



PRECARIOUS ARMENIA

Armenian Studies in a World of Turmoil



LSA

CENTER FOR
ARMENIAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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PRECARIOUS ARMENIA: A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

After serving as interim director of the Center for Armenian Studies in 2022-23, I now have the honor to return to these pages as director, appointed for a three-year term, until 2026. I would like to thank the College of LSA and Dean Anne Curzan, the International Institute and its director, Mary Gallagher, and all of you for your confidence and am looking forward to working with you.

While I am writing this note, in November 2023, the world watches with horror and dismay the spiral of suffering, death, and destruction inflicted on innocent civilians in the vicious attack by Hamas terrorists on October 7, and the merciless response by Israel. The humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding while the war is grinding on in Ukraine, a country whose hopeful start into independence I was able to watch as a German expatriate in Kyiv in the 1990s. Between these two, the world has largely moved on from the disaster that struck Armenians in September, when Azerbaijani troops suddenly overran the autonomous territory of Nagorno-Karabakh in September, after a crippling blockade of many months, triggering a mass exodus, the effective ethnic cleansing of Artsakh.

In one of our most watched events this fall, CAS brought together three experts to analyze the events in Nagorno-Karabakh. Historian and political scientist, our own Ronald Suny addressed the political constellations that opened the door for the attack; human rights lawyer Talin Hitik spoke about recourse in international law, and art historian Lori Khatchadourian (Cornell University) shared some of her data about the destruction of Armenian architectural heritage in Azerbaijan. Especially as the world is entirely focusing on the war in Gaza, it is imperative for us at CAS to make sure Artsakh is not forgotten. In December, our former director Gerard Libaridian will present his new book *A Precarious Armenia: The Third Republic, the Karabakh Conflict, and Genocide Politics*, another event that will shed further light on these developments (and from which we borrowed the title for this newsletter). Moreover, international observers are concerned that Azerbaijan will not stop at

regaining control over its internationally recognized territory, but will use the momentum to push further.

Time and again, as scholars, we are called upon to trace the origins of these conflicts and to explain the political dynamics leading up to them, but even more so it is our duty to remind us all of the human experience, of the human hopes crushed and suffering endured by people on all sides, whose individualities cannot be reduced to political affiliation. We need to see through the political rhetoric that justifies violence, and hold on to the shared humanity. I borrowed the title of Professor Libaridian's book as the headline for this article also to point out the ever changing, ever lasting threats to civilians, and to Armenians and Armenian identities in particular. I have the privilege to teach a course titled Food and Drink in the Middle East this semester (MIDEAST 209/ENVIRON 219, together with Geoff Emberling), and the title image of this newsletter invites us to contemplate how hospitality is such an elementary form of human interaction. Yet, as we find out time and again, that "food brings people together" is not always true: food has just as much potential to divide, and to enhance exclusivist identities, as we see throughout the history of our region. And let us not forget that in the past and in the present food insecurity is a threat to a vast number of peoples, especially in the Middle East, as a result of systemic developments but also of decades of corrupt and inhumane politics, and because of war.

In the spirit of honoring the experience of the regular person, and giving voice to them, this spring, CAS joined forces with the Armenian Students Cultural Association and the Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies for a commemoration of April 24. We invited participants to bring an item from their family to share, and the outpouring of memories and



Gottfried Hagen



"Gandzasar Monastery in Vank"
via Kristen Baghdasaryan

stories was truly amazing, and provided a deep connection among all those present. We intend to repeat this format in the years to come, and we hope that you will be able to join us as well.

The shadow of the genocide loomed large in the lecture of Bedross Der Matossian on the *Horrors of Adana*, during which he meticulously unpacked the social dynamics that exploded in the Adana massacres of 1909. Book artist and author Karén Karslyan combined discourse, poetic, and musical performance to demonstrate the struggle of and within the Armenian language in a moving, even unsettling reassessment of his unique visual art book, *Aterazma*.

The artistic highlight of the year, however, was the visit of the Naghash Ensemble of Armenia on March 8. The visit had been planned by my predecessors as directors, to whom so much credit is due. It had to be postponed due to COVID, but it was worth the wait. Friends, affiliates, and students in Armenian Studies were given a preview, with an introductory presentation by composer and conductor John Hodian, during our annual Dr. Berj Haidostian Distinguished Lecture, before two performances on campus. Hodian's music blends modernist and traditional music, specially composed for this ensemble, brings the words of the medieval Armenian poet Mkrtych Naghash to life, and will stay with me for years to come. Naghash sings of being a *gharīb*, a stranger in this world (a theme central also to the recent book of our own Michael Pifer) - isn't this also a precarious existence? Let me also note that for this event we worked closely with the Center

for World Performance Studies, just as we regularly partner with other units within the International Institute and elsewhere on campus. Collaboration and collegiality are true Michigan virtues, and we appreciate them.

Much of the academic work we support at CAS is much less spectacular than the Naghash Ensemble concert, but no less important. We introduced our postdocs, Cevat Dargin and James Wolfe, in our last newsletter. Due to a number of unfortunate circumstances we have not been able to fill the Manoogian postdoctoral position that we had advertised for this year, but James Wolfe extended his fellowship for a second year, and by now the announcements for both fellowships for 2024-25 are out. We are looking forward to a dynamic new cohort.

Part of the postdoc package is funding for workshops that the fellows design, and both had theirs this past year. These were followed by the 12th International Graduate Student Workshop, "The Quotidian and the Divine: Gendered Economies of Monasticism in the Christian World," organized by Kathryn Babayan and PhD Candidate Kelly Hannavi. It is this format, after all, of highly focused and intense discussions, where - as one of my professors way back used to say - we do the work on the hard work of scholarship.

The Multidisciplinary Workshop on Armenian Studies had another successful year, thanks to its leaders Armen Abkarian and Alex Jreisat, and its funding from Rackham was renewed for the current year. We are looking forward to many more conversations under the leadership of Sara Ruiz (Slavic), Emma Portugal (Linguistics), and Arakel Minassian (Comparative Literature).

Please enjoy the more detailed account of these events and many more in this newsletter. None of it would be possible without our dedicated faculty and students, without the hard work of the indefatigable Vicken Mouradian at the center of all of it, and of course, without you, our community in Ann Arbor and beyond. It is an honor and a privilege to be part of this exciting intellectual community at U-M. I hope you will join us for many events to come, and that you will also consider continuing your support for our work. Thank you all for the work you do to support Armenian Studies!

MEET THE NEW LECTURER OF WESTERN ARMENIAN LANGUAGE

Michigan Welcomes Sosy Mishoyan

The Center for Armenian Studies is delighted to welcome Sosy Mishoyan as our new lecturer on Western Armenian Language. Inspired by her living and teaching experiences in Aleppo and Yerevan, she developed a passion for Western Armenian language pedagogy. Her teaching and online courses have been well-received by the global Armenian diaspora, due in large part to her mastery of the Western Armenian dialect. Mishoyan is a member of the “Seeds of Peace” project, which aims to celebrate Armenian, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish languages in inclusive language learning environments. She hopes to continue working on her PhD dissertation, which explores the role of loan words in Western Armenian in shaping Armenian literature. In the interest of building access to Armenian language learning resources, she also hopes to develop a book or an app based on her research and teaching experience.

CAS Director Gottfried Hagen recently spoke with Professor Mishoyan about her background and her vision for teaching Armenian at U-M.

Please tell us about yourself and your beginnings as a teacher of Armenian.

I was born and raised in Aleppo, Syria, and graduated from Karen Jeppe Armenian College. I possess a bachelor’s degree in Arts and Humanities from Aleppo State University, which I attained through the English Language and Literature department. I earned another bachelor’s degree in Armenian Studies from Hamazkayin Institute in Aleppo. I also underwent pedagogy training at the ‘Spyurk’ Scientific-Educational Center situated in Yerevan, Armenia. I worked as a Western Armenian language teacher at Aleppo Azkayin Haigazian School and Karen Jeppe Armenian College until 2014 when I had to leave Syria with my family due to the dire situation caused by the Syrian war.



Sosy Mishoyan

How is the life of the Armenian Community in Syria? How do they cope with the civil war?

Before the Syrian Civil War, Aleppo had a thriving Armenian community of around 40,000 people. However, the war caused significant damage, displacement, and loss of life, leading many Armenians to leave the city. Despite the decreasing number of Armenians now in Aleppo (around 10,000), efforts have been made to rebuild and support the community. The Armenian language plays a crucial role in the community. Armenians speak Armenian in their households. Additionally, daily schools, alongside the governmental program conducted in Arabic, teach the Armenian language, literature, history facts, and culture to students of all ages. These schools aim to preserve the cultural identity and linguistic proficiency of the students. Churches and community centers serve as important hubs for the community, hosting various events in Armenian. Cultural events and organizations celebrate Armenian heritage through language, music, dance, and art. The Armenian language is also disseminated through



Armenian Genocide Memorial at the Forty Martyrs Armenian Church in Aleppo, Syria

<https://myumi.ch/Z3dwq>

a weekly newspaper and publications. Overall, the Armenian language is an essential part of daily life, contributing to the community's cultural identity and preserving its heritage.

What was your experience moving to Armenia?

After moving to Armenia, I obtained a master's degree in Armenian language and literature from Khachadour Apovian University in 2017. I then worked as a linguist in the Western Armenian Department of the Hrachia Ajarian Language Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia. In Yerevan, as you know, the official language spoken is Eastern Armenian, which differs from the Western Armenian commonly used by the Armenian diaspora.

Recognizing the limited demand for Western Armenian in Yerevan, I developed an online course exclusively dedicated to teaching Western Armenian, teaching to individuals who were eager to learn but had not had the opportunity. I was honored to have had students from different parts of the world, including

respected Armenian scholars and writers residing in the United States. Additionally, I worked as an editor for Vlume e-books, improving access to Western and Eastern Armenian texts, and served as an online spell checker for Zartonk Daily Newspaper in Beirut. I have also contributed to publications in Boston as the Armenian correspondent for Armenian Weekly.

What is it like to teach Armenian at U-M?

I have a special opportunity as a faculty member at the University of Michigan to preserve Western Armenian and educate my students. My previous experiences teaching online in Armenia and in-person in Syria have prepared me for this new role. I recognize that Middle Eastern Armenians and those in the West have different needs and experiences due to their distinct linguistic environments. The Armenian language holds immense importance for diaspora Armenians, as it serves as a link to their heritage and elicits intense emotions and memories. My students tell me that my words remind them of their grandmothers, and I often receive comments like, "You speak just like my medz mama (grandmother)."

So, by adapting my teaching methods, I am driven to empower them to connect with their roots and embrace the beauty of language.

How has your experience in Michigan and U-M been so far?

On December 23rd, the day of my arrival with my family, we were surprised by the extreme winter cold in Michigan. There was an unusual thunderstorm, and the local people told us that they hadn't seen one like it for a long time. However, we also experienced warm greetings and smiles from the friendly people during our sunny neighborhood walks. At the university, I've encountered a respectful and professional atmosphere, creating a peaceful work environment. As a newcomer, I still have much to explore and learn.

Finally, tell us about your plans for the future!

I joined "The Seeds of Peace" project, which brings together Armenian, Hebrew, Persian and Turkish languages through the Middle East Studies Department at an R-1 university. The project encourages students from different language backgrounds to recognize the differences and to find similarities between cultures connected to Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

Our main goal is to promote inclusive language learning and foster better understanding among individuals. I'm happy to be part of this project and to work with my colleagues and students. The project is scheduled for the winter semester.

In the future, I hope to resume the research plan I had temporarily paused. During my time in Armenia, I worked on my PhD dissertation, which I recently paused due to my role as a program developer at the university. I have now returned to working on it actively. My research is titled "The Dialectical Influence on Armenian Diaspora Literature." In this study, I explored the inclusion of loan words in Western Armenian, shedding light on how Western Armenian writers brought their dialect from Western Armenia, impacting their literary creations. This research offers insights into language richness, cultural practices, traditional sayings, greetings, and even curses used. I will delve into these elements, including Western Armenian's grammar and word etymology.

However, my current major dream is to turn the new program I am developing into a book or an app. As time progresses and technology evolves, we must strive to keep up with the times by utilizing easy applications that enhance language learning, making the process enjoyable and engaging.

Sosy Mishoyan presenting at 2023 World History and Literature Initiative: Border Walls: Navigating Exclusion in a Divided World



2022–23 MANOOGIAN POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS REPORT

Cevat Dargin

2022-23 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow

I have found my experience within the vibrant academic community at the Center for Armenian Studies and the Department of History at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor incredibly rewarding. I am excited to share that, starting in January 2024, I will be embarking on a new chapter in my academic journey as a visiting assistant professor at Columbia University's Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies. This opportunity has been made possible through the Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian Visiting Professorship program.



Cevat Dargin

Over the past year, I have achieved significant milestones in my academic pursuits. I have successfully completed several publication projects and had the privilege to present my work at various conferences. Notably, my peer-reviewed article, "Anticipatory Historical Geographies of Violence: Imagining, Mapping, and Integrating Dersim into the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish State, 1866–1939," was published in the *Journal of Historical Geography*. I have one book chapter that has been published in an "Şekâvet, Hıyânet, İsyan: Geç Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Eşkıyalık," and two more chapters are in the pipeline for future publication.

In addition to these academic contributions, I have written essays for semi-academic platforms such as, "Turkish Elections, Kurdish Votes, and the Question of Race" in *Jadaliyya* and "Kimin İçin Self Determinasyon? Lozan Antlaşması, Kürt Sorunu Ve Uluslararası Hukukta Irk Meselesi," in *PolitikART*. I am currently engaged in several ongoing publication projects, including my book manuscript tentatively titled *Roads to Dersim Thirty-Eight: Race, Territory, and Technology in Reinventing the Middle East*.

