

ARMENIAN STUDIES

Past, Present, and Future



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CENTER FOR
ARMENIAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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FALL 2022 – ISSUE 16

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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

It has been a year of momentous change at the Center for Armenian Studies and in Armenian Studies at Michigan, and this issue of our newsletter is dedicated to taking stock of our history and looking forward to an exciting new era.

First, however, let me introduce myself as the interim director of CAS. I am a historian of the Ottoman Empire who has mostly worked on cultural and intellectual history in the premodern era, meaning, roughly, the era from the end of the Mongol presence in Asia Minor to the eve of accelerated modernization and Westernization in the nineteenth century that is often summarized under the label of *Tanzīmāt*. I came to Michigan in 2000, and have served as director of the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies, and as chair of the Department of Middle East Studies. I have had the privilege to work with CAS for many years.

I came to Ottoman history primarily from Islamic Studies, and Islamic traditions of interpreting the world, through narratives and myth, through philosophical and spiritual traditions, continue to be central to my research. At the same time, I teach a wide variety of courses on culture and society, and the Armenian experience is very much part of the history that I want my students to understand and appreciate. Few Ottoman artifacts convey the complexity and diversity of Ottoman society in a nutshell like this page from a calendar that I found in one of my old Ottoman books, and that now hangs in my study.



Ottoman Calendar

Next to the Islamic and the Ottoman fiscal calendar, it shows the date in Armenian, Hebrew, Greek, Bulgarian, and French. The integration of the histories of these communities with the larger political and geographical framework of the Middle East has been an exciting paradigm shift in the historiography. Please read further on page 26 about the role Michigan's Workshop on Armenian and Turkish Studies has played in it.



Gottfried Hagen

Change has occurred in many forms at CAS this year. Our programming expert of many years, Naira Tumanyan, moved on to the School of Music, Theater, and Dance in 2022. Naira has been a mainstay with the center and the community, and we wish her all the best in her new position. We are excited to welcome Vicken Mouradian, who has joined us from California, where he is currently completing an MA in History at California State University, Northridge.

2022 saw the retirement of Professor Ronald G. Suny, the founding father of Armenian Studies at Michigan, and this newsletter presents an appreciation of his influence and impact [pp. 6]. He and Kevork Bardakjian, who retired in 2020, were the holders of the two endowed Manoogian Chairs in Armenian studies. We are thrilled to introduce in this newsletter Dr. Michael Pifer, who studied under Bardakjian, and was recently appointed as the Marie Manoogian Chair of Armenian Language and Literature. Read here about his exciting work on medieval literature, and his new ideas about teaching Armenian to U-M undergraduates. With Dr. Michael Pifer and Dr. Hakem al-Rustom, the new generation in Armenian Studies at Michigan is ready for the future. You can also read [pp. 32] how other Armenian scholars, trained at Michigan, are shaping the field. Hopefully, our next issue will feature another new member, the new

instructor in Armenian language in the Department of Middle East Studies.

The importance of the integration of Armenian Studies with adjacent fields and disciplines is demonstrated at opposite ends of the chronology by our postdoctoral fellows whom we introduce here. James Wolfe comes from Classics, using Latin, Greek, and Syriac along with Armenian sources, while Cevat Dargin situates Armenians in the unique context of Turkey's region of Dersim, along with Kurds, Alevis, and others. James and Cevat talk about their projects in the coming pages.

Finally, meet our new graduate students, Emma Avagyan and Arakel Minassian, who we are excited to welcome to Michigan's CAS community. We are also highlighting and celebrating the achievements of continuing graduate student Emma Santelmann, as well as two highly talented undergraduate students, Ariana Nigoghosian and Nayiri Sagherian who were awarded the recently established Edward H. Noroian Fellowship this year. The future of Armenian Studies is bright here in Michigan.

Our programming this year continues on this trajectory of innovation. Next to several important workshops, allow me to especially draw your attention to the lectures and presentations by Dr. Karén Karslyan on Dec.7 [pp. 17] and Dr. Rachel Goshgarian on Feb. 8 [pp. 18]

Armenian Studies has undoubtedly come a long way over the years and through promoting outstanding scholarship, we are proud to continue the University of Michigan's legacy in making meaningful contributions to the field. Thanks to generous support from our donors and community, the Center is more active than ever with the opportunity to promote scholars and artists representing the vibrance of our international community. Finally, we believe undeniably that our lasting impact will be in fostering the next generation of students, teachers, and leaders who will become the future of Armenian Studies.

The Barberini Ivory, an image of Justinian, Anatasius, or Zeno (6th century) via Wikipedia Commons



Armenian Newspapers via Emma Santelmann



ASCA Movie Night: Lost and Found in Armenia via Vicken Mouradian



Sahmanakhagh(kht): Hayerenn u hayerēnē via Arakel Minassian



MEET THE NEW MARIE MANOOGIAN CHAIR IN ARMENIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE: DR. MICHAEL PIFER

Dr. Michael Pifer has been appointed as the new New Marie Manoogian Chair of Armenian Language and Literature in the Department of Middle East Studies, starting in the Fall of 2022. Dr. Pifer is a familiar face in CAS, having obtained his PhD from U-M, and having served as Lecturer I in Armenian for the last two years. He is a specialist in Armenian cultural production with an emphasis on the development of vernacular Armenian literature during the medieval period. His PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Michigan in 2014 won him the ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award and three Hopwood Awards for creative non-fiction. Dr. Pifer's research asks how Armenian literature developed alongside neighboring literary traditions within shared spaces. His interests turn around questions of multilingualism, mixed-script writing, and the ways in which premodern poets attempted to accommodate certain forms of cultural difference within their compositions. By decentering monolingual approaches to literary history, his research aims to contribute to knowledge about cross-cultural dialogism across the literary landscapes of premodern Armenia and its adjacent regions. He is the author of *Kindred Voices: A Literary History of Medieval Anatolia* (Yale University Press, 2021) and a coeditor of *An Armenian Mediterranean: Words and Worlds in Motion* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

We welcome you as the new Marie Manoogian Professor of Armenian Language and Literature. Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

I try to wear a lot of hats, but one of my biggest passions is trying to make the rich heterogeneity of Armenian experiences, cultural production, and language accessible to anyone who wants to engage with them. I don't think there's any one way to do this, but there's abundant inspiration almost anywhere one chooses to look. Just to give one example—in the last few years, thanks to living with



Michael Pifer

a toddler, I've discovered the joy of Armenian children's literature (past and present). It's fascinating to see the battle to preserve Western Armenian, which is a UNESCO endangered language, being fought in the most gentle way possible: that is, by playfully nudging the imaginations of children. For this reason, aside from my regular scholarly work, I've been writing and illustrating my first children's story in Western Armenian this summer as a hobby. I hope to publish it in the fall.

What are you currently working on? And what are some projects you plan to undertake in the future?

I'm a bit of an academic omnivore, and I'm currently working on two very different projects. The first is a comparative reevaluation of Middle Armenian literary culture, which lives in-between the rise of Classical Armenian and the modern Armenian dialects. Sometimes Middle Armenian is not considered a 'literary' language because it was never subjected to the same kinds of standardization as Classical or

modern Eastern and Western Armenian. And yet, it is this unruliness of Middle Armenian—its cultural in-betweenness and resistance to the standardization—that continues to draw me in. This project is part of the research group Armenia Entangled, led by Dr. Zara Pogossian in Florence, which seeks to map new interconnections between Armenians and other peoples, cultures, and histories in the medieval era. My other project is also collaborative. Partnering with film scholar Marie-Aude Baronian, I've begun writing about the poetic legacies and multilingualism of the celebrated Armenian filmmaker Sergei Parajanov, who is widely regarded as one of the founding practitioners of 'poetic' cinema. One thing our project does is to reconsider what is 'poetic' in the context of the historical literary traditions of Armenia and its adjacent regions. Both projects are united by a simple underlying question: what does the Armenian cultural production of the past—from the medieval to the early modern—have to teach us about the ways we think about Armenian culture (or 'Armenian-ness') in the present?

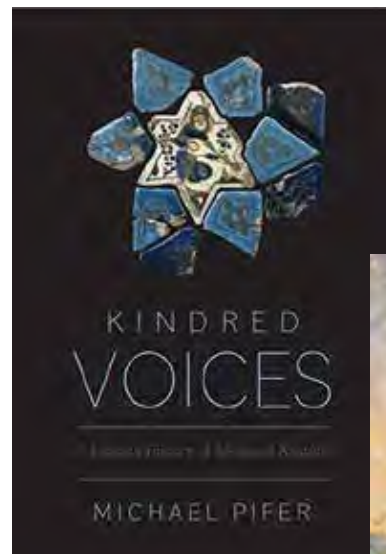
What are your plans for the Armenian Language and Literature program in the Department for Middle East Studies?

One thing I would like to do is find a way to offer Classical Armenian courses not only at U-M, but also at all the Big Ten schools on a more regular basis in a hybrid format. My hope is that by making Classical Armenian readily accessible, the field can serve the needs of young Armenian Studies scholars who might not have access to the kinds of training available at U-M. At the same time, in this way, we might attract specialists whose primary field is not Armenian Studies, but who might become potential contributors to the field if given the opportunity.

I'm also very conscious of the needs of the local Armenian community in the greater Detroit area. Many—though not all—of the students at U-M come from this community, and so it's important to think about fresh ways of serving the needs of Armenians in Michigan, whether they're our students or not. Sometimes, this might include offering a variety of Armenian studies courses—from medieval culture to church history to contemporary cinema—that can

entice students from different academic backgrounds to explore their heritage in a new way (including those who cannot major in Armenian Studies). At other times, it means bringing lectures to Detroit to give short and informative talks. Finally, I think it's also possible to have conversations with the broader academic community and the local Armenian community at the same time. I would love to host a recurring Armenian film festival, with movies from Armenia and around the global diaspora, in Detroit in the coming years, stressing the Midwest's role in the long history of Armenian cultural production.

Last but not least, graduate programs are vital to the continuing success of Armenian Studies in North America. It's important to expand the department's offering of new graduate courses. One example would be to have a translation seminar for students of Armenian—ranging from Classical to Middle to dialectical to modern Eastern or Western—as a way to think critically about how and why we translate into English, for scholarly or any other purpose. I will also incorporate Armenian materials as a central component of other department-wide courses with broad appeal.



RETIREMENT OF RONALD G. SUNY

After over forty years at the University of Michigan, Ronald G. Suny, the William H. Sewell Distinguished University Professor of History, announced his retirement as of Fall of 2022. As one of the most prominent Russian and Soviet historians in a generation, Suny brought his expertise to bear on Armenian history as well. From his earliest studies on the social history of the October Revolution, through his engagement with the cultural turn of the 1980s-90s and focus on non-Russian nationalities within the USSR, and finally to more recent work on empire and affect, Suny has been at the forefront of pushing the field forward in creative and new directions. In addition, one of Suny's major intellectual achievements was the establishment of the Armenian Studies program and the co-founding of the Workshop for Armenian/Turkish Scholarship.

