading streets.
Men and women
revolt and don't fall silent
they cannot be silenced.
Despite the uncertain future
the fear of what could come next
longing for freedom and the
ability of dreaming came back.
And this dream cannot be stopped.
On February 21st
the day before D-Day
everything is ready.
We check the rocket's trajectory
for one last time

under dreadful, torrential rain.
We check the weather forecast:
Sunny tomorrow
with a possibility of rain...
Outwitting reality, provoking it
defying it, transforming it.
As a tribute to our dreamers
create a rocket.
But this is not a weapon.
This is the fruit of what a group
of scientists were some years ago
and of what we too could be today:
researchers, utopians, dreamers.
What if it had never stopped?
What if the Lebanese
space project had continued?
Welcome to the Museum
of the Lebanese Rocket Society.
You are going to discover the story
of the Lebanese space research
which began in 1960.
In 1969, the first Lebanese satellite
was launched into space.
Since then
satellites have played
a fundamental role in our country
on the economic
military and scientific levels.
Military satellites helped us
avoiding regional conflicts
and securing our borders
turning Lebanon nowadays into the
most secure countries of the area.
Scientific satellites discovered
gas fields in the territorial waters
by the end of the 60's
and helped turn this country
into the modern and developed nation
it has become.
On this glorious day
modern Nations have decided
to send probes into space
to pursue the mission
of the probe Voyager 1

launched years ago
on a reconnaissance mission.
Voyager 1
traveling at more than 17 km/s
in relation to the sun
carries a message
which symbolizes Humanity.
It will be the first probe
to approach a star.
Soon, the probe will stop working
because of a shortage of energy.
The mission of Voyager 1
is coming to an end
at a time when new probes
are being launched worldwide
Throughout their journey
these probes will gather
information through space
and send messages
in the form of images, sounds
and words from our planet.
All this information
is engraved on Golden Records
destined to reach
life in outer space.
Lebanon is sending
out the probe Adonis
bearing the colors
of the Lebanese flag
which will travel through space
with other probes
from all over the world
for an encounter with the absolute.
The Lebanese Golden Record
has collected images
and sounds from Lebanon
to carry them far and very high
as a message of peace and liberty.
I will borrow the words
that President Jimmy Carter
used for the launching of Voyager 1
to also send our message to the
dwellers of other skies saying:
"This is a present

from a small, distant world
"a token of our sounds
"our science, our images
"Our history
our thoughts and our feelings.
"We are attempting
to survive our time"
"so we may live into yours."