In addition to my publication projects, I gave a public lecture, co-organized a workshop in collaboration with Melanie S. Tanielian, Hakem Al-Rustom, and Gottfried Hagen, and taught a significantly revised version of Ronald Suny's course titled "Nations and Nationalism." I presented at various conferences, including those held at Northwestern University, Heidelberg Universität, the Middle Eastern Studies Association Annual Conference, the Social Science and History Association Annual Conference, the Shai Studies Conference at the Islamic College in London, and the Flanders Fields Museum's conference on the First World War. I also participated in a round-table discussion at the American Society for Environmental History Annual Meeting, joined the Yalçın Çakmak ile KIYMIK podcast as a guest, and partook in a panel discussion on Democracy in Turkey, moderated by Peter Balakian.

Cevat Dargin presenting at CAS: "A Disease in the Lungs of Anatolia: Politics of Reform and Modernization at the Intersection of Armenian, Kurdish, and Kizilbach Questions across Empire and Nation-State"



James Wolfe

2022-23 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow

I am very excited to be a part of the Center for Armenian Studies community and the Department of History here at the University of Michigan for another year! Over the past year, I was able to finish up some of my previous research and dig my heels into some new research.



James Wolfe

In February, Michael Pifer and I organized a conference that drew the experiences of Armenians into dialogue with other minoritized populations in the Roman Empire, Sasanian Persia, and other empires of the Ancient Mediterranean in order to explore how hierarchies of citizenship, race, and belonging functioned as technologies of imperial rule across a variety of case studies. We were thrilled with the new collaborations and conversations this workshop fostered about the nature of premodern imperialism, revealing how the Armenian experience in particular can and should inform future scholarship on race,

identity, religion, and the history of the Ancient Mediterranean world more generally.

Over the past year, I was also able to close the loop on multiple research projects and, this fall, I will have two articles coming out - one in the *Journal of Late Antiquity* and another in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* - that explore the literary and legal traditions of the multilingual communities of late antique Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Caucasus. In October, I presented my current research on imagined geographies in Armenian historiography at a conference at the Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt, Germany.

I'm also looking forward to teaching two classes this coming winter for the Department of History and organizing another workshop for the Center for Armenian Studies on non-elite cosmopolitanisms in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Caucasus, and the medieval Middle East.

James Wolfe presenting at CAS, "Kings of Rome, Rulers of Heaven: Conceptions of Sovereignty and Empires in Syriac and Armenian Historiography"



DONORS AND IMPACT: EDWARD HAGOP NOROIAN SCHOLARSHIP

A Showcase of Excellence: Ms. Plasman's Day at CAS

Last October, a CAS delegation of faculty and students had the opportunity to welcome Ms. Jane Plasman for a wonderful campus visit! In the 2020 Spring/Summer semester, Ms. Plasman generously donated to the Center for Armenian Studies to establish the Edward Hagop Noroian Scholarship Fund, a merit-based scholarship awarded yearly to the best and brightest of our students engaging in Armenian Studies. This year, Ms. Plasman was invited to participate in a class demonstration by the two winners of last year's scholarship, Ariana Nigoghosian and Nayiri Sagherian.

Nayiri delivered an engaging presentation on Armenian generational trauma and mental health, launching into a lively discussion with the audience. Afterwards, Ariana presented on Kef in America, even recruiting participants from the audience to teach and demonstrate traditional kef dances. CAS is so proud to be supporting outstanding students like Ariana and Nayiri through the generous support of our donors.

Ariana Nigoghosian presenting, "Kef in America: An Armenian Tradition"

Nayiri Sagherian presenting, "Raised Armenian: Mental Health and Community"



Ariana Nigoghosian leading an instructional demonstration on traditional Armenian line dancing

2022-23 Scholarship Recipient: Armen Vartanian

This year, the Center for Armenian Studies is proud to award the Edward Hagop Noroian Scholarship to **Armen Vartanian!**

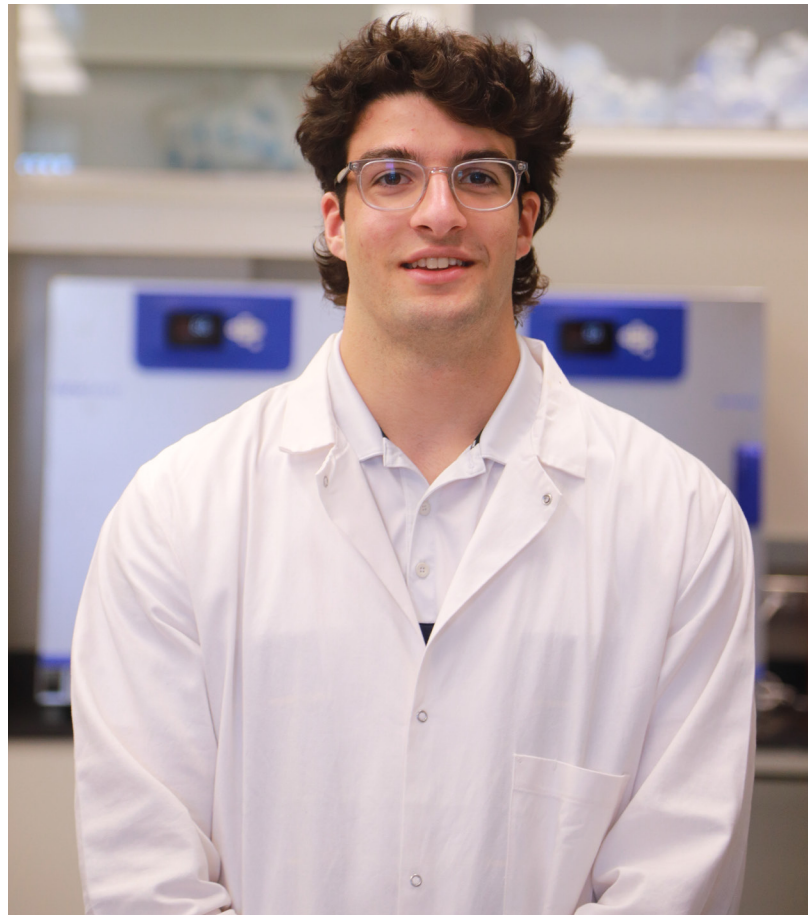
Armen is a senior studying biomedical engineering with plans to attend graduate school. He keeps in touch with his Armenian roots on campus through the Armenian Students Cultural Association (ASCA) and off campus through the Detroit Kopernik Tandourjian AYF chapter. He recently spent his summer as a research assistant for the Leshner-Perez research group working on microfluidic devices and their applications to understand pancreatic function. During his sophomore year he joined Michigan Rugby, where he devoted much of his time outside the classroom. After two years on the team, he became a team captain and looks forward to being a strong role model for his teammates this fall and spring.

In his response to the Noroian application we learned more about Armen's story and what makes him a great recipient of the award this year.

How have your academic pursuits aligned with and demonstrated engagement in Armenian Studies?

Most Armenians growing up in northern New Jersey spend the first parts of their education at Hovnanian School. Instead of learning Armenian early both through school and at home, and being bilingual from an early age, I had to make the choice to learn Armenian. Before coming to Michigan, all my knowledge of the language came from casual household phrases and objects.

By attending Camp Haiastan every summer since I was eight and joining the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) after moving to Detroit, I quickly realized the necessity to pass down our language to the next generation. I sat through several lectures and conversations where my role models in the AYF would persuade me that my lack of fluency didn't make me any less Armenian. My disagreement with that concept grew as I aged.



2022-23 Noroian Scholarship recipient Armen Vartanian

Before I arrived on the Michigan campus, I had already enrolled in Armenian 101, and was ready to gain the skills that I had always wanted to acquire. After my freshman year, having taken 102 that winter, I was thrilled by how much I learned so quickly. As an engineer with several AP credits from high school, my intellectual breadth requirement was already completed, but I still decided to take 201 because it was so important to me. The following semester I was forced to miss out on 202 because of scheduling conflicts, but that was not the end of my Armenian education at Michigan. Armenian 301, Advanced Armenian Language, was being offered in the fall, a class that is only offered if there is enough interest. I spent my summer learning the content of 202 with the help of my parents and my consistent discipline to hopefully test out of 202. By the end of the summer, I received news that 301 was being postponed, but it had served as the reason to learn so much on my own.

While my language journey was on pause, I was lucky enough to expand my historical knowledge through an independent study course with Professor Ronald Suny during my junior year. I was hesitant to take the class. Being dyslexic, I realized that heavy amounts of reading were not what I was used to in engineering school. But in the winter '23 semester I seized the rare opportunity to take an independent study reading course with Professor Suny, and we tailored the class to lie just outside my comfort zone. Each week of the class consisted of my reading a few chapters, writing an essay, and having a fulfilling discussion with my professor. Enriching questions, discussions and debates on the history of Armenia, with a world renowned professor gave me the experience I was looking for at a University like Michigan. The skills I developed and the topics covered have allowed me to be an effective contributor to discussions about the current situation in Armenia, and were in use most recently at an AYF junior seminar.

Similar to my decision to take 201, the credit for which didn't count towards my degree, I saw the importance an experience like this could provide in my life outside of school. Instead of passively listening to lectures through the AYF on the past, present, and future of Armenia, I had the urge to get involved with the difficult conversations that involve our country and its struggles today. Most recently as a counselor at AYF junior seminar, I had the privilege of speaking with lecturers from all over the country and even a veteran of the First Artsakh War. I've been able to contribute to my community in ways that wouldn't be possible without my Armenian education at Michigan.

How do you plan to continue engaging in Armenian issues?

I've been an active member of the Armenian community through the AYF, both in Detroit and the entire Eastern Region. By attending Camp Haiastan and other AYF events I've found myself in positions to use my newfound knowledge. Because many of my Armenian experiences are rooted outside of the university, it is natural for me to continue my involvement beyond graduation. But with the work I have done in Armenian Studies at Michigan, I have a deeper knowledge of the history and language, which only increases both my interest and my abilities. However, my career will also offer unique opportunities to potentially provide relief to Armenia. I'm currently a member of Michigan Neuroprosthetics, a nonprofit student-run organization that aims to provide affordable prosthetic arms for children across the world. After one of the leaders of the club located three patients in Syria and managed to build custom arms and ship them across the globe, I was inspired to see what I can do in Armenia. I spent time contacting organizations in Armenia to find a patient and a doctor to work with. Unfortunately, I was unable to find a patient, but what the experience did was expose me to engineering companies in Armenia, like ArmBionics, a high-tech prosthetics company. After graduation, I hope not to only stay involved in Armenian affairs in the U.S., but also to learn what my technical education can provide in Armenia.

Having learned to read and speak Armenian and study Armenian history at U-M, I feel equipped to make a difference in my homeland and carry what I have learned to friends, colleagues, and future generations.

Armen Vartanian and rugby teammates



BRINGING ARMENIAN TO MICHIGAN & SENDING MICHIGAN TO THE WORLD

The Center for Armenian Studies is committed to promoting academic excellence, fostering cultural understanding, and supporting the pursuit of knowledge within the realm of Armenian Studies. Central to this mission is the annual offering of grants to students, enabling them to engage in cutting-edge research and immersive travel experiences. These grants empower young scholars to explore the rich tapestry of Armenian history, culture, and heritage in ways that are both profound and transformative.

In the following pages, we are delighted to share firsthand accounts and reflections from some of the recipients of these grants. These reflections attest to the enduring commitment of the Center in shaping the academic landscape and nurturing the next generation of scholars. These experiences could not be possible without the generous support of our donors and community.

Collectivism and Mental Health in MENA-American Communities: Nayiri Sagherian (BA in Psychology)

Collectivist cultures emphasize the needs and goals of the group as a whole over the needs and desires of each individual. In such cultures, relationships with other members of the group and the interconnectedness between people play a central role in each person's identity. Collectivism contrasts with individualism, in which personal needs take precedence. Many Eastern communities focus on collectivism—including Armenia—unlike here in the West. Both individualism and collectivism have their benefits and their pitfalls. The crossing or combining of these two styles of community is something many who immigrate to the United States must deal with, at times at the detriment of their mental health. My research revolves around this idea of being raised in a collectivist culture and forced to adapt to the majority individualist culture. The research I conducted looks specifically at the mental health within Middle Eastern populations in Southeast Michigan. Having grown up in the Armenian community in Michigan, surrounded by other Middle Eastern ethnic groups, I was able to see firsthand what the transition to American culture was for many people.

I wanted to better understand what strain this adaptability had on these groups. The main goal of the study was to better understand how mental health struggles, specifically depressive symptoms,



Nayiri Sagherian

are impacted by discrimination and trust in social networks with Middle Eastern/North African (MENA) American populations. I wanted to know if the collectivist culture—this trust in social networks—acted as a buffer against depressive symptoms that might arise from the discrimination Middle Easterners face when living within the United States. This study suggests that trust in social networks such as neighborhoods, friends, and family may play a buffering role against discrimination and depressive symptoms. Future research should continue to better

understand which forms of discrimination impact depressive symptoms in MENA-American populations the most. Continuing to understand what buffering factors exist within MENA-American populations may shed light on how best to support this population.

Thanks to the **Haiganoosh Mengushian/Ajemian Memorial Student Travel Award** and the support from the Center for Armenian Studies, I was given the opportunity to participate in the Diversity in Psychology conference at Marquette University, a predominantly White institution. Here, I was able to see what further research was being conducted on not just Middle Eastern/North African Americans,

but minorities as a whole. I was able to share my research with other researchers, gain a better understanding of how other universities aside from the University of Michigan conduct research on minority populations, and see what steps I need to take as I continue my research career in psychology. Overall, the experience opened my eyes to how little research is being done on minority populations and what efforts need to be taken to not only decrease the stigmas surrounding mental health in minority populations, but also speak to the very specific mental health issues that MENA Americans face, whether that be depressive symptoms, generational trauma, and/or discrimination.