Dr. Suny's first encounter with Michigan students was in 1977, when Ben Stolz, professor of Slavic Languages invited Ron Suny, who was then teaching at Oberlin College, to teach a course on Armenian history. Ron Suny joined the University of Michigan as the first Alex Manoogian Chair for Modern Armenian History in 1981. The professorship was established by Detroit entrepreneur Alex Manoogian and his wife Marie, who were assisted and encouraged by a group of local Michiganders deeply committed to the study of Armenian history, culture, and language. The group consisted of literary critic Edmond Azadian, Michigan graduate Alice Haidostian, Dean of pharmacy Ara Paul, and Professor of Slavic languages Ben Stolz.

When Suny was appointed to the professorship there was little to work with. Armenian classes were small and Armenian-related events tended to be sparsely attended, and materials available were generally more interested in nationalist myth-making than historical scholarship. Suny went to build a program from scratch. In its first years the goals, mostly directed at undergraduates, were modest: It was to encourage the study of the Armenian past, its present condition, the life of the diaspora, and the



Ronald G. Suny

centuries-old culture of Armenians. Over the years, as courses were taught and festivals were organized, the program grew, and Suny's vision became a reality. Swayed by the program's activities, the Manoogian Foundation invested in the second professorship in Armenian Language and Literature, which would be held by Kevork Bardakjian until 2020. At the time in the 1980s, having two chairs in Armenian Studies at one institution was simply pioneering and would facilitate further expansion.

Indeed in the 1990s and 2000s, the program grew exponentially with the mandate articulated by Alex and Marie Manoogian's children Richard Manoogian and Louise Simone Manoogian to educate a new generation of scholars who would creatively and rigorously expand the field of Armenian Studies. With the Armenian Studies Program, now the Center for Armenian Studies, this mandate was taken on with incredible determination and energy by the subsequent chairholders and directors. Initiated by Suny, the program has a long tradition of being intellectually forward-looking and its leadership has proven to be innovative at every turn.

In 2000, Ron and Fatma Müge Göçek, together with historian and former diplomat Gerard Libaridian, initiated the Workshop for Armenian/Turkish Scholarship (WATS). WATS was met with skepticism from many of the leading figures in the field of Armenian Studies

at first. But pushing forward despite protests from senior colleagues, WATS, no doubt, revolutionized the field of Armenian Genocide Studies. The Middle East Studies Association recognized the significance of the work by awarding Suny and Göçek its academic freedom prize in 2005. Today the workshop's legacy is undeniable, and the heterogeneity of our students

and postdocs, as well as frequent visits and contributions of Turkish and Kurdish scholars to the conversations at Michigan, attests to it. This collaboration was unimaginable a bit over two decades ago. Today, the program is a thriving intellectual space and this is due to the vision and uncompromising work of its founder and his trust in the subsequent leadership.

40 Years of Armenian Studies and Ron Fest the 2.0 Version

Professor Suny's retirement coincided with the 40th Year Anniversary of Armenian Studies at the University of Michigan. To mark both occasions, the Center for Armenian Studies organized an evening celebration and reflection of the four decades of intellectual and community work on Friday, March 11, titled Armenian Transformations, "1981-2021: How Forty Years of Michigan Armenian Studies Looked at Imperial Collapse, Ethnic War, and the Rebirth of Independence." Three of the Manoogian chairholders, Ronald Grigor Suny, Gerard Libaridian, and Hakem Al-Rustom reflected on writing, researching, and teaching Armenian history in the context of four turbulent decades. From the creation of the Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History in 1981 to the catastrophic defeat of the Armenian Republic in the second Nagorno-Karabakh war, the three scholars highlighted how Michigan faculty have been in the vanguard of examining and attempting to understand the experiences of Armenians in modern times. When the chair was established, Armenia was a small Soviet republic, and half of the world's Armenians lived in scattered diasporic communities. Within a decade the Soviet empire had disintegrated, and Armenia became an independent state beset by hostile neighbors. The republic survived despite losses of population and economic distress. A thriving civil society defied the rule of oligarchs and self-serving politicians, and in 2018, crowds marched to the capital in a democratic revolution. Just as they rebounded from genocide more than 100 years ago and faced a new war in 2020, Armenians once again had to deal with loss and find a path to renewal and as the three argued, so must the scholarship.

The evening concluded with a musical offering by

award-winning flutist, artistic director, and author, Sato Moughalian and pianist and composer, Thomas Jennings. The program includes arrangements of pieces by composer and ethnomusicologist, Grikor Mirzaian Suni (1876-1939), grandfather of Ronald Grigor Suny. The event was generously co-sponsored by Perspectives Ensemble and the Jarvis & Constance Family Foundation's Danièle Doctorow Prize.

The following day, March 12, the focus shifted from Armenian Studies to Suny's great accomplishments when it came to Russian/Soviet history. Co-organized by Michigan faculty, Valerie Kivelson and Melanie Tanielian, as well as graduate students Alex McConnell, Reynolds Hahamovitch, and Albert Cavallaro, the conference, locally dubbed Ron Fest 2.0, brought together colleagues and students of Suny for, "A Hit Parade of Historical Turns: From A Russian Perspective." Each panel centered on a different thematic area or methodological approach, with a key text authored by Suny suggested for discussion. The conference schedule roughly followed the chronological trajectory of Ronald G. Suny's career from his earliest studies on the social history of the October Revolution, through his engagement with the cultural turn of the 1980s-90s and focus on non-Russian nationalities within the USSR, and finally to more recent work on empire and affect. Panelists provided an assessment of Suny's contributions in these areas, as well as personal reflections on how these historiographic turns have influenced their own lives and intellectual projects. It was a lively discussion wherein Suny offered his responses to the interventions of conference participants.

The event was co-sponsored by the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, the International Institute, the

Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies, the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, the Weiser Center for Europe and Eurasia, the U-M Office of Research, the Department of History, the Department of Political Science, and Slavic Languages & Literatures.

We sincerely thank Professor Suny for his many years of service and commitment to Armenian Studies at the University of Michigan.



The Manoogian Chair Remembers

I first arrived at the University of Michigan in the fall of 1977 to teach one semester of Armenian history and one semester of Russian history. Intense discussions went on that year in an attempt to convince Alex Manoogian that he should fund a chair in modern Armenian history. But the “old man,” as we referred to him, was simply not ready to part with a half-million dollars for the endowment. (Chairs at the University were much cheaper then!) So, I returned to Oberlin College, sadly, for two years until 1980 when the funding was secured. Meanwhile, my wife Armena and I suffered a horrendous tragedy. Our two-year old son, Grikor, who had been born in Ann Arbor, suddenly, without warning, died from a mysterious disease. We arrived in Ann Arbor depressed, confused, and deeply wounded, but soon we were surrounded by friends and colleagues who helped us move on. Our daughter Sevan, now a biologist teaching in San

Francisco, was born in 1982, and Anoush, an anthropologist and former Manoogian fellow was born in 1987. With our family growing, I began building the foundation of an Armenian Studies Program.

An early success was convincing Mr. Manoogian, our biggest supporter, to fund a second position, a chair in Armenian Language and Literature, and appointing Kevork Bardakjian to that position. In those early years, we had to create a presence in the university, which we did with outreach events, connecting with the Detroit community, and festivals, like the Armenian Odysseys. Armena organized a concert in Rackham Amphitheater for music by my grandfather, Grikor Mirzoyan Suni, which was attended by my father, Gurken Suny, who had carried on his musical legacy after Suni’s death in 1939.

Sometime in the 1980s, I created the official Armenian Studies Program by simply announcing it on a piece of paper I inserted in the paper catalog of the university curriculum. From that humble beginning, we began to acquire a national and international reputation as a center of serious research into Armenian history and current politics. Armenian history at the time largely focused on ancient and medieval Armenia, like the excellent research of my teacher Nina Garsoïan and the extraordinary Robert Thomson. The greatest challenges in teaching modern Armenian history at the time were acquiring texts that reliably told us about the past and were free from the nationalism and narcissism that infected much of Armenian writing about their nation. We were creating a program that was not simply about how great Armenians were but more deeply about the tragic and triumphant roads they have traveled through millennia. I loved deconstructing the myths and comfortable narratives that some students uncritically accepted in order to have them look squarely at the hard truths of the Armenian experience. My belief was that facing reality was necessary to build a stronger Armenia, both in the homeland and in the diaspora.

My mother had warned me early in life: “Ronald, don’t get mixed up with the Armenians.” But apparently, I did not heed her advice. Instead, as she and my father

did, I became mixed up with Armenians. Even after leaving the directorship of the program in 1994, I continued to research Armenian history. My work was not easily digested by Armenians; it was too critical and was considered even treacherous. I was labeled *davajan* (traitor) in post-Soviet Armenia. My prize-winning history of the Armenian Genocide -- “They Can Live in the Desert But Nowhere Else” -- published by Princeton University Press, was generally ignored by many Armenians. It has been translated into Turkish (by an Armenian press in Istanbul) and Hungarian but not into Armenian. But slowly, gradually, younger people in Armenia and among diaspora scholars have more positively received and read the work. It is younger Armenians who are looking for new ways to think about the Armenian past and the Armenian future.

At the moment, moving into retirement, I am as active as ever in research and writing. At the moment I am writing a synthetic history of the evolution of the nation-form, called *Forging the Nation: The Making and Faking of Nationalisms*. Inevitably, Armenians play a significant role in that history. I guess I am still fatally mixed up with the Armenians.

Ronald Grigor Suny

May 10, 2022

Celebrating the establishment of the Marie Manoogian Chair of Armenian Language and Literature. Standing, left to right: Kevork Bardakjian, Ronald Suny, Robert Thomson, Ben Bagdikian. Seated, left to right: Richard Hovannisian, Nina Garsoïan, and Avedis Sanjian.



A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS

Introducing the 2022-23 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellows

Cevat Dargin

2022-23 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow

Dr. Cevat Dargin specializes in the modern history of the Middle East, with a focus on the transformation from indirect imperial to centralized nation-state rule during the late eighteenth-century onwards. He uses the lens of environmental history across regime changes and revolutions, to challenge official narratives and conventional historiographies that treat such historical junctures as radical ruptures with the past. With a background in political science and Middle Eastern studies, Cevat integrates theoretical approaches from multiple disciplines and applies them to the study of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and environment through the histories of understudied and marginalized peoples and places in the peripheries and borderlands. Cevat received his PhD from Princeton University's Department of Near Eastern Studies in 2021. In the winter 2023 semester, Cevat will teach a course on nations and nationalism at U-M.

There is robust literature on minority populations as well as ethnic conflict and solidarities in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. What are the new and original findings that your work contributes to the field?

The literature on minority populations in the late Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey is indeed robust and growing. One can even argue that the term "minority" emerged from the historical developments in this part of the world, home to many ethnic and religious communities that have lived together for centuries and developed varying forms of symbiotic ecosystems. Much of that culture of coexistence has been destroyed and transformed over the last two hundred years, and the developments around World War I played a fundamental role in this transformation. My specific findings suggest that even in the midst of the war, violence, and genocide, there remained places where ethnic and religious communities continued to support one another, defying the divide-and-rule



Cevat Dargin

policies imposed by centralized state administrations. More broadly, my research challenges the approach to ethnic and religious communities as monolithic entities with primordial and unchanging animosities towards each other. Instead, I offer a local, regional, and global contextualization of the changing dynamics regarding minority populations in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey and approach "minority" as a dynamic concept similar to the way we approach nation, empire, tribe, and religion.

The concept of the minority has conventionally been applied to non-Muslim communities in this part of the world, which leaves large numbers of ethnic and confessional groups outside the scope of the literature on minorities. Hence, peoples such as Alevis, Kurds, Berbers, Hazara, and Baluchis, among others, have been largely deprived of political power, and they remain essentially outside a fair share in the scholarship on the region, both as subjects and objects of academic inquiry. As a result, our understanding of the Middle East and many of the issues associated with the region has remained limited and inaccurate.

My work makes two specific contributions to the literature on minority-identified groups. I show that such groups have a historical agency that could not, and should not, be reduced to an aberration in the nation-state-based modern world order. Long understood as the internal “others” within a nation-state framework, minoritized groups often enter the literature as a “problem” or “question” that challenges the assumed normalcy of the dominant, center-based, elite historical narratives. I reverse this perspective and offer a viewpoint based on the local, peripheral, minoritized, and marginalized positions of peoples and places. I demonstrate, for example, that contrary to the dominant narrative produced by the state elites and reproduced by historians over decades, there was no rebellion in Dersim, an Alevi Kurdish-majority region in Eastern Anatolia, in 1937–38. This seemingly simple yet profoundly important detail exposes the politics of historiography in multiple layers and brings about my second contribution through a series of questions to be answered: If there was no rebellion in Dersim, why then did the Turkish state carry out military operations that killed tens of thousands of people and displaced even bigger numbers of people? Why did the state elite produce the narrative of rebellion, and why did historians, both local and foreign, reproduce it? What historical background can help us to understand the process behind the Dersim events and their misrepresentation in academia? What roles did the Armenian, Kurdish, and Alevi questions and environmental factors played in this story? Finally, and more generally, how does understanding Dersim help us to understand the larger processes of transition from empire to nation-state and from tradition to modernity in Turkey, the wider Middle East, and beyond?

Given the persistence of the Kurdish and Armenian questions in today’s Turkey, how does your work on Dersim shed light on understanding this present juncture in Turkey and the wider Middle East?

Dersim was a hotly debated subject in the 2000s, following the re-emergence of all three of the Kurdish, Armenian, and Alevi questions in the public sphere of Turkey and in the academic debate about the Middle East since the 1990s. Indeed, Dersim has been at the center of all three of these debates. I sometimes think

of Dersim as the “Middle East” of the Middle East in the sense that it brings together multitudes of ethnic and religious questions, alongside environmental factors, which have been foundational in the making of modern Turkey and the wider Middle East. I would like to take a bold step and argue that focusing on historical developments in Dersim can shed as much light on our understanding of the modern Middle East as those in more academically and politically popular places, such as Palestine or the Persian Gulf. Through Dersim, one can study sectarian politics within Islam in one of its most complicated forms between the Ottoman and Persian Empires as well as Turkey and Iran, the two major actors in the premodern and modern history of the Middle East and the Islamic world. Through Dersim, one can understand the intra-Kurdish dynamics and the complexities of the Kurdish question within and beyond Turkey, including Iran, Iraq, Syria, and the relations of these countries with third parties. Through Dersim, one can delve deep into multiple aspects of the Armenian question, which was, and in many ways still is, at the center of the region’s political and economic developments. Lastly, through Dersim, one can also contribute to the environmental history of the Middle East, a long overdue field essential for a better understanding of different forms of ecosystems in the past and their transformations in the global process of modernization. In sum, as local historians and filmmakers Nezahat Gündoğan and Kazım Gündoğan put it, Dersim is “the black-box of the [Turkish] Republican state.” We can indeed think of Dersim as the black-box of the wider Middle East, too.

Tell us about the project(s) you are currently working on.

I am currently working on three publication projects: a book chapter about the Koçan tribe in Dersim, a journal article about the historical background of the Dersim events of 1937–38, and a book manuscript largely based on my dissertation. All three of these projects explore the historical developments in Dersim from the 1877–78 Russo-Turkish War to the Turkish state’s violent transformation of Dersim in 1937–38. With these projects, I hope to analyze the colonization of Dersim across the Hamidian, Young Turk, and Early

Republican political eras and through different units of analysis. My book manuscript, tentatively titled *Mountains and the Modern State*, brings together the Armenian, Kurdish, and Alevi questions with the environmental factors of Dersim. Popularly known as being “inside four mountains,” Dersim posed fundamental limits for the making of the modern state under the late Ottoman Empire and early Republic of Turkey. I argue that environmental factors played a major role in shaping intracommunal and intercommunal dynamics and in determining the challenges to the central administration’s regional colonization in both imperial and nation-state periods.

come to hills.” Dersim’s story confirms that observation, but it also shows that the modern state eventually did climb the hills, which marked a turning point in the long history of the relationship between civilizations and environment. All this contributes to our understanding of the larger trends in the Middle East during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within the transregional and global contexts of colonialism, modernization, and the spread of nationalism, as well as concepts such as empire, religion, nation-state, tribe, and violence from the perspective of the people and places in the peripheries and borderlands.

Kizilbash Kurds of Dersim via Dersim Oral History Project



James Wolfe

2022-23 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow

Dr. James (Jimmy) Wolfe is a historian of Roman institutions and the Roman imperial administration in the late antique and early medieval Middle East. His research examines the evolution of the late Roman state in this period of transformations by re-reading evidence from early Christian communities in the eastern Mediterranean using non-traditional frameworks. He studies dialectics of cultural exchange in northern Mesopotamia, experiences of and impact of empire in Armenian- and Syriac-speaking communities, and the replication of Roman imperial discourses in Greek, Syriac, and Armenian historiography. James received his PhD in Greek and Latin from the Department of Classics



James Wolfe

at Ohio State University in December 2020. He has held appointments as a lecturer in the Department of Classics at Ohio State University and as a postdoctoral research fellow in Hellenic Studies at Princeton University. In the winter 2023 semester, he will teach “On the Edges of the Roman Empire: Armenians and Syrians in the Medieval Middle East” at U-M.

You are trained as a historian of the ancient period: Can you tell us a bit about the state of Armenian studies in that particular period? What are the new and original findings that your work contributes to the field?

I am a classicist by training, even though I work on questions of race, citizenship, and belonging in the empires of the late antique and early medieval Middle East, which has traditionally not been a part of the classics. Now, I consider myself to be more of an ancient historian or a historian of the late antique and early medieval Middle East (from roughly the first century through the eighth or ninth centuries, or about 0 - 850 CE). My research and my interest in Armenian- and Syriac-speakers in the premodern Mediterranean has led me away from the field of classics and into the fields of Late Antiquity, Syriac studies, Near Eastern studies, and ultimately Armenian studies.

Very few scholars today work at the intersection of Armenian and Syriac studies as I do, and so my research sits at the crossroads of several academic disciplines. I see myself at the intersection of Armenian studies, Syriac studies, classics, Late Antiquity, ancient history, Byzantine studies, and Near Eastern studies. I rely on collaboration with my colleagues across several academic departments and attempt to bridge historical gaps in order to investigate how Armenian- and Syriac-speakers experienced the impact of empire in the late antique and early medieval Middle East and how they navigated the series of political, social, legal, and religious transformations that reshaped the eastern Mediterranean world at the end of antiquity and the beginning of the Middle Ages. I am interested in these questions about the transformation of the Mediterranean world, and particularly in evidence from Armenian- and Syriac-speaking communities because

because I believe that asking these questions encourages us to come to a better understanding not only of what it meant to be a subject of empire at this time, but also of the shape of imperialism and its impact on provincial communities and minoritized populations in the premodern Mediterranean as a whole.

Tell us about the project(s) you are currently working on.

During my time as a postdoctoral fellow at Princeton, I began working on my current book project, *Imperial Syriac and the Institutions of Rome in Syriac Literature*, and the construction of an online digital glossary of *Syriac Terms for Roman Institutions* (STRI, for short). The project as a whole seeks to develop new frameworks for historians of the late antique and early medieval Mediterranean that will allow us to re-read Syriac and Armenian evidence for the impact of empire on provincial communities and linguistic minorities in the late antique and early medieval Middle East. Right now, I am working on a chapter of the book that compares Armenian and Syriac conceptions of citizenship, empire, and sovereignty in order to uncover their experiences as subjects of the late Roman empire and under Islam.

One of the challenges in reading Syriac literature as evidence for Syriac conceptions of empire and the experiences of empire in Syriac-speaking communities is that the terminology for empire, the emperor, and sovereignty, in general, is remarkably stable throughout the Syriac-speaking world, both diachronically and synchronically. There are few if any differences between the terminology a Syriac author like Bardaisan uses (who was writing ca. 200 CE) and the terminology found in a set of Syriac inscriptions from eastern Turkey from the thirteenth century, over a millennium later! The same cannot be said for Armenian literature. Armenian texts reflect a series of changes in the terminology for empire, the emperor, and sovereignty that we find in Greek and Latin literature over the same period of about 1000 years. This means that the stability of the terminology in Syriac obscures not only important historical developments in the political landscape of the late antique and medieval Middle East, but also the important interventions Syriac-speakers made into the discussions about what it meant to be Christian during this period of

political, social, and religious turmoil. By comparing Syriac and Armenian evidence, I am able to uncover the hidden meanings behind these Syriac texts and, at the same time, arrive at a fuller understanding of the intersection of Syriac and Armenian literature in this period.

What do you hope to accomplish during your postdoctoral year?

In addition to completing my current book project (Imperial Syriac and the Institutions of Rome in Syriac Literature) and continuing the expansion of STRI to include Armenian terminology, I will investigate questions of genre and Hellenism that still lay at the center of scholarship on my favorite piece of classical Armenian literature - the anonymous *Epic Histories* (known in Armenian as the *Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'*) once attributed to P'awstos Buzand. This fascinating text has perplexed scholars for well over a century, and there are still questions that remain about the identity of its anonymous author, its date of composition, and if it was even written originally in Armenian!

During my time at the Center for Armenian Studies, I will continue to build on my work on the literary ecosystems that lay behind the composition of the *Epic Histories* that I first laid out in my forthcoming article (JECS 31.1). In this article, I identify a previously-undiscovered reference to Plutarch's *Life of Demosthenes* in the third book of the *Epic Histories*. Because scholars have generally agreed that the *Epic Histories* is the only work of Classical Armenian historiography that is not a hybrid text, combining written and oral narrative traditions from "east and west," my discovery invites a new re-reading of the text that situates it in the literary ecosystems of the late antique eastern Mediterranean world, where Greek, Latin, Syriac, Armenian, and Persian literary traditions came together.

I am excited to begin expanding my research on the *Epic Histories* at the University of Michigan and to start working on my second book project, provisionally titled *Fables and Fiction in Classical Armenian Historiography: A Reconsideration of the Literary Ecosystem of the Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk'*. This project will investigate the questions of genre and literary composition that

still lay at the center of scholarship on the *Epic Histories*, as well as questions about the literary ecosystem of its anonymous author, including, but not limited to, defining what exactly was late antique Hellenism and how Syriac gnomic literature may have served as a mediator for the particular form of Hellenism found in the *Epic Histories*.