Dialects in Dialogue: Arakel Minassian (PhD Student in Comparative Literature)

I was very grateful for funding from the Center for Armenian Studies and the **Haiganoosh Mengushian/Ajemian Memorial Student Travel Award** for supporting my travel to Los Angeles and presenting my book, *Sahmanakhagh(kht): Hayerenn u hayerene (Border-play: The Armenian and the Armenian)*, at the University of Southern California in March 2023. This book, co-written with Anahit Ghazaryan, a writer from Armenia, is a commentary on the eastern and western dialects of Armenian. It is a correspondence between Anahit and myself, written while I was living in Armenia in the summer of 2019.

Although these two dialects are of course part of the same language, they are significantly different in grammar and pronunciation. But they also diverge in the cultural backgrounds against which they continue to develop – Western Armenian being a dialect that exists only in diaspora and Eastern Armenian having been influenced by the Soviet and post-Soviet contexts. Today, these languages are constantly in

contact, whether in the diaspora, where a growing number of Eastern Armenian-speakers from Armenia have settled, or in Armenia, where a growing Western Armenian presence has emerged in recent years.

Anahit and my book tried to capture a moment in these changing dynamics by presenting a picture of our friendship as it existed through the interactions of our different dialects. We noticed things that eluded comprehension between us, the various struggles I faced as a diasporan Armenian living in post-Soviet Armenia, and the struggles she faced in communicating with me.

Our book presentation at USC gave Anahit and me an opportunity to present this work to an audience outside Armenia and was successful in promoting our book and continuing an evolving conversation on the place of these two dialects in the contemporary world.

Arakel Minassian and Anahit Ghazaryan speaking with USC Dornsife Institute of Armenian Studies Director Shushan Karapetian



Exploring Armenia's Manuscript Treasures: Armen Abkarian (PhD Candidate in History)

The generous support of the Center for Armenian Studies, by means of both the **Arsen K. Sanjian Fellowship** and the **Haiganoosh Mengushian/Ajemian Memorial Fellowship** have made a tremendous impact on my development as a scholar over the past year. With the center's award, I was able to participate in the Society for Armenian Studies conference entitled, "Technologies of Communication and Armenian Narrative Practices Through the Centuries" in September of 2022. The conference hosted a wide variety of Armenologists whose interests spanned a broad temporal and geographic spectrum. Moreover, the interdisciplinary approach to the conference's organization allowed for a richer engagement with the central theme of the meeting. As a researcher of medieval Mediterranean kingship through the relatively specialized entry point of Cilician Armenian literary production, much of the feedback I receive from colleagues in response to my works in progress are structural, theoretical, or conceptual in nature. But by traveling to Belmont and participating in the conference, I was able to benefit from the observations of fellow specialists in my field. The collegial atmosphere fostered by the conference also extended our conversations beyond the confines of an auditorium setting and helped forge an academic network connecting scholars around the world. It is through the enthusiastic and proactive support of the Center for Armenian Studies that I was able to become a part of this network and return to Ann Arbor with a deeper insight into my project.

Armen Abkarian



Armen Abkarian presenting on panel at Society for Armenian Studies conference

The steadfast encouragement of the Center for Armenian Studies continued well after the academic year had concluded. The Center granted me the invaluable opportunity to travel to Armenia over the summer of 2023 and continue my archival research. While at Armenia's Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts I was able to reconnect with colleagues with shared interests in premodern Armenian history. As we discussed recent developments in our field, both in terms of publications and revolutionary adaptations in technology, I was reminded of the truly social and dialogic nature of our scholarship. In addition to serving as a unique intellectual hub for academics working with Armenian texts, my trip to Yerevan granted me the opportunity to engage with many of the primary sources that I had been researching for years in Ann Arbor. While the university boasts an awe-inspiring collection of Armenian primary sources in the form of critical editions, the Center for Armenian Studies allowed me to encounter many of these same texts in their manuscript form at the Matenadaran where they are housed. Through these encounters I was able to come to a deeper understanding of the production, circulation, and organization of these manuscripts in their historical context. Moreover, the Matenadaran's substantial collection of digitized manuscripts found a sensible compromise to the issue of handling delicate antiquities, while also prioritizing their preservation. As a result of these digitization efforts, I was also fortunate enough to return from my trip with scans of several excerpts from primary sources that will feature prominently in my dissertation.



Linguistic Discoveries from Gavar to Athens: Emma Portugal (PhD Student in Linguistics)

Thanks to the **Haiganoosh Mengushian/Ajemian Memorial Student Travel Award** from the Center for Armenian Studies, I had the opportunity to present a poster about my research at the 56th Annual Meeting of the *Societas Linguistica Europaea* (European Linguistics Society) in Athens, Greece in August 2023. My poster presented the results of my qualifying paper research about variation in the use of vowels among speakers of Armenian in Gavar, Armenia. The preliminary results of my research suggest that men use vowels more consistently with the previously described norms of the local dialect than women do, while age and education level did not seem to be related to the vowels that people use. During the poster session at the conference, I had the opportunity to tell other participants of the conference about my research and to discuss methodological difficulties and strategies with other researchers working on similar topics. Throughout the four days of the conference, I was able to hear numerous presentations from a wide variety of

subfields of linguistics, including presentations from my own subfield (sociophonetics) that examined linguistic variation in different parts of the world. While there were not any other presentations related to the Armenian language, there were several presentations focusing on contact between Russian and other languages of the former Soviet Union. These were interesting to me from a comparative standpoint, as contact between Armenian and Russian is another one of my research interests. In general, this conference was a great chance for me to interact with researchers whom I would be unlikely to meet otherwise, as many of the participants came from various universities in Europe. Thanks to the generous grant from CAS, I was also able to go on an excursion with other conference participants to the Temple of Poseidon located on Cape Sounio near Athens, which allowed me to learn about Greek history while also getting to know some of the other researchers.

Emma Portugal presenting research poster at Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea



A Comparative Analysis of Armenian and Hebrew Language Revitalization: Emma Avagyan (PhD Student in Middle East Studies)

My research analyzes the comparative socio-linguistic history of Hebrew and Armenian to first examine the similar visions of Khachatur Abovyan and Eliezer Ben-Yehuda in an attempt to preserve the language and revitalize it through different means, ideologies, and methods in their peoples' newly formed pedagogical arena, although living in different periods and geographical areas. In the 19th century, the ideas of national and linguistic independence flourished in central and southern Europe under the Enlightenment movement, which influenced the formation of the collective European society and the subsequent nationalist ideas of the ethnic and religious minorities living alongside them. As a result, the languages of mass use and those used primarily in religious texts and rituals, such as Classical Armenian and Biblical Hebrew, underwent massive changes. Therefore, one of the most urgent problems for the pioneers of Armenian and Jewish enlightenment was to give new life to these languages and make them functional for the masses. The **Agnes H. and R. A. Yarmain Fellowship**, awarded to me by the Center for Armenian Studies, helped me cover the travel expenses, and allowed me to do archival and library research in Armenia. I already had a bibliography list and wanted to digitize or purchase the materials for further reading. I collected the resources for my research, mainly from the National Library of Armenia, the National Archive, and the house-museum of Khachatur Abovyan. In the National Archive, I read Khachatur Abovyan's letters addressed to Armenian intellectuals abroad, in which he spoke about his struggle against the clergy, the miserable condition of the people, and its language. At the time, Abovyan was trying to get the support of various intellectuals for his pedagogical activities in the schools of Yerevan and Tbilisi. In the National Library, I found many articles written about Abovyan, the founder of Armenian literature, and his first novel, "Wounds of Armenia" in Ashkharhabar, from various periodicals (Hayrenik, Banber, Lraber) that were published in



Emma Avagyan

Soviet Armenia. Later sources know about only two versions of Nakhshavigh written by Abovyan, the first Armenian teaching book in Ashkharhabar. Here however I learned about the existence of a third edition of this seminal work. This generous grant enabled me to access those resources and digitize books, articles, periodicals, and newspapers on Abovyan's life and activity. The grant also allowed me to purchase the essential materials for preliminary examination and my further research.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Guest Lectures

The Horrors of Adana: Revolution and Violence in the Early Twentieth Century by Bedross Der Matossian

On October 6, 2022, 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, Dr. Bedross Der Matossian, explored the microhistories of the Adana Massacre in his book, *The Horrors of Adana: Revolution and Violence in the Early Twentieth Century*. During his lecture, Der Matossian explained how microhistories unveil the roles that criminal offenders, victims, and bystanders participated in during the massacre. With an emphasis on political agency, affective motivations and responses, and public reception of the massacre, Der Matossian illustrated the varying roles that all involved parties assume in episodes of ethnic violence and cleansing.

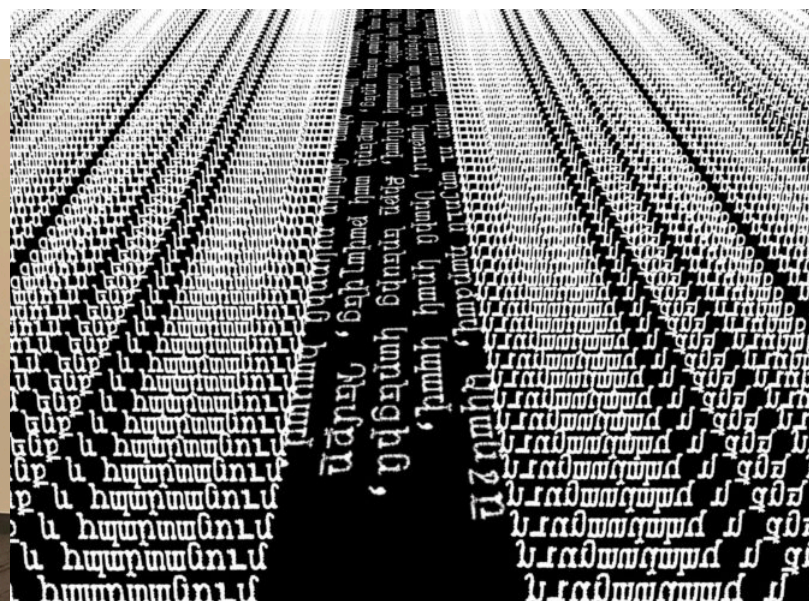
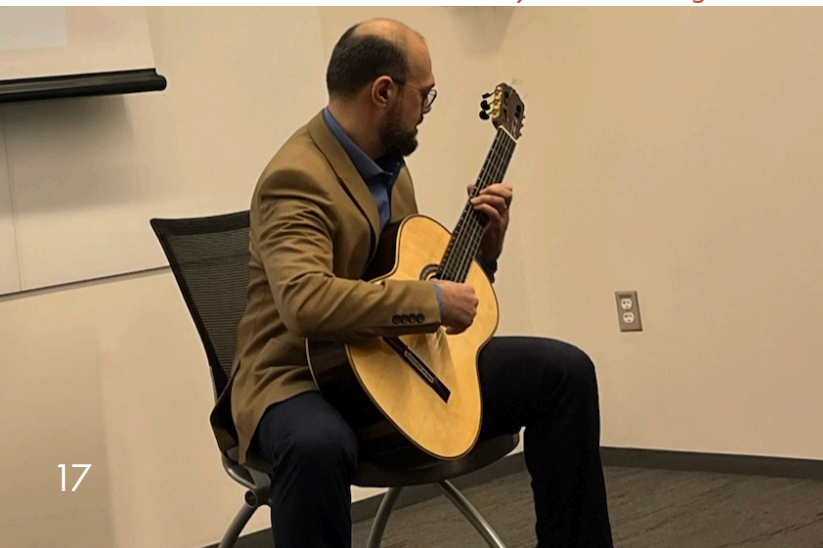


Dr. Bedross Der Matossian Presenting at CAS

Language as a War Veteran by Karén Karslyan

Four years elapsed between the Four Day War of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, with the latter causing significantly more human suffering and geopolitical precarity. In response, poet, novelist, visual artist, and translator Karén Karslyan was invited to explore the shared relationship between conflict and language during his December 7, 2022 lecture. In a half-interactive, half-lecture session, Karslyan drew on personal encounters with war, multimedia expressions of wartime experience, works of literature, creative writing exercises, and anthropologies of trauma to illustrate the ways in which wartime conflict opens up new avenues for dialogue in the face of violence, as illustrated in his book, *Aterazma*.

Karen Karslyan Presenting at CAS



Workshops

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

On November 4, 2022, the Center for Armenian Studies hosted an in-person workshop called "Modern State and ‘Internal’ Colonialism: Peoples, Places, and Power across Empire and Nation-State." Organized by the 2022-23 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow in Armenian Studies, Cevat Dargin, and Alex Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian History, Hakem Al-Rustom. The workshop aimed to unite scholars who explore ecosystems of livelihood beyond the control of, and often despite, central administrations as the last bastions of coexistence challenging the expansion of the modern state. The participants challenged disciplinary boundaries and existing periodizations, engaging with underrepresented themes and groups across the world. The main objective was to explore different approaches to intercommunal relations and environmental circumstances before, during, and after the absorption of non-state people and places into a centrally administered modern state. By employing approaches outside state-society, center-periphery, and sovereign-subject dichotomies, the presentations qualified the metanarratives of collective communal violence that treat ethnic and religious communities as hostile and monolithic entities. They also shed light on the role of modern states in transforming intercommunal relations and in shaping collective memories in transition to modernity in state-making through internal colonialism.

After opening remarks by **Gottfried Hagen** (University of Michigan) and introductions by **Cevat Dargin**

(University of Michigan), the workshop opened with a keynote address by **Ussama Makdisi** (University of California, Berkeley). Makdisi’s lecture “Coexistence in an Age of Genocide” examined the dynamics of coexistence and violence in the Middle East in the context of Western imperialist and colonial incursions during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Drawing on his expertise on Ottoman orientalism and his recent book *Age of Coexistence: The Ecumenical Frame and the Making of the Modern Arab World*, Makdisi provided a general theoretical and historical approach for understanding internal colonialism as a framework of historical analysis in the Middle East and beyond.