"The Echmiadzin Gospels, with its ivory frontispiece (ca. 6th century)" credit Wikimedia Commons



A YEAR OF ARMENIAN STUDIES

FALL 2022/WINTER 2023

OCT

6

The Horrors of Adana: Revolution and Violence in the Early Twentieth Century

Bedross Der Matossian

Vice-Chair, Associate Professor of Modern Middle East History & Hymen Rosenberg Professor in Judaic Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

It is not every day nor every year that we see a seminal work being published. However, the new book by the former president of the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS), Bedross Der Matossian is just that. Historians of the Ottoman Empire as well as those interested in the Armenian Genocide have long been waiting for a comprehensive and deeply archival-based monograph on the massacres that shook the province of Adana, located in the southern Anatolian region of modern-day Turkey in 1909. The central Ottoman government failed to prosecute the main culprits, a miscarriage of justice that would have repercussions for years to come. Despite the significance of these events and the extent of violence and destruction, killing more than 20,000 Armenians and 2,000 Muslims, the Adana Massacres are often left out of historical narratives. Der Matossian's *The Horrors of Adana* offers one of the first close examinations of these events, analyzing sociopolitical and economic transformations that culminated in a cataclysm of violence. The book provides voice and agency to all involved in the massacres—perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. Drawing on primary sources in a dozen languages, he develops an interdisciplinary approach

to understanding the rumors and emotions, public spheres, and humanitarian interventions that together informed this complex event. Ultimately, through consideration of the Adana Massacres in micro-historical detail, this book offers an important macrocosmic understanding of ethnic violence, illuminating how and why ordinary people can become perpetrators.

Bedross Der Matossian is the Vice-Chair, Associate Professor of Modern Middle East History, and Hymen Rosenberg Professor in Judaic studies at the Department of History at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Born and raised in East Jerusalem, he is a graduate of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He completed his PhD in Middle East History at Columbia University in 2008. He has taught at MIT and the University of Chicago. He is the editor of the series *Armenians in the Modern and Early Modern World* (I.B.Tauris and Bloomsbury Press). He is the author, editor, and co-editor of multiple books including the award-winning book *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2014). He is the president of the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS).

Bedross Der Matossian presenting at Michigan



NOV

3-4

Modern State and “Internal” Colonialism: Peoples, Places, and Power across Empire and Nation-State

Fall 2022 Workshop

In parallel to the process of external colonization around the world, modern state makers simultaneously conquered and colonized people and places within their territorial boundaries by rendering them legible through knowledge production and manageable through force, coercion, intimidation, and, at times, reward. Mountains, deserts, and valleys that have sustained ecosystems of livelihood beyond the control of, and often despite, central administrations became the last bastions of coexistence challenging the expansion of the modern state. Scholars such as Harold Wolpe, Rivera Cusicanqui, Robert Blauner, Michael Hechter, James Scott, and Uğur Ümit Üngör, among others, have applied the theory of internal colonialism to state-making processes in places as far and wide as, respectively, South Africa, Latin America, North/Black America, England, Southeast Asia, and Turkey. Global in scale yet provincial in disguise, such wide-ranging applicability shows that internal colonialism has been as widespread and crucial as external colonization, i.e., colonialism par excellence, in the making of the modern world. This workshop brings together scholars whose works challenge disciplinary boundaries and existing periodizations, and engage creatively with underrepresented themes

and groups in different parts of the world. The main objective is to explore different approaches to intercommunal relations and environmental circumstances before, during, and after the absorption of nonstate people and places into a centrally administered modern state. By employing approaches outside state-society, center-periphery, and sovereign-subject dichotomies in conversation with one another, we hope to qualify the metanarratives of collective communal violence that treat ethnic and religious communities as hostile and monolithic entities. The workshop hopes to shed light on the role of the modern state in transforming inter-communal relations and in shaping collective memories. To these ends, the first panel discusses narratives of cohabitation and state evasion in the imperial and post-imperial settings. The second panel discusses the transformation of ecosystems of coexistence outside direct state control and the ways in which such pasts are remembered. The roundtable brings together both sets of panelists to discuss internal colonialism as a conceptual framework for exploring the processes of modern state-making and its role in transforming people and places, both in history and memory.

Armenians Constructing a Raft of Inflated Sheepskins on the Banks of the Euphrates River. Photo by Ellsworth Huntington



Map of Turkey Divided Illustrating the Agreements of 1916 in Regard to Asia Minor



What does war do to our ability to communicate with one another and “the other?” Karén Karslyan’s 2016 book, «Ատերազմա» տպագրային ֆիլմ [Aterazma: Typographic Film], uses the prism of the 2016 4-Day War between Armenia and Azerbaijan to explore this relationship between war and language. Utilizing constrained writing, interactive components, as well as a combination of various media, Aterazma emphasizes the limits war places on language and the ability to think one’s way out of violence, yet offers a path towards dialogue.

Four years on from Aterazma, Armenia and Azerbaijan have seen another war, this one far more deadly and causing significant changes to the geopolitical realities on the ground, to say nothing of the ongoing suffering borne by servicemen and their families.

In this presentation—part-talk and part-reading—Karén will perform his 2016 work, contextualizing and re-evaluating it in the aftermath of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. He will draw on his own experience of the war, written as part of his latest poetry collection «Լեզվի ծայրին» [Lezvi Tsayrin (On the Tip of the Tongue)], as well as anthropological studies of post-war trauma. Karslyan will also engage the audience in an interactive creative writing experiment based on some of the techniques implemented in the book, allowing the audience to create alternative versions of an existing chapter.

Karén Karslyan is a poet, novelist, visual artist, and translator. Born and raised in Armenia, he moved to the United States in 2005. He earned a PhD in English from Yerevan State Linguistic University, where his dissertation centered around a comparative intertextual reading of Lawrence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* and James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*. Karslyan writes and translates between Armenian, English, and Russian. His literary work often pushes boundaries,



Karén Karslyan

and his most recent Armenian-language publications include the play “The Regime is in Panic” (Actual Art, 2019) and *Aterazma: Typographic Film* (Inknagir, 2016), a commentary on war, interethnic hatred, and the ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Both texts employ the technique of constrained writing and combine traditional writing with visual media and performance. Karslyan’s other publications include «Լեզվի ծայրին» [Lezvi Tsayrin (On the Tip of the Tongue)], a recently published poetry collection from Granish press in Armenia (an excerpt of which was recognized as Granish’s best poetry of 2021), as well as *Doomed to Spell* (Inknagir, 2010), *X Frames/Sec* (Bnagir, 2003), and his 2015 translation of Kathy Acker’s *Lust* (Inknagir). His poems have appeared in a number of anthologies in English, Spanish, French, Serbian, Georgian, and Greek translation. Karslyan is the chairman of the Peace Committee of PEN Armenia and was recognized as writer of the year by Armenian Public TV in 2003.

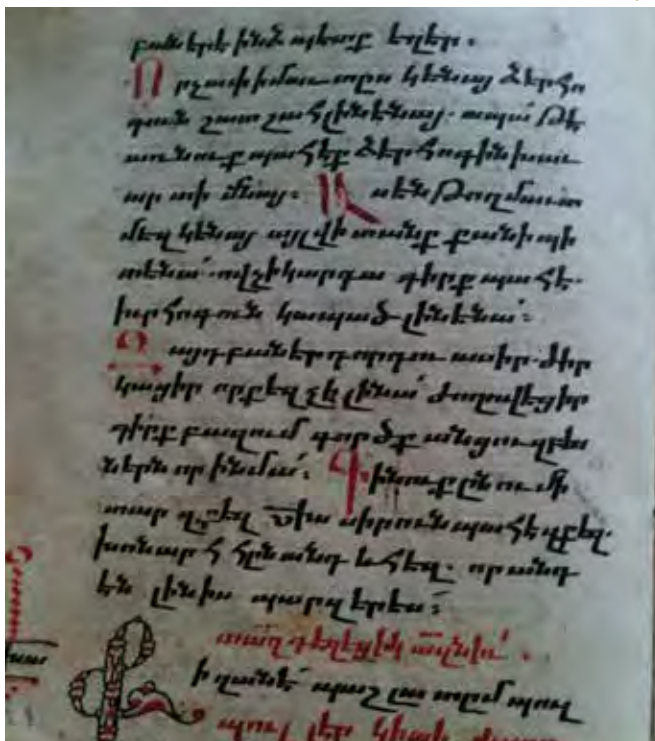
Armeno-Turkish and the Space of Language in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Worlds

Rachel Goshgarian

Associate Professor of History, Lafayette College

Armenians consistently composed works in Turkish (with Armenian letters), from the thirteenth through the twentieth centuries. Most historians have had a tendency to shy away from using Armeno-Turkish as a means of getting at myriad aspects of both pre-Ottoman Anatolian and Ottoman pasts. In fact, aside from a few unique examples, Armeno-Turkish texts have almost uniquely been used by historians when considering aspects of Armenian history, literature, or identity, rather than as a tool for looking at realities present inside an overarching Turkish language space, or the Ottoman Empire. In reflecting upon the volume of texts composed in Armeno-Turkish from the late medieval through the modern periods, one can't help but understand that many Armenians—whether monolingual, bilingual or multilingual—were engaged with oral and written Turkish linguistic and literary cultures. And that they participated in the shared space of the Turkish lyric throughout—and before and beyond—the Ottoman Empire.

Medieval Armenian manuscript



Rachel Goshgarian is Associate Professor of History at Lafayette College. She is a social historian who is interested in the circulation of ideas, patterns of social organization and the communication of cultural ideals. She works with primary sources composed in Armenian, Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Armeno-Turkish, and her academic work is also deeply informed by interrogations and interpretations of material culture. Her first monograph, *The City in Late Medieval Anatolia: Inter-faith Interactions and Urbanism in the Middle East*, is forthcoming with I.B. Tauris in 2022. Goshgarian has also co-edited *Architecture and Landscape in Medieval Anatolia, 1100-1500* with Patricia Blessing (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017) and co-authored *Kendi Kendine Ermenice (or, Teach Yourself Armenian)* with Şükrü Ilıçak (Istanbul: Armenian Patriarchate, 2006). She is a member of the Middle East Studies Association, the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association. She is also a board member of the Society for Armenian Studies. She currently serves as the Vice President of the Society for Armenian Studies.

Rachel Goshgarian



FEB

23-24

Negotiating “Ambiguous Race”: Hierarchies of Citizenship and Belonging in the Empires of the Premodern Mediterranean

Winter 2023 Workshop

In the second book of the *Annals*, the Roman historian Tacitus describes the Armenians as an *ambigua gens* - an “ambiguous race.” According to Tacitus, not only did Armenia defy definition, but its volatile political history between Rome and Persia reflected the inherent ambiguity of the Armenian gens. Neither Roman nor Persian, Greek nor barbarian, Armenia simply did not fit into one of the established hierarchies the Romans used to order their world and to situate their subjects within the existing hierarchies of their empire.

By drawing the experiences of Armenians into dialogue with other minoritized populations in the Roman empire and under Islam, this workshop explores how hierarchies of citizenship, race, and belonging functioned as technologies of imperial rule across a variety of case studies around the premodern Mediterranean. In particular, it seeks to contribute to critical conversations on the study of race in the ancient, late ancient, and medieval Mediterranean, thereby shedding light on the ways in which imperial subjects fashioned their individual and communal subjectivities both diachronically and synchronically.

How, then, might the “ambiguity” of the Armenian *ambigua gens* illuminate not only the experiences of empire, but also the ontology of empires themselves in the premodern Mediterranean? How did imperial hierarchies of citizenship and belonging shape daily life at the center and on the periphery? How did imperial subjects engage with, manipulate, or even reject these imperial hierarchies in order to navigate their place in their local and supra-local imperial contexts? This workshop brings together scholars from multiple academic disciplines to reconsider the dynamics of imperialism and to propose new historical paradigms to decenter, decolonize, and deconstruct the historiography of empires in the premodern Mediterranean.