After a short break, the presenters of the first panel titled “Cohabitation, Conflict, and Internal Colonialism” discussed narratives of cohabitation and state evasion in the imperial and post-imperial Middle Eastern settings. **Christopher Gratien** (University of Virginia) presented a chapter titled “Ahmet Cevdet’s Civilizing Mission in Cilicia” from his new manuscript draft *The Book and the Sword: A Microhistory of Empire in Late Ottoman Cilicia*, in which he focuses on the question of “empire” in a trans-Atlantic context across Ottoman Empire and the United States from 1860-1866. In her presentation titled “The Empire of Priorities: Ottoman State Policies in the Age of Scarcity,” **Zozan Pehlivan** (University of Minnesota) provided a snapshot of her book manuscript project *Before the Genocide: A History of Violence and Environment in Late Ottoman Kurdistan*, where she



examines the socio-economic and environmental implications of the late nineteenth-century climatic anomalies on local peasants and pastoralists, considering the ways in which they shaped inter-communal relations between Christian Armenian peasants and Muslim Kurdish pastoralists. The last speaker of the panel, **Cevat Dargin**, presented his paper “The Kizilbash Kurds’ Dangerous Mission: Smuggling Armenian Genocide Survivors to Safety During World War.” The paper explored Kurdish-Armenian relations before, during, and after World War I through the case of Dersim, a region in Eastern Anatolia with a predominantly Kizilbash Kurdish population. **Fatma Müge Göçek** (University of Michigan), moderator and the commentator of the panel, highlighted the connections between these three presentations and underlined their significance as “cutting edge” scholarship in the field of Middle Eastern studies.

Following a lunch break, the second panel presenters discussed ecosystems of coexistence outside direct state control and the ways in which such pasts are remembered. In his paper titled “Digital Map of Deportations of Armenians of Sivas/Sepastia Province during the Armenian Genocide,” **Robert Sukiasyan** (Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute) detailed his ongoing digital mapping project of deported Armenians of Sivas/Sepastia province during the

Armenian Genocide. **Hazal Özdemir’s** (Northwestern University) paper, “They Vowed Never to Return: Armenian Transatlantic Mobility and Denaturalization at the end of the Ottoman Empire,” elucidated Armenian transatlantic mobility and denaturalization at the end of the Ottoman Empire. The study focused on photography efforts under Abdulhamid II’s regime to monitor the movements of Armenians across the Atlantic. **Roxana Maria Aras’** (University of Michigan) paper, “In Search for Futures Lost: Waqf, Parish, and Locality among Rum Orthodox in Beirut” explored intercommunal relations among the Rum Orthodox of Beirut. The moderator and commentator of the panel **Kathryn Babayan** (University of Michigan) put all three of the presentations in communication with one another and underlined their significance in understanding relations among people, places and power in different imperial and post-imperial contexts.

Following a short break, the workshop concluded with a roundtable under **Juan Cole’s** (University of Michigan) moderation. The roundtable brought together both sets of panelists to discuss internal colonialism as a conceptual framework in exploring the processes of modern state making and its role in transforming people and places, both in history and memory.



Negotiating “Ambiguous Race”: Hierarchies of Citizenship and Belonging in the Empires of the Ancient Mediterranean by James Wolfe

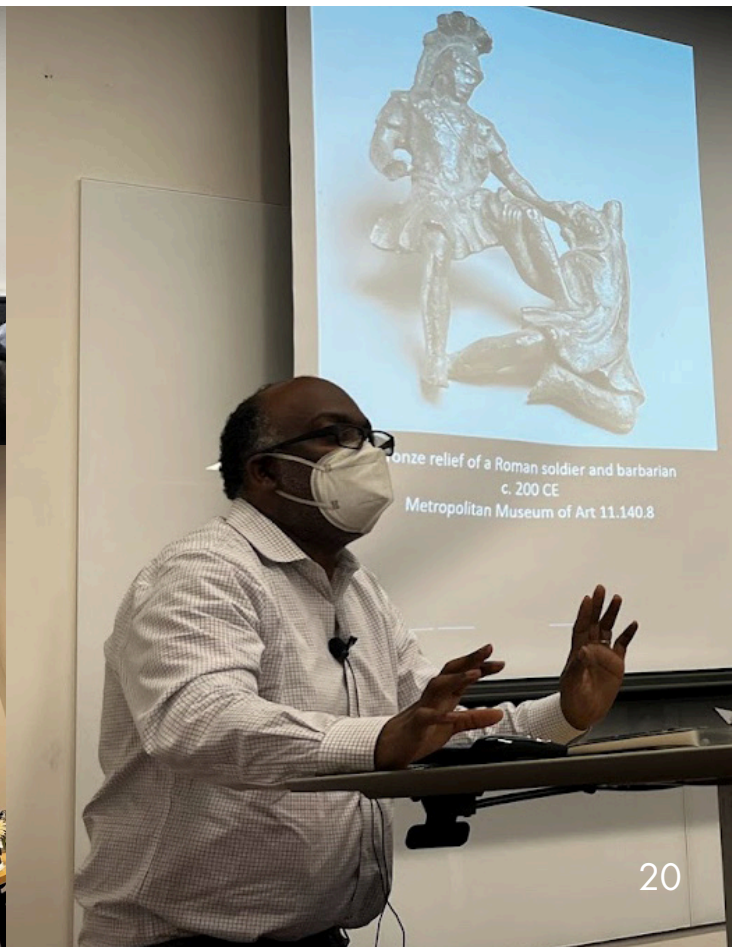
On February 23-24, 2023, the Center for Armenian Studies hosted a workshop titled “Negotiating ‘Ambiguous Race’: Hierarchies of Citizenship and Belonging in the Empires of the Ancient Mediterranean,” which welcomed scholars from multiple institutions and academic disciplines, including Classics, the Ancient Middle East, Late Antiquity, Byzantine Studies, Armenian Studies, and the History of Art, 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 world.

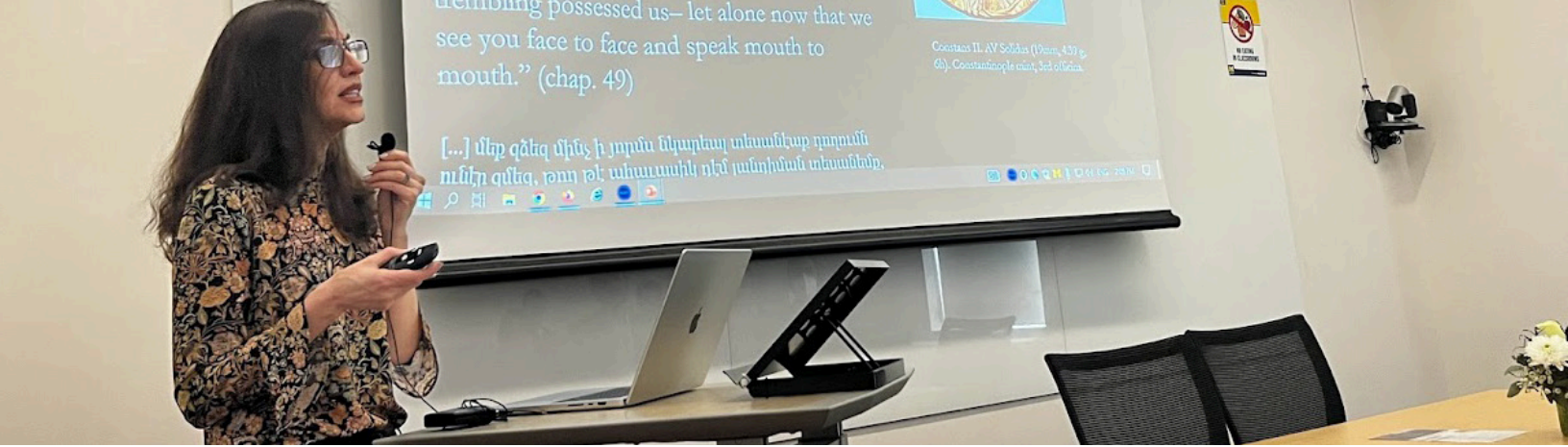
Organized by **Michael Pifer**, the Marie Manoogian Professor of Armenian Language and Literature in the Department of Middle East Studies, and **Jimmy Wolfe**, the Alex and Marie Manoogian Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Armenian History in the Center for Armenian Studies, the workshop sought to contribute to critical conversations on the study of race in the ancient and late ancient Mediterranean, thereby shedding light on the ways

in which imperial subjects fashioned their individual and communal subjectivities both diachronically and synchronically.

By drawing the experiences of Armenians into dialogue with other minoritized populations in the Roman empire, Sasanian Persia, and other empires of the Ancient Mediterranean, this workshop explored how hierarchies of citizenship, race, and belonging functioned as technologies of imperial rule across a variety of case studies. The workshop fostered new collaborations and conversations about the nature of premodern imperialism, revealing how the Armenian experience in particular can and should inform future scholarship on race, identity, religion, and the history of the Ancient Mediterranean world more generally.

After opening remarks by Michael Pifer, Jimmy Wolfe introduced the workshop’s keynote speaker, **Dan-el Padilla Peralta**, Associate Professor of Classics at Princeton University, whose research explores Mediterranean and global histories of slavery,





citizenship, and migration. In his keynote, “Racialization in the Roman Empire: Disposition and Affects,” Professor Padilla Peralta examined the dynamics of race and race-making in Greco-Roman antiquity. Building on the pioneering work of scholars such as Geraldine Heng, Dorothy Kim, Roland Betancourt, Sarah F. Derbew, Cathy Park Hong, and, in particular, Anne Anlin Cheng, Padilla Peralta analyzed the psychological properties of racism in ancient Rome and the institution of manumission as a racializing project through a close reading of the speech of Hermeros in Petronius’ *Satyricon*, a first-century Latin novel. Padilla Peralta showed that Hermeros’ speech exhibits how his experience as a freedperson was filled with a sense of paranoia and racial melancholy as he fought to navigate living among freeborn Roman citizens. In doing so, Padilla Peralta modeled how scholars can and should revisit the issue of racialization in the Ancient Mediterranean. Followed by a lively discussion, Padilla Peralta’s keynote set was a thought-provoking opening to the workshop.

Day two of the workshop consisted of three panels that were organized with the goal of bringing into direct dialogue Armenian evidence with non-Armenian evidence. In the first panel, titled “Whence Ambiguity?: Imperial Hierarchies and the Experiences of Empire,” **Cliff Ando** (University of Chicago) and Jimmy Wolfe (University of Michigan) examined how imperial institutions were generative of both racial hierarchies and thus racial ambiguities. Ando’s paper, “Rome and the peoples without name,” explored the juridification of identity in Roman thought and assessed its limits, showing that Roman rule was exercised above all through republican domination - that is, through a network of city-states whose infrastructure was instrumentalized to extend the reach of imperial power into regions that became their hinterlands. In his paper, titled “An Ambiguous Race: Armenian and Assyrian Identities in Roman and

American Imperialism,” Wolfe revisited Tacitus’ famous assertion that the Armenians were an “ambiguous race” (*ambigua gens*) through comparison with a modern example of the apparent racial ambiguity of Armenian and Assyrian Christians. To do so, he traced the career of an American Presbyterian missionary named E.W. McDowell who, in 1924, testified before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization on behalf of the so-called “mountain Nestorians.” Wolfe showed that McDowell’s testimony in favor of their immigration to the United States engaged directly with American imperialist discourses and categories of race that defined American immigration policy at the beginning of the twentieth century, echoing Tacitus’ imperial gaze. In her response, Aileen Das (University of Michigan), challenged the panelists to think how one might, therefore, push back against these Eurocentric models of racialization in the Roman world and develop new ones that more faithfully attend to the experiences of these and other minoritized communities in the context of ancient imperialism.

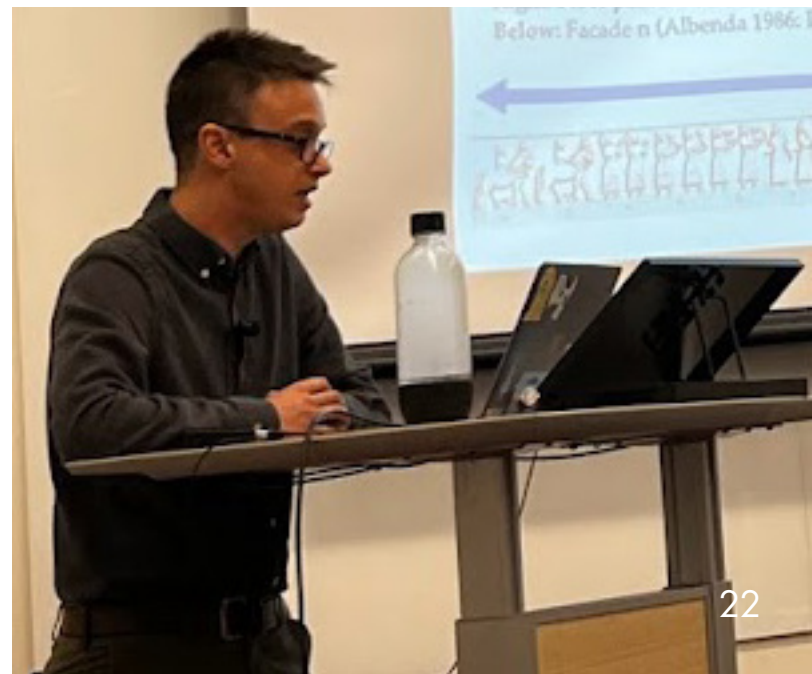
Panel two, “Racialized Paradigms and Minoritized Populations in the Ancient and Medieval Middle East,” included papers by **Jessie Degrado** (University of Michigan) and **Kayla Dang** (St. Louis University), with a response given by **Katherine Davis** (University of Michigan). In their paper, “Ancient Alterity, Modern Racialization: Language, Culture, and the Construction of the Neo-Assyrian Empire,” Degrado problematized Orientalizing paradigms that have characterized the ancient Neo-Assyrian empire as being uniquely brutal among ancient empires because it was seen as being “Semitic” in its essence. They showed that, as a result of such paradigms that have tied together language and culture, Mesopotamian states are still classified and evaluated based on their perceived proximity to the ill-defined categories of “Semitic” and “Sumerian” (i.e., not Semitic). Degrado thus

argued instead that the Neo-Assyrian empire curated and instrumentalized human difference as a means to constitute new subjects of a universal empire. Dang, whose work critiques modern characterizations of Iranian culture through the adduction of Armenian evidence, sought to theorize more fully the relationship of ethnicity, religion, and imperial power in Sasanian and post-Sasanian Persia as well as its role in modern nationalist dialogues in her paper, “The Entangled Ērān: Ethnicity, Religion, and Race in Iranian Studies.” She demonstrated that “Iranian identity” in late antiquity could include those, like the Armenians, who today scholars might not call “Iranian,” and so we must continue to critique our modern notions of identity, race, and belonging in the context of premodern Mediterranean empires. Katherine Davis offered a response in which she showed how similar Orientalizing paradigms have shaped the field of Egyptology as well, inviting us to question what we know about the evolution of ancient empires and how they worked.