Two secular rulers in a miniature depicting Pentecost. 13th century Syriac manuscript housed in the Church of the 40 Martyrs in Mardin, Turkey.

Tradition and innovation in Armenian Music: A Lecture/Performance with The Naghash Ensemble

2023 Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Annual Distinguished Lecture

For the 2023 Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Annual Distinguished Lecture, the Center for Armenian Studies is collaborating with the Center for World Performance Studies to bring the fabulous and internationally renowned Naghash Ensemble to Michigan. The Naghash ensemble “combines the earthy spirituality of Armenian folk song, new classical music, and contemporary post-minimalism with the energy of rock and jazz. Three brilliant female vocalists and some of Armenia’s finest instrumentalists on duduk, oud, dhol, and piano play captivating new music based on sacred texts by the medieval Armenian mystic poet and priest, Mkrtych Naghash.” The idea for The Naghash Ensemble arose when composer and pianist John Hodian heard Hasmik Baghdasaryan singing medieval Armenian spiritual music in an ancient pagan temple outside of Yerevan, Armenia.

The unique acoustics of the ancient structure added to the magic of her voice, John Hodian writes, haunting him for days. Determined to capture the moment and extend the magic beyond that performance, Hodian with a sound in mind searched for many years to find the text that would be the foundation of a new musical journey. Combing through the libraries of Yerevan, New York, and Berlin, Hodian came across the work of the medieval Armenian poet Mkrtych Naghash. “The words leaped off the page and into my soul” Hodian writes. This was exactly the text that he was searching for. Hodian began setting the poem of Mkrtych Naghash to music and eventually found the right group of talented musicians to perform what he had envisioned the day he heard Baghdasaryan’s voice floating through the ancient space enchanting the present.

Naghash Ensemble



A YEAR IN REVIEW

Armenian Diaspora Survey: A Transnational Initiative to Study Diasporic Armenian Experiences in the 21st Century

Dr. Vahe Sahakyan

Michigan Armenian Diaspora Survey Manager, UM-Dearborn Armenian Research Center

Switching between Armenian and English, one of the in-depth interview participants of the 2019 Armenian Diaspora Survey in Lebanon, explained her complicated feeling of belonging:

“Ես կը զգամ լիբանանցի, այո, simply որովհետև հոս մեծցեր եմ, շրջանակս հոս է: Այդ հայերէն չեմ որ լիբանանցի չեմ: ...Բայց միշտ ամէնուն որ ինքզինքս կը ներկայացնեմ, I am Lebanese-Armenian կ'ըսեմ: But Armenian is my ethnic origin... Lebanon is definitely home. To me, it is always home. ... Հայաստան... confusing զգացում մըն է:”

“I feel like a Lebanese, yes, simply, because I grew up here, my circle is here, I am not like those Armenians who are not Lebanese. ... When I introduce myself to everyone, I tell I am Lebanese-Armenian. But Armenian is my ethnic origin. ... Lebanon is definitely, home. To me, it is always home.... Hayastan... it's a confusing feeling.”

In many discourses on Armenian diaspora notions of “home”, “homeland”, “identity”, and “belonging” are often presented as unchanging and given realities, inherently centered on the homeland, Armenia, as the ultimate point of reference, orientation and eventual return. Overriding and silencing alternative voices, these discourses often reduce the enormous diversities of the Armenian diaspora into more conventional notions of national belonging, ethnic identity and homeland-diaspora connection and relations. Diaspora in such discourses is often treated as a group, either mobilized or capable of mobilizing, to act in unison for the benefit of the homeland across the boundaries of various nation states, for raising awareness about the Armenian Genocide in various countries, or for some other Armenian cause.

Voices like the one quoted above, coming from Lebanon – the most Armenian, one may argue, among all diasporic communities – alongside many others, complicate and challenge the conventional perceptions of origin and belonging, purity of identities, and lend themselves well to thinking with and through the complexities of diaspora, whether in academic studies, policy making, or in journalistic and public discourses.

The Armenian Diaspora Survey (ADS) is a research project initiated and funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and carried out under the auspices of the Armenian Institute in London. The purpose of the study is to fill the “gap in the research and analysis” of the Armenian diaspora and to meet the need for “evidence-based understanding of Armenians in dispersion around the world,” explains Razmik Panossian, the director of the Armenian Communities Department of the Foundation (*Armenian Diaspora Opinion: Armenian Diaspora Survey, Pilot Project 2018*, Hratch Tchilingirian, ed., London: Armenian Institute, 2019, p. 5).

Led by an international team of academics, researchers and experts, ADS was launched in 2018 as a Pilot Project in Boston, Pasadena, Marseille and Cairo. The Armenian Diaspora Survey was subsequently conducted in Argentina, Lebanon, Romania and Montreal in 2019, in Belgium, Britain, Paris, and Rostov-on-Don in Russia in 2021. Most recently, the last round of the survey



U-M senior and ASCA member Nayiri Sagherian, at the ADS table at St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church in Dearborn, May 22, 2022.

was launched in North America (May-July 2022), with a focus on Ontario, Canada, Los Angeles, New York/New Jersey, and Michigan. The UM-Dearborn Armenian Research Center was the local partner of ADS in Michigan. The network of the ADS teams included advisory committees and research groups in each of these locations, mobilizing a large group of scholars, researchers, students, volunteers, community

leaders, and activists around the common purpose of evidence-based understanding of the Armenian diaspora. The results of the 2018 pilot project and the 2019 surveys have already been published and are available for a free download on the ADS website at armeniandiasporasurvey.com. Once completed, the reports of the 2021 and 2022 surveys will be available on the same website.



Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian, the director of ADS presenting in front of Michigan-Armenian audience at St. John Armenian Apostolic Church, March 2022.

Armenian Studies and The World History & Literature Initiative (WHaLI)

The World History & Literature Initiative (WHaLI) is a unique collaboration between the University of Michigan International Institute's Title VI National Resource Centers and the School of Education designed to deepen teachers' understanding of world history, literature, and the ways in which their students learn new historical ideas. These materials can be used to help students understand the connections between micro-level "closeup" processes, "bigger picture" world-historical processes, and "even bigger picture" global and cross-temporal processes. By nesting historical study in this manner, teachers can instill methods of historical thinking that permit students to "see" global patterns and switch scales from the global to the particular.

Where does Armenian Studies fit in? Engaging in this year's theme, "Democracy in World History & Literature," the Center for Armenian Studies co-sponsored a Teaching Program Fellowship for an exceptional in-service teacher consultant, Amy Perkins. Amy served on the design team to devise impactful learning experiences for the participating teachers and to research and design teaching resources.

Joining a delegation of 15 teachers, Amy traveled to Armenia this past summer to engage in a comparative study of genocide. Hosted by The Genocide Education Project, Perkins and her cohort spent 10 days in Yerevan, attending lectures prepared by distinguished

professors and traveling to sites central to Armenian history and culture.

“Each morning, we engaged in academic discussions of historical evidence and theories associated with the Armenian Genocide,” Perkins recounts. As the teachers examined the stages of genocide implemented by the Ottoman Empire amidst the backdrop of a world war, they also investigated the motives behind Turkey’s persistent denial of the Armenian Genocide. Their intensive study revealed as much about the historical context of the early 20th century as it did about the geopolitical landscape of the present.

Forging a connection between Turkey’s ongoing denial of the Armenian Genocide and recent opposition to the teaching of Critical Race Theory within the United States, Perkins concludes, “A nation’s unwillingness to confront its brutal past—be it genocide, slavery, or the like—causes these historical wounds to fester. No nation can effectively extricate itself from the shackles of past wrongs if it is unwilling to confront those wrongs thoughtfully, critically, and honestly.” Perkins and her colleagues spent their afternoons

touring churches, battle sites, museums, local markets, and memorials. Each location reflected the resilience of Armenian culture and identity. Impromptu meetings with Rwanda’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Academy Award-winning director Terry George further enriched participants’ understanding of genocide. Perkins explains, “The perpetrators of genocide are not madmen. Rather, they are ordinary citizens who, through the process of cultural and social indoctrination, rationalization, and dehumanization of the ‘other,’ devolve into mass murderers. This disturbing reality underscores the importance of examining the contexts in which genocides occur. If we can identify clear patterns, we are better positioned to prevent future genocides through education.”

Perkins plans to share her insights and research with fellow Social Studies educators at the National Council for the Social Studies annual conference in Philadelphia this December. She remains grateful to The Genocide Education Project for the opportunity to study in Armenia and to the University of Michigan for enriching her understanding of the Middle East through the MENA-SEA Teacher Program.

Amy Perkins and Cohort in Armenia



Performing the Archive: A Conversation on Art, Engagement, and Armenianness

2023 Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Annual Distinguished Lecture

Arsinée Khanjian

Actress, performer, producer, and civil rights activist

Marie-Aude Baronian

Associate Professor, University of Amsterdam

Germany does not loom large when we think of the Armenian Diaspora. Still, in 2015, a tremendous effort was made by award-winning Artistic Director of the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin, Shermin Langhoff to commemorate the centenary of the Armenian Genocide. The forty-day artistic program titled “It Snows In April” included production of Franz Werfel’s 40 Days of Musa Dagh, a musical theater piece about Komitas, and countless other shows, readings, exhibitions, and installations. Arsinée Khanjian had developed a performance especially for the program titled “Auction of Soul: Performing Memory.” Written and directed by Khanjian, acted by herself and Elmira Bahrami, Taner Şahintürk, and Jesse Jonas Kracht, it is based on and dedicated to the life of Armeniengenocide survivor and early American cinema actress Aurora Mardiganian (1901–1994). *Auction of Souls* is a multi-layered attempt to cope with the afterlife of a catastrophe. A catastrophe that has been denied and the specter of which haunts across space and time. A catastrophe that resides in fragments defies

temporalities and presents an archive of images, scenes, or passages, from Aurora’s 1918 book *Ravished Armenia*, extracts from an original film script, stills from the silent Hollywood film *Ravished Armenia*, and parts of a 4-hour long interview that the Zoryan Institute carried out with Mardiganian in the 1980s. Copies of the film and archival materials had disappeared just like Aurora, who died penniless and forgotten in Los Angeles at 92 years old. But still, it was the remaining traces and fragments that would allow Khanjian to expose the complexity of survival, memory, and the impossibilities of history. The powerful performance of *Auction of Souls: Performing Memory* was recorded and for the first time screened in the US by the Center of Armenian Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Following the screening, Arsinée Khanjian, in conversation with visual theorist and Film Studies expert Marie-Aude Baronian, discussed the genesis of *Auction of Soul: Performing Memory* and its various interpretative layers. Baronian and her colleague Erica



Biolchini prior to this public lecture had initiated a conversation with Khanjian in 2020, that led to a publication in the Journal for Armenian Studies' recent special issue on performance titled: "Performance, Memory, and the Archive: A Conversation with Arsine Khanjian." The performance Khanjian notes, while of course seeking to give Aurora a voice, "is a creation, a construct, an effort to give voice to and revive, through the telling of Aurora's story, every and all the stories which have been maligned by the indifference of history." As such woven together and performed with great conviction, *Auction of Souls*, Marie Baronian writes "touches upon wider current social, ethical, and geopolitical issues such as other massive and violent displacements, persecutions, civil wars, and oppressive regimes that are still taking

place and that we are witnessing today." Straddling memory, history, and theatric performance, the conversation, ultimately, stressed the necessity of elaborating and including artistic practices in Armenian studies.

The Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Annual Distinguished Lectureship was established by the family of the late Dr. Berj Haidostian, a prominent and devoted physician in Michigan. The annual lecturer is selected jointly by the Armenian studies faculty and the Haidostian family from among internationally recognized experts on Armenia and Armenians. The Haidostian family has a long and continuing relationship with the university and with the Center for Armenian Studies.





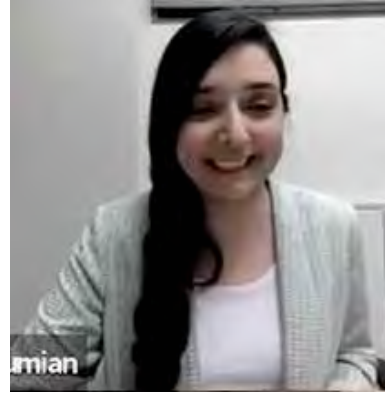
Dispossession and Its Legacies: Comparisons, Intersections, and Connections

A Workshop Organized by Our Manoogian Post-Doctoral Fellows

On February 10-11, 2022, the Center for Armenian Studies hosted a virtual workshop called “Dispossession and Its Legacies: Comparisons, Intersections, and Connections.” Organized by the two 2021-22 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellows, Helen Makhdoumian and Matthew Ghazarian, it aimed to create a forum to discuss historical and literary representations of dispossession, its violence, and its persisting legacies in the Ottoman East and its diasporas of Armenians, Alevis, Assyrians, Kurds, and others. The workshop aimed to bring Ottoman Studies and Armenian Studies into conversation with fields like settler colonial studies, critical Indigenous studies, and global histories of colonialism and capitalism. Invoking dispossession as a point of comparison and the framework for its panels, the workshop offered a forum for recent work in Armenian Studies and Ottoman Studies, which have begun to explore chains of displacement and dispossession under conditions of what some have called internal colonization. The workshop also facilitated participant's reflection on

how their projects might inform, learn from, and complicate understandings of territorial removal, the settler/native binary, and Indigenous transnationalisms. By anchoring the workshop in Armenian Studies and Ottoman Studies while simultaneously working in this mode of interdisciplinary meaning-making, the workshop sought to initiate a praxis of bringing together analyses of a broader set of geographies, including the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas.

After opening remarks by Melanie Tanielian (U-M), introductions by Matthew Ghazarian (U-M), the workshop opened with two keynote addresses, one by Robert Nichols (University of Minnesota), followed by Dirk Moses (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill). Nichols’s lecture “Dispossession in Global Comparative Context” examined the historical formations of the concept of dispossession and how the creation of property relations often came hand-in-hand with mass expropriation and exploitation. In “Settlers and Security: Structures and Subjectivity



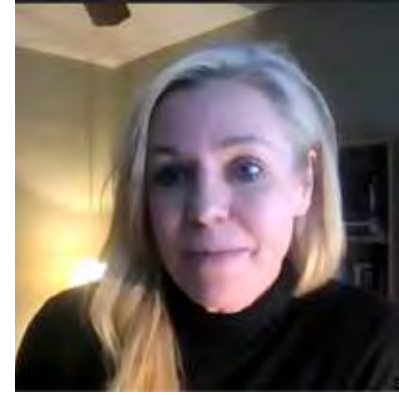
in State Formation” Moses then sketched some limits, problems, and dilemmas in the ways political actors deploy dispossession, and how these uses of the concept pose important questions for theorists of identity, settler-colonialism, and nationalism.

The second day of the workshop consisted of two panels and a roundtable discussion. The first panel, “Displacement and Dispossession in the Late Ottoman Empire,” explored the arrivals of Muslim refugees into Ottoman domains, the connected dispossessions of the Hamidian Massacres and Armenian Genocide, shifting property regimes in the Ottoman Mashriq, and famine and dispossession in the Ottoman East. Nora Barakat (Stanford University) presented “Building an Ottoman National Economy: Land, Religious Identity, and Capital Expansion in the Syrian Interior, 1870-1915,” in which she discussed how late Ottoman economic policies simultaneously created the conditions for an open land market in the Syrian interior by dispossessing Bedouin communities, while at the same time used regulatory mechanisms to limit access to that market. The second paper by Ella Fratantuono (University of North Carolina at Charlotte), “Failing Upward: Critique, Contestation, and State Consolidation in Ottoman Immigrant Settlement,” examined the challenges and failed plans

of Ottoman refugee settlement policies, as well as how those failures were actually productive of increasing state power. Matthew Ghazarian (U-M), in the third paper, examined land collateralization in the context of the 1887-94 Anatolian famines, which facilitated in the Ottoman East what Robert Nichols refers to as the “making and taking” of property.

The second panel, “Memory, Narrative, and Aesthetic Form,” took up representations of dispossession and its legacies, with a focus on film, literature, and testimony. Under the title “How Difficult Pasts Complicate the Present: Comparative Analysis of the 1915 Armenian Genocide and 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda” Jacob Caponi and Fatma Müge Göçek made the case for the productive outcomes of comparative analysis through a broader argument on the contentious process of conceptualizing genocide and on ensuing memory-making practices concerning collective violence. In “If These Bones Could Speak: The Genesis of Armenian Pilgrimage to Dayr al-Zur,” Elyse Semerdjian (Whitman College) applied Alison Landsberg’s “prosthetic memory” to interpret the significance of references to bones and human remains in Armenian pilgrimage narratives about the killing fields in the Syrian Desert, materials which range from memoirs, journals, poems, photo essays,

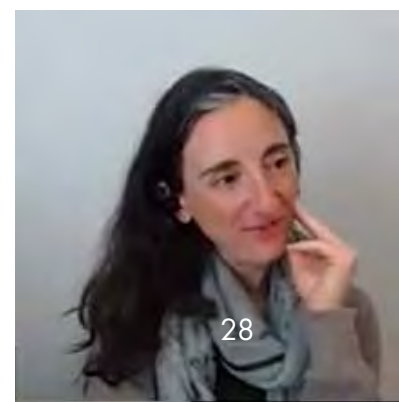




to oral interviews. Claire Baytaş’s (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) paper, “Patterns of Marginalization in Yeşim Ustaoglu’s *Waiting for the Clouds*,” discussed cinematic techniques used to portray the state surveillance experienced by a Greek Orthodox woman in the film’s present of 1975 Turkey, her Pontic Greek community having been deported from the Black Sea region in 1916. The final paper by Helen Makhdoumian (U-M), “When the Study of ‘Settler Mnemonics’ Meets the Study of Literature,” built upon the scholarship of political scientist Kevin Bruyneel and addressed how to frame narratives in an Armenian American novel (Micheline Aharonian Marcom’s *Three Apples Fell from Heaven*) and an American Indian novel (Tommy Orange’s *There There*) conceptualize the intersecting practices of settler subjectivity, governmentality, and state memory work.

Davis), and Kabir Tambar (Stanford University) discussed the possibilities, tensions, and nuances of conceptualizing Indigeneity in the regions and histories they study. They also reflected on how the concept of Indigeneity factors into their work, and how Armenian and Ottoman Studies can meaningfully engage Indigenous and settler-colonial studies. The conversation centered on whether and how rubrics of Indigeneity from other contexts might shed light on the history and the presence of Armenians and other groups made into minorities in Turkey, and, in turn, how those minorities could contribute new understandings of Indigeneity.

The workshop concluded with a roundtable discussion, “Dispossession, Memory, and Indigeneity in Ottoman and Armenian Studies,” moderated by Hakem Al-Rustom (U-M), which brought together scholars of Armenian Studies, modern humanitarianism, and Alevis and other minorities in contemporary Turkey. Melissa Bilal (University of California, Los Angeles), Keith David Watenpaugh (University of California,



The Geography of Genocide: Mapping Refugee Movement at the End of World War I

Michelle Tusan

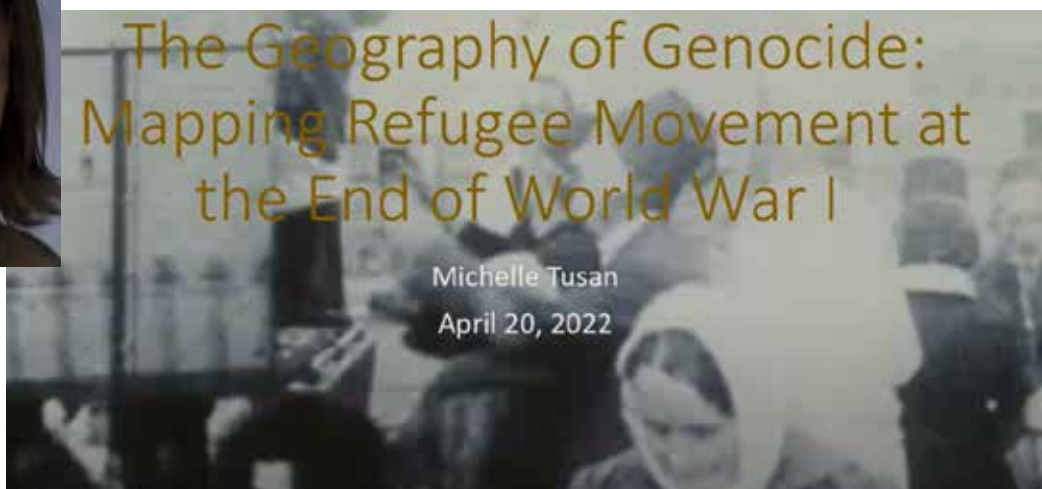
Professor of History, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Michelle Tusan's new work maps the Armenian Genocide refugee crisis to render visible the human geography of total war. For those stuck in the no man's land between war and peace in the Ottoman Empire, World War I did not end with the signing of the 1918 armistices or the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. Instead, Tusan argued it continued beyond the signing of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty and produced the world's largest refugee crisis to date while leaving a legacy of political instability that continues to plague the region. Deep maps – rendered using ARC- GIS technology and data from official documents, institutional records, and diaries of aid workers, refugees, and other non-combatants – reveal how refugee routes and war relief infrastructure reconfigured the landscape. The refugee experience of those fleeing genocide took form in the desert, the camp, and on the road during a protracted and seemingly unending war that had important consequences for minorities in the postwar Middle East. Michelle Tusan is Professor of History at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Her publications include "The British Empire and the

Armenian Genocide" (2017/2019), "Smyrna's Ashes: Humanitarianism, Genocide and the Birth of the Middle East" (2012), and articles in the *American Historical Review* and *Past and Present*. A forthcoming piece in the *Journal of Modern History*, "From Concentration Camp to Site of Refuge," traces the significance of the camp in the refugee experience during WWI. She is working on a book provisionally entitled, "The Last Treaty: The Middle Eastern Front and the End of the First World War" which rewrites the final years of the war as a story of humanitarian crisis and failed diplomacy.