In panel three, “Visual Subjects: Art and Identity in Byzantium,” **Paroma Chatterjee** (University of Michigan) and **Christina Maranci** (Harvard University) examined the dynamics of race and identity within the material culture of Medieval Rome (Byzantium) and Medieval Armenia. Chatterjee’s paper, “Image-breaking as otherness in Byzantium: Business as usual?” revealed the ways in which attitudes toward images were perceived as markers of ethnicity and, by extension, of belonging or otherwise, in certain circles in Constantinople in the aftermath of the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy of the 8th and

9th centuries CE. Chatterjee examined how texts across genres predictably ascribe the mistreatment of statues to the Arab Muslims or the Latins, demonstrating how Byzantine literature posited that practices or customs were somehow symptomatic of a particular ethnicity. Likewise, Maranci reexamined the “identity” of the Armenian Catholicos Nerses III (r. c. 641-c. 661). By focusing on both literary evidence and evidence from the epigraphy of Zvart’nots’, her paper, “Breaking Down Byzantium with Nerses III Catholicos (c.641-c. 661),” provided a new lens through which to understand the figure of Nerses, the supposedly ‘Byzantinizing’ features at Zvart’nots’, and the many ways in which Nerses engaged with the Byzantine empire as catholicos and as Armenian. **Bryan Miller’s** response further expanded the discussion in order to include evidence from Central Asia and the cultures of Mongolia, Western China, and the Central Asian steppes, reminding participants that the ancient Mediterranean was just one part of an interconnected world.

In sum, we are happy to report that the workshop was a success - not because it answered our questions about the nature of ancient imperialism and how Armenians factored into the history of the premodern Mediterranean, but because it encouraged us all to ask new questions about the experience of empire, the impact of imperial categories on ancient and modern conceptions of race, identity, and culture, and how we might better attend to those voices who were not amplified by those who have written the history of race in the ancient world.



The Quotidian and the Divine: Gendered Economies of Monasticism in the Christian World by Kelly Hannavi

On April 6 and 7, 2023, The Center for Armenian Studies hosted its 12th International Graduate Student Workshop “The Quotidian and the Divine: Gendered Economies of Monasticism in the Christian World,” organized by Professor **Kathryn Babayan** and PhD Candidate **Kelly Hannavi**. Expanding beyond the romanticized notion of an isolated religious hermit, we sought to include all the ways that monastics and monastic institutions intersected with the social and economic world beyond their stone walls. While scholars of the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East have developed a rich social history of religious life, monasticism as a structure, and in particular its relationship to the region it both supports and depends upon, is still lacking. This workshop became an opportunity to remedy this gap by considering the social, sexual, and spiritual hierarchies that configured these sacred spaces and the relationships they created within and outside them.

This workshop brought together young career scholars who work on monasticism, broadly defined, in the Eastern Christian churches and beyond. During our call for papers, we found a dearth of work on monasticism in the Eastern Christian world in the early modern and modern periods (roughly 16th-19th centuries), thus encouraging us to expand our geographic and temporal scope. This enabled a rich discussion that traversed time and place in a way that the organizers had not initially anticipated; similarities and differences between case studies offered fresh perspectives on our often-siloed work.

We had the pleasure of having two keynote speakers to open and close our workshop. Professor **Albrecht**

Diem (Syracuse University) opened our workshop with his talk, “‘Was the First Medieval Monk a Woman?’ Reconsidered.” In it, he revisited the argument he had made in a provocative article by the same title, namely that women’s religious orders, and the rules they followed, predated men’s monastic orders by 200 years. The reception and canonization of the central texts by and for men, at the time and in our discipline, however, resulted in the silencing of women’s monastic lives and the marginalization of their involvement in the development of asceticism.

Professor **Febe Armanios** (Middlebury College) concluded our workshop with her talk, “Suffering Bodies: Reflections on Women’s Piety and Virtue in Coptic Religious Narratives.” Her talk connected the topic of her first book, the 15th century Saint Demiana and the reception of her hagiography in the Ottoman Egyptian context, to her current work-in-progress about Coptic films’ representations of women’s suffering as sainthood. Seeking to tame the depiction of the powerful female saint, these “hagiopics” overemphasize clerical authority and the hierarchy of the church over the power of the saint, her malleable hagiography, and the (accessible) cult that celebrated her yearly festival.

In each of the three panels, a pair of participants delivered remarks on pre-circulated papers. Our first panel, “Early Modern Monastic Piety and Bodily Sensibilities” was chaired by Professor **Megan Holmes** (Art History, University of Michigan), who also served as respondent. Under the title “‘In Consideration of Her Infirmities’: The Experience of Impairment in the Early Modern Cloister,” **Haley E. Bowen** (PhD, University of Michigan) explored how



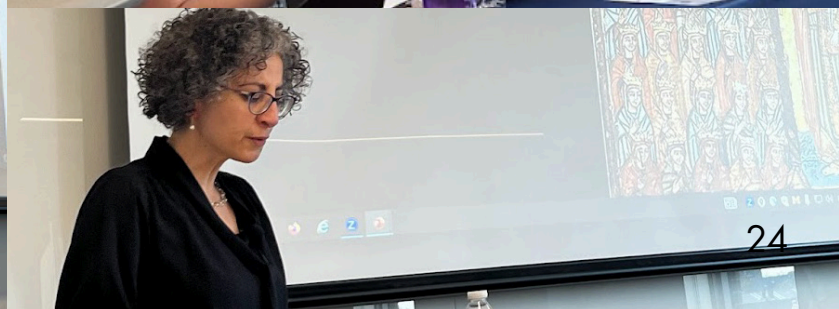
and why disabled women in early modern France entered convent life and how the convent as an institution served an important function as an alternative space for women whose corporeality was perceived as a barrier. **Janice Feng's** (PhD, University of Michigan) paper, "The Desire to Suffer? Asceticism, Piety, and Indigenous Women's Self-Making in Seventeenth-Century Nouvelle-France" examined how indigenous women of Turtle Island, through their interactions with French Catholic missionaries, interpreted and adopted ascetic practices that crossed acceptable boundaries of the French missionaries, thus creating new ways of being-in-the-world while resisting colonial attempts to control their bodies and desires.

The following panel "Monastic Labor: Scribes and Manuscript Production" brought us back to the Middle East chair and respondent was **Evyn Kropf** (Librarian for Middle Eastern & North African Studies and Religious Studies; Curator, Islamic Manuscripts Collection, University of Michigan). **Vevian Zaki** (PhD, Cataloger of Arabic Manuscripts at HMML, and Research Associate, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich) presented the case of three scribes, the monk Simon of Emesa, the Syrian Orthodox nun Maryam, and the East Syrian nun Mahabat Allah, and their respective scribal work and social position in two very different institutional settings in (or lack thereof) "Scribes, Binders, and Owners of Christian Arabic Manuscripts: Nuns and Monks in the Making of Manuscripts." **Lauren Onel** (PhD Student, Princeton University) shared some of her preliminary research on medieval Armenian women's experiences with church institutions in her paper

"Female Monasticism in Cilician Armenia: Gendered Boundaries and Franciscan Influence."

With CAS Director Gottfried Hagen as chair and respondent, the final panel traveled through time to the 19th century and examined "Monastic Transformations in Modernity." In her paper "Nineteenth Century Armenian Monastic Reform and Reimagination," **Nora Bairamian** (PhD Candidate, UCLA) compared the varied perspectives on the role of the Armenian monastery in the shifting political landscape of empires and nation-states in canonical works of Armenian literature to underscore the desire to reform the 'ancient' institution to meet modern, nationalist demands. **Kelly Hannavi** (PhD Candidate, University of Michigan) probed a miracle account of a child who transitions between genders as a solution to their mother's social and economic precarity, which occurred on monastic grounds, as a way to consider the Syriac Orthodox's clergy understanding of land, sanctity, and gender ("The Miracle of Sex: Spirituality, Sacred Lands, and Gender in 19th c. Ottoman Mardin").

Overall, the workshop spanning from late antiquity to the 1980's underscored both the longevity of monastic institutions and the multiple permutations it took across time and place. Through encounters between cultures in the New World or political changes brought by nationalism and secularism, we learned that monasteries and their inhabitants adjusted accordingly to serve its spiritual functions and survive in the material realm.



Harmonizing History: The Naghash Ensemble's Mesmerizing Performance at the 2023 Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Annual Distinguished Lecture

In a delightful fusion of cultures, music, and history, the 2022-23 Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Annual Distinguished Lecture hosted by the Center for Armenian Studies in collaboration with the Center for World Performance Studies (CWPS) was a captivating series of events that left attendees enchanted and inspired.

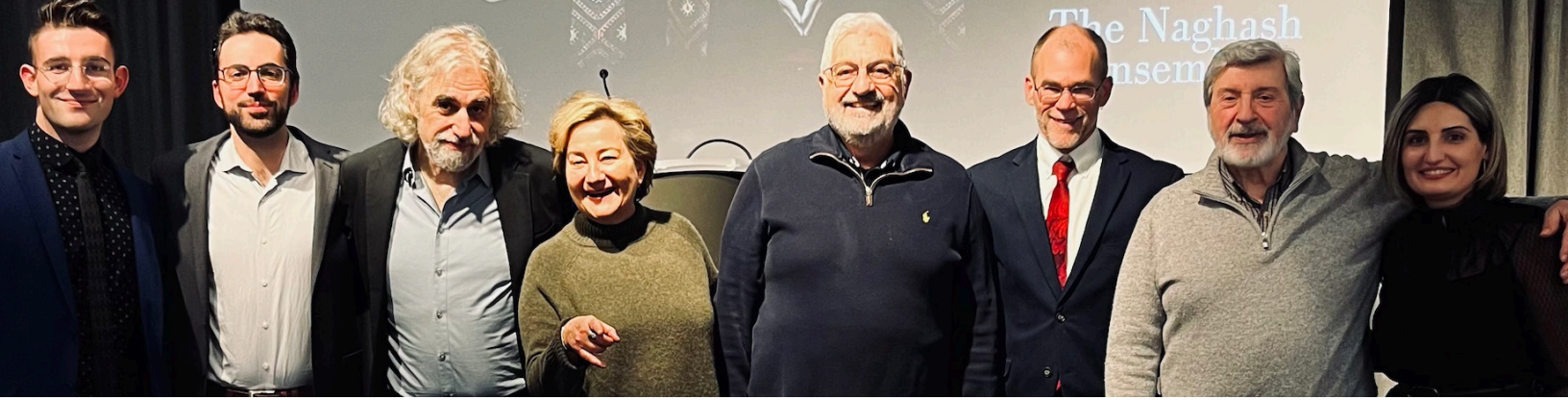
CAS and CWPS had the pleasure of hosting the internationally acclaimed Naghash Ensemble, a musical marvel that combines the essence of Armenian folk songs, classical music, post-minimalism, and the vibrancy of spirituals. Comprising three extraordinary female vocalists and some of Armenia's most talented instrumentalists playing instruments like duduk, oud, dhol, and piano, the Naghash Ensemble brought to life the sacred texts of medieval Armenian mystic poet and priest, Mkrtych Naghash. The result was an ethereal and mesmerizing soundscape that transcended time and space.

The journey that led to the creation of the Naghash Ensemble was equally fascinating. On March 8th, composer and pianist John Hodian was invited to present the Distinguished Lecture before the

performance of the Ensemble. Hodian describes how he was spellbound when he heard Hasmik Baghdasaryan singing medieval Armenian spiritual music in an ancient pagan temple outside Yerevan, Armenia. The haunting acoustics of the temple combined with Baghdasaryan's captivating voice left an indelible mark on Hodian. Driven by a desire to capture that magic, Hodian embarked on a quest that lasted for years. Hodian's pursuit took him through libraries in Yerevan, New York, and Berlin, searching for the perfect text to serve as the foundation for his musical vision. His eureka moment came when he stumbled upon the work of the medieval Armenian poet, Mkrtych Naghash. The words resonated deeply with Hodian, and he knew he had found the text he had been searching for. Hodian meticulously composed music to accompany Naghash's poetry and assembled a talented group of musicians who shared his vision. The community of Ann Arbor's Armenian Studies affiliates was given a unique opportunity to engage with the rich cultural heritage of Armenia and the innovative spirit of contemporary music.