Tusan's lecture drew a sizable online and in-person audience. The audience was intrigued by the great potential of Tusan's work. Not only was it seen as a great teaching tool, but also the potential for including additional archival materials in languages like Armenian, Turkish, Arabic, Russian was discussed. For a more detailed report of the lecture please see Harry Kezelian's report "Michelle Tusan Maps Armenian Genocide With Innovative Technology" in the *Mirror Spectator*.

Michelle Tusan



Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies

During the academic year of 2021–2022, the Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies (aka MWAS) organized five writing workshops for works-in-progress and one lecture. MWAS provides an institutional space for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows in Armenian studies and its adjacent fields to share their work and receive invaluable feedback from their colleagues. Additionally, MWAS is an important social space wherein scholars can connect through their research interests, an obvious necessity in our current time. Thanks to guidance and faculty advisor and center director Melanie Tanielian, co-hosts Sosi Lepejian and Kelly Hannavi organized several virtual meetings.

We kicked off our first meeting with Manoogian Post-Doctoral Fellow Matthew Ghazarian, who shared with us a chapter entitled, “Indeterminate Criminal” from his dissertation “Ghost Rations.” The chapter illustrated how state and society dynamics have changed overtime from a novel approach that considers both ecological and economic perspectives. Our next meeting featured a linguistic anthropology article co-authored by Emma Santelmann, PhD student in linguistics at the University of Michigan and Sean Nonnenmacher, Mellon Fellow in Linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh. Their innovative article “Loanword Ideology and Linguistic Purism in Post-Soviet Armenia” examines loanwords in contemporary Armenia, considering the complexities of the Eastern and Western dialects, diaspora influences, and nationalist anxieties. We ended the fall semester with Armen Abkarian, PhD Candidate in the history department, and a draft of his prospectus (or dissertation proposal) “The Crown of Togarmah: Adaptation and Amalgamation in Medieval Armenian Kingly Ideology.” Anchoring his work on questions of sovereignty and legitimacy in Cilician Armenia (12-14th c.), Armen proposed to examine representations of Cilician Armenian kingship and authority in medieval Armenian poetry for his dissertation.

In the Winter term, we welcomed our colleague Flora Ghazaryan, PhD Candidate in the history department of the Central European University, who presented

a chapter from her dissertation entitled “The Edge of Political Power: Informal Politics of Catholic Armenians in Early Nineteenth-Century Istanbul.” Her dissertation is a critical micro-history of a powerful Armenian Catholic family who managed the imperial mint of the Ottoman sultan. Our final workshop featured Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow Helen Makhdoumian, who shared her dissertation chapter “Nested Memory: The Intergenerational Transmission of Memory When The Past Has Not Yet Passed.” The chapter introduces the central term “nested memory” as Helen’s intervention into the fields of memory studies, genocide studies, and postcolonial literature. We also had the privilege of inviting George Kiraz, director of Gorgias Press, to discuss the connections between Syriac and Armenian communities during the late Ottoman Era. His lecture was titled, “Were the Suryani ever a Millet under the Ottomans?” He highlighted ecclesiastical, social, and political connections between the two communities, outlined the history of the Syriac Orthodox Church’s attempts to create its own millet in the Ottoman system, and presented several interesting examples of archived letters between clergy.

Overall, we had a successful MWAS run this academic year thanks to the support of the Center for Armenian Studies, Rackham Graduate School, and our dedicated faculty and students. The space that this workshop provides helps students craft works that are cutting-edge, innovative, and influential in the field of Armenian Studies and beyond.

Armenian Students' Cultural Association (ASCA)

The Armenian Students' Cultural Association (ASCA) was able to return to mostly in-person meetings and events this school year with the return of big events such as Hye Hop and the Armenian tailgate as well as the introduction of new events such as the "ArmenIn" networking event. Biweekly meetings were held with general members and included activities such as speed dating, a presentation on Armenian-related summer opportunities, pastoral visits from Father Ardash Bagdasarian and Lisa Mardigian of St. John Armenian Church in Southfield, a cider mill trip, ice skating at Yost Ice Arena, and a trip to a Michigan Women's Basketball game. Board members for the 2021-2022 school year were Gasia Oknayan (President), Melanie Sarafian (Vice President), Olivia Mouradian (Secretary), Talar Malkadjian (Treasurer), Kristen Bagdasarian (Education Chair), Ariana Nigoghosian (Hye Hop Chair), Maddy Kachikian (Marketing Chair), and Celene Philip (Networking Chair).

In an effort to bring together young Armenians from different universities as well as graduates, the "ArmenIn" networking initiative began as a set of virtual panel sessions in February 2021 and was continued in the form of an in-person mixer with co-

sponsors of the Detroit chapters of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America and AGBU Young Professionals as well as the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School. Over 60 attendees gathered to reunite with old friends and meet new connections to help students interested in certain fields find a potential mentor. The following day saw the return of the Armenian tailgate - an event attended by students, alumni, families, and even non-Armenians - everyone had a blast as showing our school spirit and dancing the morning away.

This year, ASCA brought back Hye Hop, ASCA's annual charity dance, to much excitement. The charity chosen to be the recipient of the proceeds of Hye Hop was SOAR, the Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief, the world's only charitable organization devoted exclusively to helping orphaned Armenian children. Hye Hop, which featured the Nigoshian band, activities, and a silent auction was held at the Michigan League in February and drew over 120 students, family members, and community members. Through Hye Hop and the support of our community, ASCA was able to donate \$5,000 to SOAR to be used toward families of fallen soldiers and those in Artsakh affected by the war.

Asca makes its mark on Ann Arbor



PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Michigan Alumni Lead the Way

Mentorship of graduate students has been the hallmark of our program and there is simply nothing better than seeing our students succeed in their chosen careers. We are immensely proud to report that four of our alumni are now occupying leadership positions at some of the most prestigious universities in the US.



Alison Vacca (PhD Near Eastern Studies, 2013), was recently appointed Gevork M. Avedissian Associate Professor of Armenian History and Civilization at Columbia University, after being recruited from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. Her monograph, *Non-Muslim Provinces under early Islam: Islamic Rule and Iranian Legitimacy in Armenia and Caucasian Albania*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2017 and received the 2018 prize from the Central Eurasian Studies Society.



Michael Pifer (PhD Near Eastern Studies, 2014) accepted a position as the Marie Manoogian Professor of Armenian Language and Literature at the University of Michigan's Department of Near Eastern Studies. He is the author of *Kindred Voices: A Literary History of Medieval Anatolia* (Yale University Press, 2021) and a coeditor of *An Armenian Mediterranean: Words and Worlds in Motion* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).



Richard Antaramian (PhD History, 2014), is Associate Professor of History at the University of Southern California. His first book, *Brokers of Faith, Brokers of Empire: Armenians and the Politics of Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, was published in 2020 by Stanford University Press. In it, Antaramian explains why the late Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic developed authoritarian state practices and, despite putative secularization, also became violently intolerant of non-Muslim communities.



Dzovinar Derderian (PhD, Middle East Studies, 2019), taught at the University of California, Irvine last year, and now is a visiting lecturer in Late Modern European history at the University of California, Berkeley, teaching courses on Armenian history and on marriage in the Middle East.

New Leaders in Training

Arakel Minassian

We welcome a new PhD student in Comparative Literature, Arakel Minassian. Arakel has completed an MA in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Michigan, with a thesis on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in contemporary Armenian literature. His research has focused on contemporary authors from Armenia, and he has published on a 2015 travelogue to Diyarbakir by Anna Davt'yan. Arakel is further interested in translation of Armenian from different dialects and contexts. His translation of a scene from



from the 19th century author T'lkatints'i's *From the Other World* was published in a collection from Arter Press in Turkey, and Arakel is currently finalizing a translation of Zabel Yessayan and Hayk T'oroyean's testimony from the Armenian Genocide, *The Agony of a People*. In 2022, Arakel published his own book



Arakel Minassian

in Armenian, together with the Armenia-based writer Anahit Ghazaryan, called *Sahmanakhagh(kht): Hayerenn u hayerēnĕ* [*Border-Play: The Armenian and the Armenian*]. It is a dialogue that explores the linguistic and cultural differences between the two speakers' dialects, Western and Eastern Armenian, the former spoken primarily in the post-genocide diaspora and the latter having its centre in the Republic of Armenia. As a graduate student in Comparative Literature, Arakel plans to place Armenian literature, especially from the early 20th century, into conversation with postcolonial literature and theory coming out of the francophone contexts.

Emma Avagyan

The Center for Armenian Studies welcomes Emma Avagyan as a new PhD student in the Department of Middle East Studies. Emma's research focuses on the intersections between Armenian and Judaic Studies; she will be affiliated with both the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies and the Center for Armenian Studies. Emma received her BA from Yerevan State University (2017) and two MAs from Ben Gurion University of the Negev (2019) and Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg and Paideia (The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden, Jewish Civilizations). She has worked as a Hebrew teacher at the Yerevan Brusov State University of Language and Social Sciences (2019-2021). Emma's research interest centers on comparative sociolinguistic study of revitalization of modern Hebrew and vernacular Armenian in the 19th century through Eliezer Ben



Emma Avagyan

Yehuda and Khachatur Abovyan, two prominent individuals who were respective spearheads in shaping different national linguistic identities. Emma looks closely at language change and the tensions that arise between the usage of classical and vernacular languages in modern nation states.

The Music of Armenia Echoes across Campus

Spotlight: Mikayla Kurkjian

Mikayla Kurkjian graduated from U-M in 2020, where she was an active participant of the Armenian Students' Cultural Association, with her BSE in electrical engineering. Recently, Mikayla returned to U-M for graduate school. Despite her heavy course work, she was inspired to learn to play the Carillon in the bell tower on central campus. Pedestrians in Ann Arbor likely heard the bells ringing out as she played – and may have recognized a few of her Armenian musical adaptations.

Tell us a little about your background and what you're studying at U-M.

I recently graduated with my MSE in Electrical and Computer Engineering with a concentration in applied electromagnetics and RF circuits. I also studied electrical engineering at U-M as an undergrad.

What's your experience been taking Armenian Studies courses at U-M? In what ways has the Center for Armenian Studies furthered your engagement with your heritage?

I took four semesters of Armenian language, which was a great way for me to make new friends and engage with our shared culture. I particularly enjoyed reading stories and poems together in class and the many opportunities for creative expression.

The Carillon is such a unique instrument. What got you interested in learning how to play?

I lived on North Campus as a freshman and used to listen to the lunchtime recitals at Lurie Tower from my dorm room. I didn't know that students could learn to play until I was looking for an extra class to take and a friend mentioned that I should join the carillon studio. I was admitted off the waitlist the week before classes started, and it was an honor to be able to participate in such a rich campus tradition.

How (and why) did you start arranging Armenian music for the Carillon?

Professor Tiffany Ng, the university carillonist, is committed to diversifying the music played on our carillons and in the carillon community at large. At the beginning of the winter semester, she gave me a copy of Ari Im Sokhak, arranged by Melissa Coppola for Global Rings. This inspired me to work on my own

arrangements, and with Professor Ng's encouragement I arranged and performed my pieces Armenian 10/8 Medley and Tamzara as a class project. It was important to me to bring pieces that showcase the uniqueness of Armenian music to the carillon repertoire, and I focused on kef songs to share the vibrance of Armenian music and dance with the campus community.

Have you gotten any public reaction to your Armenian performances?

It's hard to gauge public response to performances from up in the tower, but the response from family and friends has always been positive. I gave a short concert on April 24th, and I'm very grateful for the support of friends and ASCA members who came to listen.