Their short residency in Ann Arbor also included a visit to the Stearns Collection of Music where followed





From Left to Right: Vicken Mouradian, Michael Pifer, John Hodian, Kathryn Babayan, Ronald Suny, Gottfried Hagen, Kevork Bardakjian, and Naira Tumanyan

followed by a tour, each member of the ensemble was asked to participate in recorded interviews that have been translated, transcribed, and published by the Stearns Collection. Throughout the residency, the Ensemble also participated in three classroom visits consisting of FTVM 322 - How to Survive Dark Times: A Century of Armenian Film with Professor Michael Pifer, CWPS Graduate Seminar with Mbala Nkanga, and ARMN 202 - Intermediate Western Armenian II with Sosy Mishoyan.

On March 9, the culmination of this creative journey was on full display with a public performance at the Keene Theater. The Naghash Ensemble's performance was a testament to the power of music to bridge the gap between history and modernity. The audience was treated to a captivating rendition of Naghash's poetry, breathing new life into ancient words.

The 2023 Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Annual Distinguished

Lecture, with its harmonious blend of history, culture, and music, was a resounding success. It showcased the beauty of cross-cultural collaboration and the enduring power of art to transport us through time and space. The Naghash Ensemble left an indelible mark on our campus community and we are grateful for their visit. We'd also like to thank our incredible partners at the Center for Performance Studies and the Stearns Collection for helping make this a memorable event!

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.



Shared Memories: The Armenian Experience through Objects and Stories

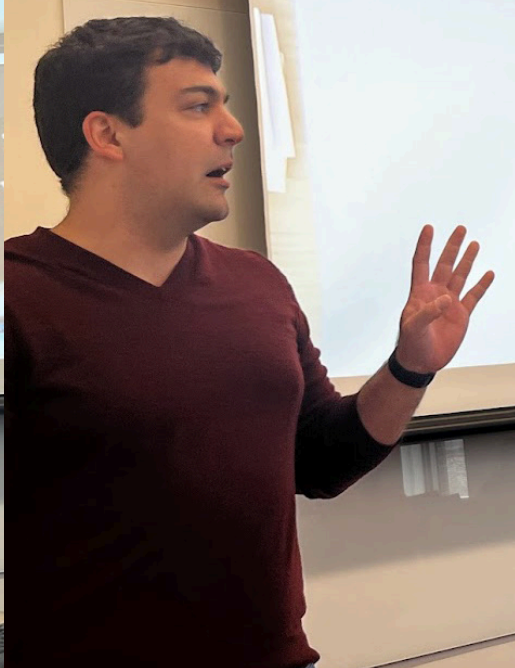
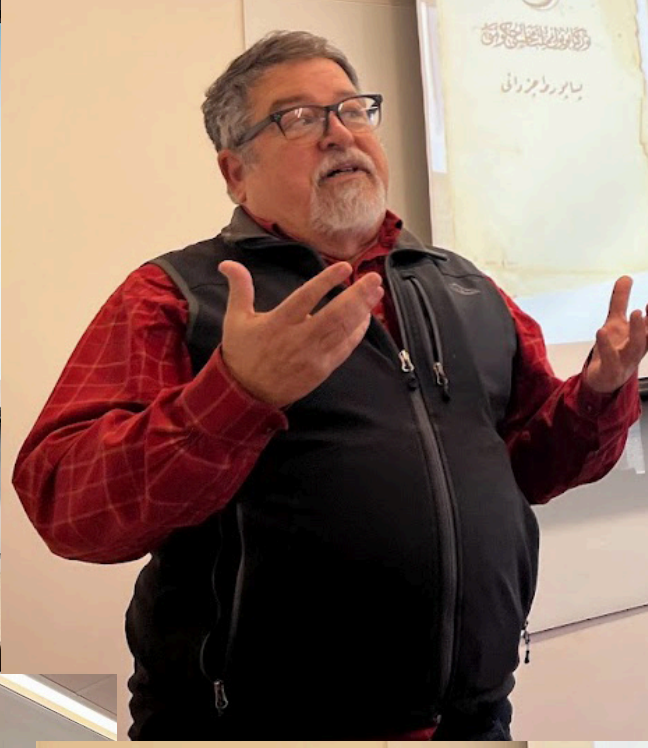
In a touching yet cathartic commemoration of the Genocide, in collaboration with the University of Michigan's Armenian Students' Cultural Association and the Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies, the Center for Armenian Studies, hosted an event on April 24 titled "Shared Memories: The Armenian Experience through Objects and Stories." In what we hope to make an annual tradition, this community gathering welcomed participants from all over the Michigan community to come together and share objects and stories that bear witness to the rich tapestry of Armenian identity.

At the heart of this event was the desire to connect generations and communities through personal experiences, artifacts, and narratives. Attendees were encouraged to bring objects or share stories that represented various facets of Armenian identity, history, and heritage. These cherished possessions and narratives had the power to convey stories related to the Armenian experience,

the Armenian Genocide, and the Michigan-Armenian Armenian-American experience. These objects and stories provided a profound insight into the lives and struggles of Armenians, both in the homeland and in the diaspora in the decades following the collective trauma. Each item and every narrative added depth to the shared memory of the Armenian people.

By creating a space for people to come together, share, and remember, the "Shared Memories" event fostered a sense of unity, solidarity, and resilience among the Armenian community and its supporters. It was a poignant tribute to the strength of the Armenian people and a reminder that through the act of remembering, we can ensure that the legacy of the Armenian Genocide is never forgotten. In the darkest of times, stories and objects have the power to connect individuals and communities, transcending generations and borders to keep the flame of remembrance alive.





CAS in the Community: On- and Off-Campus Collaborations

Technologies of Communication and Armenian Narrative Practices Through the Centuries (September 17/18, 2022)

The two day Technologies of Communication event organized by the Society for Armenian Studies and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) in Belmont, MA, included Michigan's own Armen Abkarian. Scholars from Armenia, the United States, Hungary, and Australia presented papers on how new technologies of communication have shaped Armenians' narrative styles and practices across historical periods, as well as how Armenians shaped narrative practices in turn. Armen's "Forging The Crown of Togarmah: Vahram's Chronicle and the Creation of Cilician Armenian Kingship," focused on Vahram's Chronicle and its strategies of projecting the power and legitimacy of the Cilician Armenian kings, as well as its place in a tradition of Armenian historiography that sought to legitimize this or that ruler but also how the Chronicle draws on non-Armenian forms and styles.

Armenia-Azerbaijan Relations and Implications for Peace and Security in the South Caucasus Region (February 13, 2023)

Organized by the Weiser Diplomacy Center and held in Ann Arbor, Ronald Grigor Suny, Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of History and Political Science discussed the little-known conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed territory of Karabakh, an issue overshadowed by the war in Ukraine. This protracted conflict, spanning over thirty years, resulted in thousands of casualties and endless diplomatic negotiations. Despite a ceasefire in 1994, tensions persisted, and the conflict escalated in 2020, with Azerbaijan launching a military offensive supported by Turkey. The presentation delved into the causes, dynamics, and potential outcomes of this conflict, highlighting the challenges posed by nationalism and territorial integrity. Professor Suny's extensive expertise in the South Caucasus added valuable insights to understanding this complex and ongoing issue.

"Technologies of Communication and Armenian Narrative Practices Through the Centuries" held at NAASR Building, September 17-18, 2022



27th Annual Comparative Literature Intra-Student Faculty Forum: Insurgent Research: Practice and Theory (March 10/11, 2023)

Organized by graduate students in the Department of Comparative Literature, this conference aimed to showcase research that challenges and resists various issues, including capitalism, colonialism, militarism, racism, environmental destruction, mass incarceration, and policing. The panelists consisted of a diverse group of graduate and undergraduate students, independent scholars, researchers, faculty, and activists from various locations. Dr. Joy James, a scholar and activist specializing in topics like police and prison abolitionism, political imprisonment, radical feminism, and diasporic anti-Black racism, served as the keynote speaker. The conference featured a wide range of topics, emphasizing the transition from theoretical discourse to practical action.

Panel on Reconstructing History and Challenging Canons (March 27, 2023)

In an attempt to challenge conventional narratives, the LSA Student Government assembled a panel of diverse professors aiming to recontextualize history and challenge conventional narratives. Their discussions spanned disciplines and geographies, encouraging a critical examination of “accepted histories” and providing an educational entry point for students. CAS’s own Dr. Hakem Al-Rustom was among the panelists who contributed to exploring topics of academic canons and the Westernization of history, emphasizing the importance of centering voices and stories beyond the mainstream to create a more inclusive understanding of the world.

A Musician’s Role in Advocating for the Armenian Community (April 3, 2023)

Organized by the Multicultural Pharmacy Student Association (MPSO), Dr. Samvel Arakelyan, a professional violinist with a Doctorate of Musical Arts (DMA) from Michigan State University, was invited to discuss his role within the Armenian community. Born in Yerevan,

Armenia, he uses music as a platform to advocate for Armenian culture. The event aimed to inspire discussions about leveraging personal strengths and passions to advocate for important causes within various communities. Spearheaded by MPSO’s Director of External Affairs and Doctor of Pharmacy Candidate, Stella Archiyan, the event highlighted the advocacy for cultural awareness and appreciation within the diverse college.

2023 World History and Literature Initiative (WHaLI): Border Walls: Navigating Exclusion in a Divided World (June 13, 2023)

In partnership with the International Institute, this teacher-training event aimed to enhance the teachers’ content knowledge, pedagogical practices, and access to resources for teaching global perspectives. Led by experts in area studies, the conference included regional case studies on border walls, small group discussions, and the use of resources provided by the WHaLI design team. CAS’s own Sosy Mishoyan shared a presentation entitled, “The Border Between Artsakh and Azerbaijan - Sharing My Experience Living in Armenia 2014-2022.” Highlighting the ongoing issues surrounding the Lachin corridor, Sosy surveyed both the history of the region as well as her firsthand experiences living in Armenia as a Syrian refugee. Teachers from Michigan, Illinois, and Puerto Rico attended this year’s event. The symposium received positive feedback from all participating educators who found the content valuable for understanding border walls and enriching their courses.

Vicken Mouradian and Sosy Mishoyan at "Border Walls: Navigating Exclusion in a Divided World" (June 13, 2023) in Ann Arbor





Our Mission

The Center for Armenian Studies (CAS) is a non-profit organization that fosters cross-cultural understanding and promotes the study of Armenian history, culture, and language. Through its various programs, CAS provides a platform for academic research, public education, and community building.

EVENTS

Guest Lectures
Artist Spotlights
Film Screenings
Conferences
Music

Study Armenian

Masterclasses through the University of Middle East Studies (UMES) through our programs and with the support of Armenian Studies.

Public Education Initiative

6-12 Teacher Training
Community College Partnership



CENTER FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Creating Connections of Understanding
CAS is at the Center of It All!

Community Building

American Studies
Cultural Association
ASCAP
Multiculturalism
Grading to work with the
Armenian Studies
MEMASA

Student Funding

- Scholarships
- Fellowships
- Travel/Research
Grants

Postdoctoral
Fellowships
Olga Stepanian
Fellowship in
Armenian Studies
Armenian History

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OFF-CAMPUS MEAL PLANS

Discover the wonderful world of off-campus meal plans. They offer a variety of options to suit your needs and budget. For more information, visit our website or contact us at cas@umich.edu.

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ASCA's Annual Recap: From Cider Mills to Hye Hop by Dashiell Silvers

The Armenian Students' Cultural Association (ASCA) had a great school year in 2022-23! We participated in many different events throughout the year, such as a cider mill trip, pastoral visits from Father Aren and Lisa Mardigian of St. John Armenian Church, baking events, charity events, and collaborations with other cultural organizations. We additionally participated in a cultural organization world cup, finishing as finalists. One of the highlights of our year was the much-anticipated Hye Hop event, held in mid-February. This grand celebration brought together nearly 130 participants and, in an incredible display of generosity, raised over \$2,000 for the Center for Creative Technologies (TUMO). This charitable organization is a beacon of hope, providing technology to underserved areas in Armenia, and we were proud to support their noble cause. The dedicated executive board for the year included Celene Philip (President), Ariana Nigoghosian (Vice President), David Ameriguian (Treasurer), Victoria Nigoghosian (Marketing Chair), Olivia Mouradian (Secretary), Nayiri Sagherian (Networking Chair), Kristen Bagdasarian (Education and Outreach Chair), and Dashiell Silvers (Hye Hop Chair). In collaboration with the Center for Armenian Studies, we expanded our horizons by participating in various events, including an Armenian movie night that deepened our appreciation for the cultural tapestry of our heritage. Looking back, it's clear that

we had an exceptional year in ASCA, one filled with camaraderie, growth, and memorable moments. As we eagerly await the upcoming year, we carry with us the cherished memories of our successes and the boundless optimism for an even brighter future. With the support of our passionate members and the backing of CAS, we are confident that our next journey will be nothing short of extraordinary.

ASCA Executive Board 2022-23



2023 Annual ASCA Hye Hop



MWAS Annual Report: Pushing the Boundaries of Armenian Studies by Armen Abkarian

During the academic year of 2022-2023, the Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies (MWAS) organized two research presentations and four writing workshops for works-in-progress. 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 where scholars can connect through their research interests, essential for cultivating a vibrant intellectual community and rigorous scholarship. Thanks to the guidance and support from Faculty Advisor and Interim Center Director Gottfried Hagen, Graduate Coordinators Armen Abkarian and Alex Jreisat organized and hosted a series of six workshops throughout the winter term.

Armen Abkarian, PhD candidate in the Department of History, kicked off our series with his dissertation chapter “The People Are Not The Land: Genealogical Mandates in Cilician Armenian Kingship (1198-1289).” His chapter explores the construction of kingship in Cilician Armenia, focusing on the discursive creation, promulgation, and contestation of prestigious genealogies as a pathway to power. His discussion highlights the faultlines of power, especially between the nobility and the clergy in the formation of this nascent medieval kingdom.

Our next workshop in the series was a master’s thesis shared by **Vicken Mouradian**, an MA student in the Department of History at California State University, Northridge. Titled “Love in Ancient Armenia: Formations of Identity in the Pre-Christian Tradition,” he discussed the various forms of love which figure in the primary and secondary sources that contain the earliest representations of Armenians. He considers how these representations of love intersected with contemporaneous values of identity, cultural values, and gender.

Alex Jreisat, PhD student in the Departments of Anthropology and History, gave a presentation

titled, “Exploring the Late Ottoman Şeriat Court Records through Machine-Learning: A Case-Study from Qaḏā’ al-Salt,” on his co-creation of a machine-learning model that can make ruḳ’ah Arabic script machine-readable through the use of Handwritten-Text Recognition (HTR) software. The model allows for digitally searchable shar’ia court records from the late Ottoman Empire’s eastern provinces, enabling instant searches by criteria such as person, place, religion, nationality, city of origin, or land under adjudication.

Arakel Minassian, PhD student in the Department of Comparative Literature, workshopped his essay, “Memory, Mourning, and Solidarity in Vasily Grossman’s *Dobro vam* [Good to You].” His paper argues that *Dobro vam*, a reflective memoir he wrote about his time in Soviet Armenia, offers a rich point of entry to comparatively consider shared trauma. His own experiences of anti-semitism and genocide were thrown into relief against the landscape and social life of Soviet Armenia. His interactions with Armenians gave birth to a deep sense of solidarity with another people who had faced genocide.

Emma Portugal, PhD student in the Department of Linguistics, shared a presentation, titled “Examining the Maintenance of Dialect Features in Regional Urban Armenian Speech via Sociolinguistic Analysis of Vowels in Gavar, Armenia.” Her presentation treats the maintenance and evolution of an Armenian dialect of migrants to Gavar from Bayezid at the turn of the twentieth century. Relying on interviews with various community members, she traces the degree to which the migrants’ dialect had incorporated elements from their new environs and how they had maintained elements of their original features.

Our last workshop in the series was an article-in-progress by Manoogian Post-Doctoral Fellow, **Cevat Dargin**, titled “‘A Boil in the Heart of Anatolia’: Imagining Dersim as ‘a State within a State’ across Empire and Nation-State (1866– 1939).” He investigates

investigates the discursive emergence of Dersim in British, Armenian, Ottoman, and Turkish sources, highlighting shifting perspectives on its geography. Despite its location in Central Anatolia, Dersim was considered a frontier in the Ottoman imaginary. Dargin examines medical metaphors and colonial analogies, tracing these Ottoman-era discourses into the Turkish Republic and the 1937-38 campaign to conquer Dersim's challenging topography.

Over the course of the academic year, we did not have the opportunity to invite a scholar to visit our campus and share their work with us. However, we were also extremely fortunate to have rigorous discussions on new methodologies and themes among ourselves. In light of the inspiration that we took from one another's workshop papers and academic recommendations, we repurposed the funds formerly dedicated to inviting visiting scholars, instead providing two particularly influential books to the participants of our workshop.

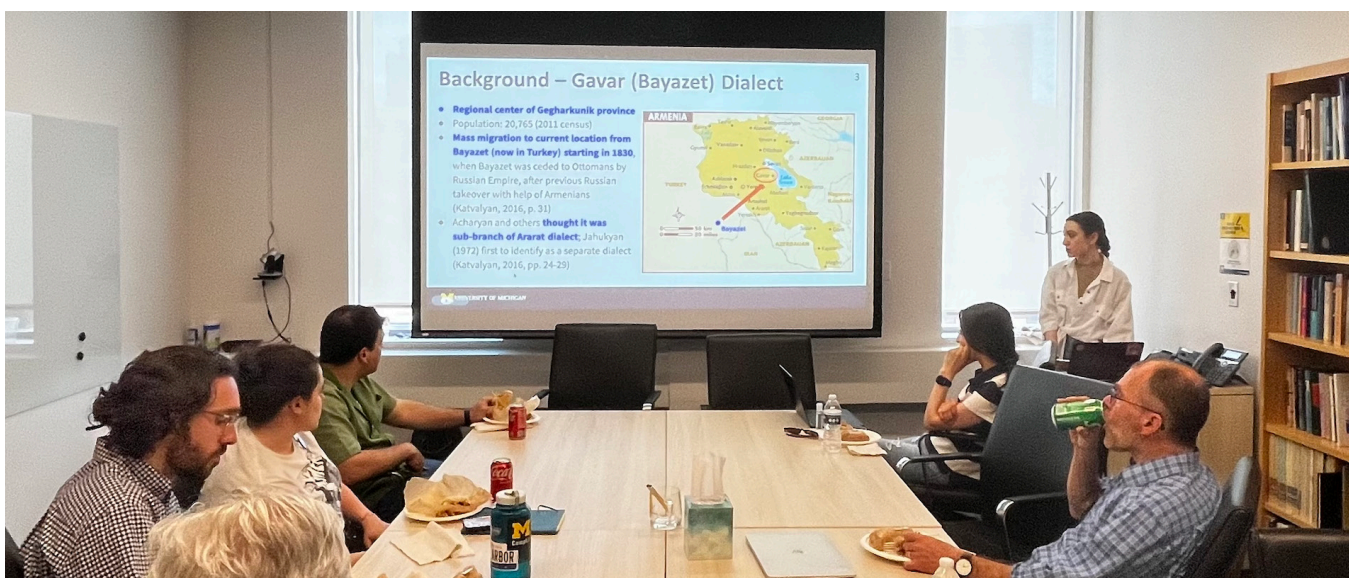
For our first book, we distributed an English translated edition of Vasily Grossman's *An Armenian Sketchbook*. Because much of the text blends the writer's first-hand experiences with his romantic imaginations of a historic Armenia, from an outside perspective of a Soviet Jew, the book serves the central theme of transcultural solidarity to which our workshop aspires.

The second book we distributed was Azfar Moin's and Alan Strathern's *Sacred Kingship in World History: Between Immanence and Transcendence*. Moin and Strathern employ a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to compare the relationships between religion and politics across a vast temporal and geographic

scope. The text addresses the fundamental question of how premodern kingship is created, which was posed by our first presenter's paper.

Finally, in consultation with the Center for Armenian Studies administration team, the MWAS group decided to co-sponsor a year-end event hosted by the center. On April 24, CAS hosted the first annual Armenian Genocide community commemoration event called, "Shared Memories: The Armenian Experience Through Objects and Stories." During this event, campus faculty, staff, undergraduates, and graduates came together with local Metro Detroit community members to engage in an interactive and collaborative effort to think critically about the Armenian experience. Audience members were asked to bring objects and stories that attest to their links to the Armenian identity, the Genocide, the Armenian-American experience, and so on. MWAS participants attended and presented during this event which better helped us to connect with the community and present an academic perspective to a lay audience. Sponsored funds went towards food purchases featuring a variety of ethnic foods that further demonstrated the inherent complexity that comprises the Armenian identity.

Our successful MWAS workshop series this academic year would not have been possible without the generosity and support of the Center for Armenian Studies, Rackham Graduate School, and our dedicated faculty and students. The space that this workshop provides enables students to hone their innovative and essential research, which offer significant contributions to Armenian studies and the participants' various fields.



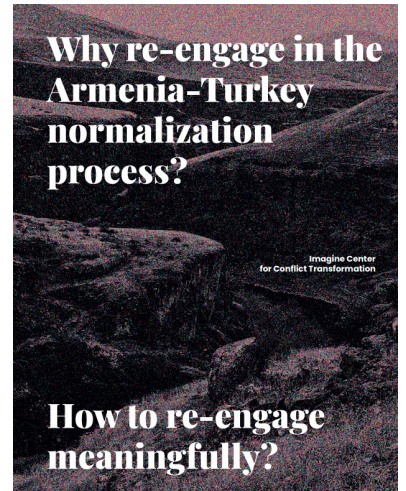
KEEPING UP WITH CAS

New Graduate Student Spotlight: Lilit Gizhlaryan

This year, CAS welcomes our newest student, Lilit Gizhlaryan to Ann Arbor. Pursuing a Masters in International and Regional Studies with a specialization in Russian, East European, & Eurasian Studies, Lilit makes a welcome addition to the CAS community.

Lilit's academic background includes an MA degree in Spanish language and literature, which she obtained from Yerevan State University in 2016. Her master's thesis explored the portrayal of the dictatorship period in Argentina from 1945 to the 1960s through the works of Julio Cortazar. In addition to her academic pursuits, Lilit has actively engaged in conflict resolution efforts in the South Caucasus region. She has been involved in facilitating dialogue projects, including the Armenian-Azerbaijani, Armenian-Turkish, Georgian-Ossetian conflicts.

Lilit's research contributed to the publication, *Why Re-engage in the Armenia-Turkey Normalization Process: How to Re-engage Meaningfully?* She also has extensively worked with the local population living at the border regions of Armenia. Currently, Lilit is developing her research topic, which centers on the Armenian community and institutions in Turkey, exploring the complex dynamics of the community and its interactions within the broader Turkish and Armenian context.



Lilit Gizhlaryan



Undergraduate Student Feature: Dashiell Silvers

This year we sat down with Dashiell Silvers, incoming senior majoring in sport management and ASCA president to discuss his background, involvement in Armenian programming, and his research aspirations in the world of college sports

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

My name is Dashiell Silvers and I was born and raised in Los Angeles, CA. I am $\frac{3}{4}$ Armenian and $\frac{1}{4}$

Jewish. I am currently a senior majoring in sport management at the University of Michigan.

What has 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?

My academic journey with Armenian Studies saw me engaging in two courses, Western Armenian 101 and 102. These courses were nothing short of a

revelation, as I dove into the fundamentals of the Armenian language. What made this experience great were the remarkable mentors who guided me through it. Professors Pifer and Mishoyan, with their expertise and dedication, transformed these courses into a rich exploration of the language and culture. As I look forward to my final semester, I am eager to immerse myself in another captivating Armenian Studies course.

What is your role and history with the Armenian Students Cultural Association? What motivated you to participate in this community?

I joined the Armenian Students' Cultural Association as a freshman in late 2020. That year was the Covid year, so we had all our meetings on Zoom. The next year, I joined the marketing committee and had a good time working there, which led me to apply for the e-board. My junior year, I was in charge of Hye Hop and was on the executive board. This year, I am the president of ASCA and also doing Hye Hop again.

Can you tell us more about your academic research or projects you are working on?

I am currently working on research related to the name, image, and likeness laws (NIL) in college sports. There are many new laws around it, and I am trying to find trends in how schools adapt to the new landscape.

What are some of your academic goals during your remaining time at U-M? What are you aspiring to do after graduation?

During my remaining time here, I hope to take another Armenian-related class and graduate with honors. After graduation, I hope to work in professional sports. I also want to help create a stronger Armenian alumni network of U-M grads from all majors.

What has been your impression and experience with Armenian Studies engagement during your time at U-M?

While at U-M, I loved being associated with Armenian Studies. I believe they do a great job holding a diverse

panel of guest speakers and hosting interesting events. My favorite one to date was meeting the director of Aurora's Sunrise who came in and spoke to us about her process of making the movie.

Do you have any advice for incoming students on engaging with the Armenian Studies community?

My advice would be just to show up to as many Armenian-related things as possible. We are all a community, and we need to act like it by supporting each other and sticking together. Whether it's ASCA, CAS, or other events, just try to show up and talk to people! I got to where I am today just from going to meetings, and availability is the best ability. You are only in college for so long, so make sure to make the most of it.





Our Mission

The Center for Armenian Studies (CAS) serves students, faculty, and the broader community by furthering the understanding of the history and culture of Armenian societies worldwide through pioneering research, innovative instruction, and a commitment to building partnerships on campus and abroad.

EVENTS

Guest Lectures
Artist Spotlights
Film Screenings
Conferences
Music

Study Armenian

- Major/Minor through the Department of Middle East Studies
- MA/PhD through any program and concentrate on Armenian Studies



CENTER FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Culture, Community, & Connections
CAS is at the Center of it all!