What do you want to learn next?

I've been learning how to do Armenian lace and embroidery for the past few years, and I want to continue learning new forms. I'm most interested in Aintab and Svaz embroidery.

Mikayla Kurkjian



Outstanding Scholarship at U-M

Avedis and Arsen Sanjian Fellowship

The Arsen K. Sanjian Fellowship is available to University of Michigan graduate students engaged in research related to Armenian studies to be conducted in the U.S. or abroad.

Emma Santelmann

PhD Candidate, Department of Linguistics

Over the summer, Linguistics PhD candidate, Emma Santelmann proposed and completed the following research project:

“The linguistic situation in the Republic of Armenia is complex. The standard language, which is used in formal contexts such as news broadcasts and school classrooms, coexists with both the colloquial language of the capital (Yerevan) and with regional dialects. The degree to which regional dialects are being maintained among younger generations is unclear. Hodgson (2019, p. 96) has claimed that a “quasi-standard colloquial language” has developed in Yerevan and spread to most other urban areas, pushing out the regional dialects such that they remain primarily in rural areas. However, this claim has not been investigated in any quantitative studies. Though extensive dialectological work has been carried out by both Armenian and Western linguists, there have not been any quantitative studies of recent changes that the dialects have potentially undergone under the pressure of the standard language and the colloquial language of Yerevan. This complex situation, where different language varieties, attitudes, and ideologies interact, provide a fruitful context for exploring the influence of different intersecting factors on the outcomes of language and dialect contact situations. The main proposed goals of the research trip were accomplished, as 31 sociolinguistic interviews were carried out in the city of Gavar, Armenia.

The most surprising preliminary result pertains to participants’ comments about child-directed speech. Out of the seven interviews that I have transcribed so far, many of the participants have either stated that they try to speak in a more standard way (using less dialect) with their children or that they notice that other people try to avoid speaking the dialect



Emma Santelmann

with children. Based on preliminary observations from all the interviews, it also seems that having young children and/or working in a profession (such as teaching) that requires interaction with children might correlate with decreased use of dialect features. Interestingly, this tendency does not seem to correlate with negative opinions about the dialect, as most participants express positive opinions about Armenian dialects while also acknowledging the importance of the standard language as a practical tool.

This project will also help me achieve my individual career goals. In addition to helping me launch my research career, it will allow me to build more connections in Armenia – both with linguists and with people who are generally interested in the Armenian language and its dialects. One of my long term career goals is to work together with local linguists to facilitate the improvement of the state of linguistics in Armenia. I also believe that the research of Armenian and its dialects can make a substantial contribution to linguistics more generally, and this project will be the first step in the research program that I hope to develop with this goal in mind.”

We are eagerly following Emma to hear more about her research!

Noroian Scholarship

The Edward Hagop Noroian Scholarship, established in 2020 by Jane E. Plasman, honors the memory and legacy of her late husband Edward H. Noroian, who was an executive at Presbyterian Hospital in New York, and seeks to recognize students of great intellectual promise. It is awarded annually by the Center for Armenian Studies.

Ariana Nigoghosian

Ariana is majoring in neuroscience, with plans to enter the medical field and pursue her desire to become a pediatric neurologist. Her interest in neuroscience has expanded through her experience as a research assistant for the Michigan Cognitive Aging Project at Zahodne Lab, focusing on the psychosocial factors that influence aging in older adults.

Ariana writes: “I have always had a desire to promote inclusion of neurodiverse individuals, something truly near and dear to my heart. In doing so, I spent the Summer of 2022 as a job coach at the Living and Learning Enrichment Center (a super awesome place!). In addition to numerous supportive programs, the center provides vocational experience to individuals with autism and related needs. Another organization of which I am so grateful to take part in is Special Olympics at the University of Michigan. This student organization provides an inclusive space for individuals of various needs to participate in sporting opportunities.

Of course, I must also mention the first club I ever joined at U-M: Armenian Club! Prior to the start of my freshman year, I knew this club would provide me a home away from home. From planning Hye Hop, to fun socials, to amazing fundraising efforts, I have loved every part of this student organization. The access to Armenian resources throughout this University- whether through the club or the center- is a quality that I know my fellow students and I feel so fortunate to have. In fact, the Center for Armenian Studies has provided students like myself the ability to expand our knowledge of Western Armenian through language courses. Having access to such courses truly deserves so much appreciation, as it allows us to preserve and maintain our beautiful language. Having taken history courses, my experience at this



Ariana Nigoghosian

university has been enhanced; such opportunities have presented me with the ability to embrace my culture, while simultaneously pursuing my academic studies.

Being Armenian will always be a core of my identity; I carry it with me in everything and anything that I do. Amongst other qualities, I think that simply the pride we hold for our Armenian identity makes our culture and community so special. Hence, having an Armenian community at this University, through which we can promote, preserve, and share our culture, is something for which I will always be grateful.”

Nayiri Sagherian

Nayiri Sagherian is a senior studying Psychology, Middle Eastern Studies, and Creative Writing. In her time here at the University of Michigan, Nayiri has been a part of organizations such as the Armenian Student's Cultural Association (ASCA), the Arts Ambassadors, and Wolverine Support Network (WSN). This past summer, she was involved in ongoing research through the Department of Psychology, where she continues to do research and plans to complete her honors thesis this school year. She was also part of an ongoing sociological research study called the Armenian Diaspora Survey (ADS) that aims to help Armenian diaspora members worldwide. Nayiri hopes to use her majors of Psychology and Middle Eastern Studies in conjunction with one another, with her honors thesis being only a first step in the road ahead.

Her major in Middle Eastern Studies, with a specialization in Armenian Studies, has allowed her to learn more about anti-racism and begin to develop ways to tackle issues that come with being of a minority status in America. Having been raised in a mostly Middle Eastern community near Detroit, Michigan, she was used to hearing and learning about the difficulties that many people from various ethnic



Nayiri Sagherian

backgrounds from the Middle East experience here in America. She hopes that by doing research centered around minority studies, and most especially Middle Eastern communities, she'll be able to upraise these communities, most especially in respect to mental health and access to ways to improve and maintain mental health in spite of being of minority status. Nayiri plans to continue her education after her bachelor's degree to follow a path towards a doctorate in clinical psychology.

Ariana and Nayiri demonstrating traditional Armenian line dancing for Dr. Al-Rustom's History 389 class: From Natives to Foreigners: Armenians in Turkey and the Diaspora



Center for Armenian Studies Faculty

Hakem Al-Rustom

Assistant Professor in History & the Alex Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian History

Kathryn Babayan

Professor of Iranian History and Culture

Kevoork Bardakjian

Professor Emeritus of Armenian Languages and Literatures

Gottfried Hagen

Interim Director, Center for Armenian Studies, Professor of Turkish Studies

Michael Pifer

Assistant Professor, Department of Middle East Studies & Marie Manoogian Chair of Armenian Language and Literature.

Ronald Grigor Suny

William H. Sewell, Jr. Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of History

Melanie Tanielian

Associate Professor of History

2022–23 Continuing Graduate Students

Armen Abkarian, PhD Candidate, Department of History

Areas of Concentration: The Mongol Empire, Armenian literature, Armenian historiography.

Emma Avagyan, PhD student, Department of Middle East Studies

Areas of Concentration: Armenian language and linguistics, Armenian literature, Modern Hebrew language and linguistics, comparative sociolinguistics, language pedagogy

Sosi Lepejian, PhD Student, Department of Sociology

Areas of Concentration: Ethnography, comparative-historical sociology, environmental sociology, colonialism, social movements, migration, race and ethnicity, Middle East studies.

Arakel Minassian, PhD student, Department of Comparative Literature

Areas of Concentration: Modern and contemporary Eastern and Western Armenian literature, literary responses to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, postcolonial studies, creative writing in Western Armenian.

Mano Sakayan, PhD Candidate, Department of History

Areas of Concentration: Intellectual history, cultural history, history of science and medicine, French colonial studies, Armenian history, late Ottoman history, the modern Arab world.

Emma Santelmann, PhD Student, Department of Linguistics

Areas of Concentration: Language and dialect contact and bilingualism, with a focus on Armenian and speakers of Armenian.

2022–23 EVENT CALENDAR

All our events are free and open to the public. When possible, recordings will be posted on the website after the event. Please visit. ii.umich.edu/armenian for more information and register for online events. The center is offering a mix of hybrid (in-person and online) events.

SEPTEMBER

14
wed

Lecture | *“A Disease in the Lungs of Anatolia”*: Politics of Reform and Modernization at the Intersection of Armenian, Kurdish, and Kizilbash Questions across Empire and Nation-State. **Cevat Dargin**, 2022-23 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow, U-M. **4PM**

OCTOBER

6
thu

Lecture | *The Horrors of Adana: Revolution and Violence in the Early Twentieth Century*. **Bedross Der Matossian**, Associate Professor of History and Hymen Rosenberg Professor Of Judaic Studies, University of Nebraska, Lincoln. **4PM**

NOVEMBER

4
fri

Workshop | *Modern State and “Internal” Colonialism Peoples, Places, and Power across Empire and Nation-State*

29
tue

Lecture | *Armenian Diaspora Survey*. **Vahe Sahakyan**, Senior Information Resources Specialist and Research Associate, University of Michigan-Dearborn Armenian Research Center. **6:30PM**

DECEMBER

7
fri

Artist Spotlight | *Language as a War Veteran*. **Karen Karslyan**, Novelist and visual artist. **4PM**

JANUARY

11
wed

Lecture | *Kings of Rome, Rulers of Heaven: Conceptions of Sovereignty and Empire in Syriac and Armenian Historiography*. **James Wolfe**, 2022-23 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow, U-M **5PM**

FEBRUARY

8
wed

Lecture | *Armeno-Turkish and the Space of Language in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Worlds*. **Rachel Goshgarian**, Associate Professor of History at Lafayette College

23-24
thu-fri

Workshop | *Negotiating “Ambiguous Race”: Hierarchies of Citizenship and Belonging in the Empires of the Premodern Mediterranean*

MARCH

8
wed

2023 Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Annual Distinguished Lecture | *Tradition and Innovation in Armenian music: A lecture/performance with The Naghash Ensemble*. **5–9PM**

APRIL

6-7
thu-fri

International Graduate Student Workshop | *The Quotidian and the Divine: Early Modern Gendered Economies of Monasticism in the Eastern Christian World*

The University of Michigan's Center for Armenian Studies serves the university and community by:

- *Preparing the next generation of scholars in the field of Armenian studies.*
- *Offering a comprehensive university-level education in Armenian studies, teaching language, culture, literature, history, anthropology, international relations, and political science.*
- *Offering graduate student, postdoctoral, and visiting scholar fellowships; graduate and undergraduate student research support.*
- *Reaching out to the larger community with an intensive program of public lectures, workshops, international conferences, and film screenings.*
- *Answering student and researcher questions on Armenian history and culture from the US and throughout the world.*

Together with our faculty, graduate students, visiting and postdoctoral fellows we have combined our efforts to push scholarship in Armenian Studies in new directions. Our interventions in the study of Armenian history, literature, translation studies, and the visual arts can be gauged by a carefully curated set of initiatives we have undertaken that will have a long-term impact on the field. The Center for Armenian Studies has been there for you since its founding in 1981; we want to be there in the future and do more.