Public Education Initiatives

K-12 Teacher Training
Community College Partnerships

Community Building

- Armenian Student Cultural Association (ASCA)
- Multidisciplinary Graduate Workshop for Armenian Studies (MWAS)

Student Funding

- Scholarships
- Fellowships
- Travel/Research Grants

Postdoctoral Fellowships

Alex & Maria Manougian Fellowships for:
- Armenian Studies
- Armenian History



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it.umich.edu/armenian

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024 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: Modern Hebrew Language and Linguistics, Modern Armenian and Linguistics, Language Pedagogy, Comparative Sociolinguistics, Teaching Hebrew as a Foreign Language

LILIT GIZHLARYAN, MA Student, Masters in International and Regional Studies Program

Areas of Concentration: Identity Creation, Nationalism, Memory Politics, Borders, Colonial Legacies

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 Armenian Literature; Postcolonial Studies; Translation; Creative Writing in Western Armenian

EMMA PORTUGAL, PhD Student, Department of Linguistics

Areas of Concentration: Sociolinguistics, Language and Dialect Contact, Language Ideologies, Armenian Dialects

ARMENIAN STUDIES AFFILIATED FACULTY

HAKEM AL-RUSTOM, Assistant Professor in History & the Alex Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian History, Departments of History and Anthropology

KATHRYN BABAYAN, Professor of Iranian History and Culture, Department of History

KEVORK BARDAKJIAN, Professor Emeritus of Armenian Languages and Literatures, Department of Middle East Studies

GOTTFRIED HAGEN, Director, Center for Armenian Studies, Professor of Turkish Studies, Department of Middle East Studies

SOSY MISHOYAN, Lecturer, Department of Middle East Studies

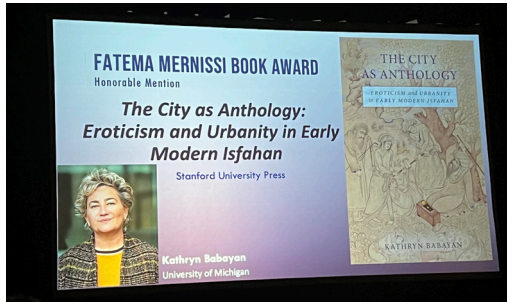
MICHAEL PIFER, Marie Manoogian Professor of Armenian Language and Literature, Department of Middle East Studies

RONALD GRIGOR SUNY, William H. Sewell, Jr. Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of History, Department of History

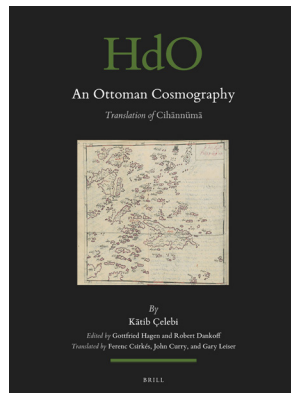
MELANIE TANIELIAN, Director, Program in International and Comparative Studies, Associate Professor of History, Department of History

Faculty News & Updates

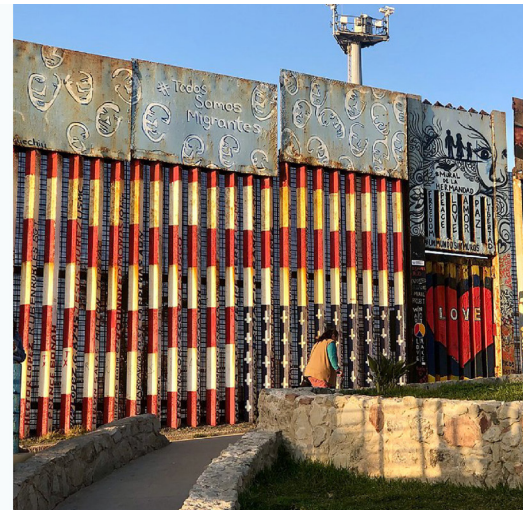
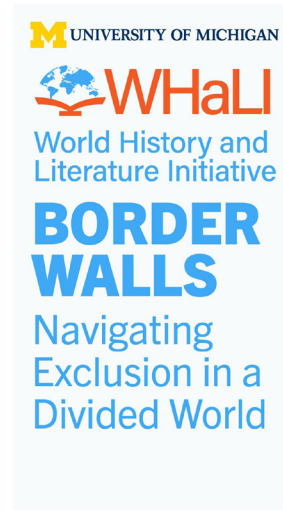
Kathryn Babayan was recognized during the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association for her book, *The City as Anthology: Eroticism and Urbanity in Early Modern Isfahan* for outstanding scholarship in studies of gender, sexuality, and women’s lived experience. This past year, Kathryn also received LSA Research funding in the Humanities for her Isfahan Anthology Project.



In 2021, **Gottfried Hagen**, in collaboration with Robert Dankoff, published the English translation of a key work of early modern Ottoman intellectual history, Kātib Çelebi’s (d. 1659) geographical encyclopaedia *Cihānnümā*. He returned to the topic with an entry on the author in the online collection *Bloomsbury History: Theory & Method*, under the rubric of key thinkers in 2022. A more recent study of this important figure, focusing on historical semantics, will come out in 2024. Gottfried also contributed a chapter on the patronage of Ottoman maps to a volume commemorating the great Arabist-medievalist Michael Bonner (“Ptolemaeus Triumphans, or: Maps, Knowledge, and Ottoman Patronage,” in *Islam on the Margins. Studies in Memory of Michael Bonner*, edited by Robert Haug and Steven Judd, 235–67. Leiden: Brill, 2023). Gottfried also continues to publish on Ottoman Islam, most recently with “*Pietas Ottomanica: The House of ‘Osmān and the Prophet Muḥammad*,” in *The Presence of the Prophet in Early Modern and Contemporary Islam*. Volume 2. Heirs of the Prophet: Authority and Power, edited by Rashida Chih, David Jordan, and Stefan Reichmuth, 21–43. Leiden: Brill, 2022.



As a part of the 2023 World History and Literature Initiative (WHaLI) workshop on Border Walls, **Sosy Mishoyan** was asked to participate in this vital teacher training initiative. Sosy shared a presentation entitled, “The Border Between Artsakh and Azerbaijan - Sharing My Experience Living in Armenia 2014-2022.” With a focus on highlighting the ongoing issues surrounding the Lachin corridor, Sosy surveyed both the history of the region as well as her firsthand experiences living in Armenia as a Syrian refugee.



Michael Pifer is continuing to develop new courses for CAS, such as his newest class on the Silk Roads, which centers on Armenian case studies and experiences for a broad undergraduate audience. He received a grant in 2023 from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation to publish an illustrated children’s book in Western Armenian, aimed at ages 4-6, to promote Armenian literacy in the diaspora. He plans to donate some copies of this book to the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School in Southfield, MI. He also gave the inaugural Walter G. Andrews Memorial Lecture at the University

The caravanserai lies just ahead in the blue twilight. You dismount your horse, wipe the sweat and dust from your clothes, and approach the hearth fire inside. Huddled around you are many other travelers who have come from afar, both from the east and the west. You open your mouth to greet them. But wait— what language will you speak? What stories will you swap? What meals will you share and what songs will you sing? Do you have allies here? Or enemies?



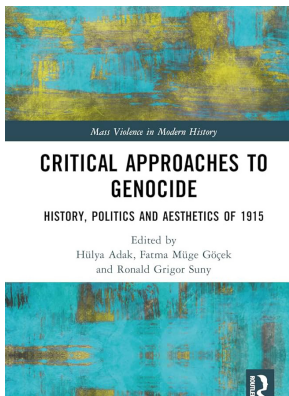
So You Want to Be
a Silk Roads Traveler
A Premodern Survival Guide from
Europe to Asia (and Back Again)

Dr. Michael Redman Pifer (mipifer@umich.edu)
Satisfies the Humanities Distribution Requirement
This course takes an up-close look at world history by bringing to life moments of contact between diverse travelers from Italy to the Middle East, Armenia to Central Asia, Japan to China. Together, we’ll shed light on the pathways that make up what is popularly known as the “Silk Roads,” a network of routes that spanned the Eurasian world. Over the semester, you’ll gain a gritty, gritty understanding of the travelers who traversed this space during the medieval period, encountering pilgrims and merchants, mercenaries and princes, slaves and servants, queens and caravan masters. We’ll also consider how non-human actors (languages, stories, goods, and diseases) made use of these same routes, connecting diverse cultures and peoples across Eurasia in uneven manners. As this class maintains, the Silk Roads are still well worth traveling — but only if you know how to get by on the road.
Grading is based on active participation, short response papers, a midterm, and a final project. No previous knowledge of the Silk Roads or Eurasia is necessary.



of Washington in 2022. Currently, his research program focuses on multilingualism and the Armenian vernacular in the premodern period.

Ron Suny, now an emeritus professor of history and political science at two universities, was a little nervous about retiring from teaching. His advice to younger colleagues now is that one should retire as soon as possible. Retirement is an extended sabbatical. It gives you time for your own scholarly work, to travel to conferences, to give lectures at universities, and to sleep in late. Since retirement at the end of June 2022, after 55 years of teaching, he has lectured or participated in conferences in person in Erevan, Tbilisi, London, Berlin, and Istanbul, as well as at Harvard, Yale, Berkeley, Northwestern, Stanford, Toronto, and Columbia Universities, and Wellesley College. He has lectured online in Russia, Lithuania, Armenia, and Georgia. He has given 63 interviews on the war in Ukraine and the conflict in Artsakh. The highlight of the last year was lecturing in and traveling in July



with the Monterey Summer Symposium on Russian Studies in Armenia and Georgia. He has published 16 articles in the last year in *The Conversation*, *The European Journal of Social Theory*, *Moscow News*, *Jacobin*, and *The Cambridge History of Socialism*. He co-edited a collection of articles from an earlier Workshop in Armenian-Turkish Scholarship with Hülya Adak and Fatma Müge Göçek, *Critical Approaches to Genocide: History, Politics and Aesthetics of 1915* (London: Routledge, 2023).

In the fall of 2023, **Melanie Tanielian** accepted a new role as the director of the Program in International and Comparative Studies at U-M. During the last year, she also published an article "Defying the Humanitarian Gaze: Visual Representation of Genocide Survivors in the Eastern Mediterranean" in *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*. She has a forthcoming article in the *American Historical Review* titled "'We Found Her at the River': German Humanitarian Fantasies and Child Sponsorship in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century." She is currently working on a monograph about German humanitarianism in the Eastern Mediterranean from 1890s to 1930s.

2023-24 EVENT CALENDAR

All our events are free and open to the public. When possible, recordings will be posted on the CAS youtube page www.youtube.com/aspmichigan after the event. Please visit ii.umich.edu/armenian for more information on upcoming events and sign up for our mailing list to receive updates and announcements.

SEPTEMBER

18
mon

Lecture | *Remnants: Embodied Archives of the Armenian Genocide*. **Elyse Semerdjian**, Clark University.

22
fri

Roundtable | *Crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh: Panel on Recent Developments*. Panelists: **Talin Hitik, Lori Khatchadourian, & Ron Suny**.

28
thu

2023 Annual Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Distinguished Lecture | *Aurora's Sunrise: Craft of the Film*. **Inna Sahakyan**, Director & Filmmaker.

29
fri

Film Screening & Q&A | *Aurora's Sunrise* **Inna Sahakyan**, Director & Filmmaker.

OCTOBER

11
wed

Lecture | *Early Modernity, the Armenian Printing Revolution, and Imagining the "Confessional Nation" across the Armenian Diaspora, 1680-1800*. **Sebouh David Aslanian**, University of California, Los Angeles.

20-27
fri-fri

Film Screening | *Aurora's Sunrise* at State Theater.

NOVEMBER

10-11
fri-sat

Workshop on Armenian and Turkish Scholarship (WATS XI) | *From the Foundational Crime to the Making of a New State (and Nation): The End of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Turkish Republic*.

DECEMBER

6
wed

Lecture | *A Precarious Armenia: When Does the Future Look Like the Past?* **Gerard Jirair Libaridian**, University of Michigan Emeritus.

FEBRUARY

16-17
fri-sat

Workshop | *Where Empires Meet: Borderland Cosmopolitanisms in the Late Antique and Medieval Middle East*.

MARCH

8-9
fri-sat

Workshop | *13th Annual International Graduate Student Workshop in Armenian Studies - Language Revitalization and Resurgence: The Case of Modern Armenian*.

APRIL

24
wed

Community Event | *Armenian Genocide Commemoration*.



A YEAR OF SUPPORT

Annual Donation Report

The Center for Armenian Studies is funded almost entirely by the generous donations of our supporters. We seek to increase the depth and breadth of resources devoted to Armenian studies at U-M through an endowed fund that provides permanent support for the center. This year, CAS solicited funds to support our three publicly-sourced funds.

We'd like to extend our deepest gratitude to all our community members who donated to the center this year. Particularly during fall's Giving Tuesday and spring's Giving Blue Day, we raised a combined total of \$2,105.00. We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals for their generous contributions in 2022-23 (August 1, 2022-July 31, 2023)

ARMENIAN ENDOWMENT - \$1,590.38

CAS promotes the study of the history, language, and culture of Armenia and Armenians and helps prepare a new generation of scholars. We seek to increase the depth of resources devoted to Armenian studies to provide permanent support for the center.

GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWSHIP FUND - \$1,815.00

Gifts to this fund support collaborations, initiatives, and center public programming creating opportunities for the students and community to interact with prominent scholars, artists, and experts in the field.

CENTER FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES STRATEGIC FUND - \$3,250.00

Gifts to this fund support collaborations, initiatives, and center public programming creating opportunities for the students and community to interact with prominent scholars, artists, and experts in the field.

As CAS navigates through a post-pandemic landscape, we continue to provide in-person and hybrid programming for our on-campus and general community populations. Your gift is not only critical to helping us attract and retain the most outstanding graduate students from the U.S. and overseas, but your financial support is also an investment in the next generation of Armenian studies scholars and public servants in the diaspora as well as in Armenia!

We could not do this without your generous support. It is our great hope that we continue to work together to drive forward the mission of the center to educate about all things Armenian and provide the most promising undergraduate and graduate students as well as early-career scholars with an intellectual community wherein they may thrive!

WE WOULD LIKE TO ALSO SHARE OUR EARNEST GRATITUDE AND RECOGNITION FOR OUR REGULAR MAJOR DONORS REPRESENTED BY THE FOLLOWING FUNDS

- Agnes, Harry, and Richard Yarmain Fellowship Fund
- Avedis and Arsen Sanjian Fellowship Fund
- Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Lecture Fund
- Edward Hagop Noroian Scholarship Fund
- Haiganoosh Mengushian/Ajemian Memorial Scholarship & Student Travel Award
- Harry Ardashes Paul Memorial Fund
- Leo A. and Armine G. Aroian Armenian Studies Scholarship Fund
- Manoogian Simone Fund for Armenian Studies

In an effort to foster community engagement and in recognition of every donation of \$65 or higher, we will send you one of our special CAS T-shirts! Our center T-shirts not only represent your support for Armenian Studies but also help raise awareness of our vibrant community!

FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO RECEIVE YOUR SHIRT:

- 1 Visit ii.umich.edu/armenian/donate and select your fund
- 2 Proceed to Checkout, and under Gift Options, select "I would like to add a comment," and enter your T-shirt size here (1 T-shirt per \$65 increment)
- 3 Enter your contact information on the following page with the best email & mailing address the T-shirt would be sent to.

SCAN HERE TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT ARMENIAN STUDIES!



The University of Michigan's Center for Armenian Studies
serves the university and the 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 1981; we want to be there in the future and do more.

