

# ARMENIAN MOBILITIES

*People, Ideas, and Objects*



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## ON THE COVER

Garmravank monastery near Gevas (Credit: Anoush Suni)  
An old map of Haleb (Aleppo)

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# NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

## REFLECTIONS & FUTURE VISIONS

For the last four decades, the Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan has benefitted from the enthusiastic leadership of its directors and the continued support from our community. The program has a long tradition of being intellectually forward-looking and demands innovation at every turn.

## LEGACIES & CONTINUITIES

Under the creative directorship of Kathryn Babayan, in particular, the program shifted its focus and moved into exciting new scholarly directions. Student involvement and interdisciplinarity writ large were the hallmarks of Dr. Babayan's seven-year tenure. She empowered the program's students and postdoctoral fellows and creatively steered Armenian Studies beyond the confines of a usually narrowly defined field. With the aim of giving young scholars a voice and the chance to become active participants in shaping some of the intellectual themes of the program, she opened opportunities for students and postdoctoral fellows to organize workshops based on their interests. Recent graduate of our program, Dzovinar Derderian, expressed her appreciation and comments on the meaning of such events for a growing scholar in the field:

*As a graduate student, the opportunity to co-organize two international graduate student workshops and to co-coordinate the Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies allowed me to form meaningful collegial relations with students and faculty at the University of Michigan, as well as with an international group of students and scholars outside of the university. The formation of such a scholarly community that Professor Babayan always encourages, has been vital for my intellectual growth and has given me the opportunity to collaborate with scholars of various fields and disciplines.*

Furthermore, Dr. Babayan pushed faculty and students associated with the program to enter into conversations that crossed disciplinary boundaries. First and foremost, she urged everyone around her to ask what Armenian Studies might have to offer to thematic and methodological discussions of shared histories, visual culture, childhood studies, Mediterranean studies, the study of gender and sexuality, and finally last year's theme - materiality.



Melanie Tanielian

Armenian Studies, it comes as no surprise, has a lot to offer. The results are highlighted in two edited volumes: *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century; Societies, Identities and Politics* edited by graduates of the program Dzovinar Derderian, Ali Sipahi, and a former Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow, Yasar Tolga Cora, and *An Armenian Mediterranean: Words and Worlds in Motion* edited by Michael Bedrossian Pifer, too, a graduate of our program, and Babayan herself. A third edited volume on materiality and Armenian Studies is in preparation. Derderian speaks of this as a “fundamental transformation of the program”:

*Kathryn Babayan helped shape the field in ways that engaged scholars from outside of Armenian Studies, and encouraged those whose research topics and methods had remained marginalized. Her open and dynamic vision of the future of our field gave many of us students the space to imagine new and perhaps unconventional avenues of research.*



Kathryn Babayan with ASP students & fellows



Exhibit: "Now or Never: Collecting, Documenting, and Photographing World War I in the Middle East," 2015

It is an understatement, then, to say that Dr. Babayan is handing me a vibrant program and one that thrives on innovation. During my tenure as the director, I hope to continue along the line of Dr. Babayan's vision and take heed to the urgent request of a former student to keep and expand upon the focus on "mentorship of students and postdoctoral fellows" and the "open approach to the field of Armenian Studies" as a central vision of the program.

For me personally, as it has for many, the program has provided a welcoming space for thinking and a creative, collaborative, and supportive community. My scholarly work is concerned with the violence of the First World War in the Eastern Mediterranean. And while my research has been about the Ottoman Levant and wartime famine, the fate of Armenians in this period is never far from my mind. Hence, it was natural that the Armenian Studies Program became my intellectual home when I joined the University of Michigan's faculty. I was invited to join the program's executive committee in 2012. Since then I have had the opportunity to organize and co-organize three workshops and co-curate an exhibit. From discussing pedagogical strategies for teaching genocide, to thinking through research methods when it comes to child survivors of the Armenian Genocide in 1915, through the possibilities of Armenian Studies to draw from and contribute to childhood studies, these workshops have not only contributed to my scholarly growth, but also to my commitment to the field of Armenian Studies. In 2015, Kathryn Babayan and I worked together to curate an exhibit on campus commemorating the centenary of the Armenian genocide. Using the University of Michigan's archive, we were able to tell the story of the genocide's aftermath through the eyes of U-M archaeologist

Francis Kelsey and U-M staff photographer George Swain. This public engagement project has set the stage for my future vision for the program.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

I not only hope to maintain and further advance Dr. Babayan's work but also make a significant push toward greater public engagement. The University of Michigan has made one of its key priorities the outreach, communication, and collaboration with a broader public. President Mark Schlissel has noted that it is "both a privilege and an obligation to provide thoughtful insights and important contributions toward public policy and to help solve the most complex and challenging issues confronting our society." What does this look like for the Armenian Studies Program is a question that I hope to address in the coming year. How can we increase the visibility of our program, collaborate with and serve a wider public? How can we engage with the immediate local Armenian community on and off campus? And how can our faculty and students contribute more directly to political, social, educational, and cultural debates concerning contemporary Armenia as well as Armenian Diaspora communities around the globe? What impact may we, as a program, have in providing expertise and room for discussion? What are the most pressing issues facing today's Armenia and Armenians?

But it is not only the Armenian community with whom I hope to engage. As much as it is important to reach across intellectual and disciplinary boundaries, it is important to inform the larger public as to the past and present concerns of Armenians. For this, we have been collaborating with the Center for Middle Eastern



and North African Studies to educate high school teachers on things Armenian in the State of Michigan. I hope to broaden this effort by developing national and international collaborative student-faculty research projects that involve community partners and result in digital products that may function as teaching tools, resources for policy advisors, or simply as information for an interested public.

## OUR PROGRAM FOR FALL 2019-20

A program such as ours cannot function without generous institutional and donor support. We have been fortunate to have many long-standing patrons who believe in the work we do. To celebrate the life and legacy of one of our past benefactors, we commenced our fall program with a two-day conference in memory of Ms. Louise Manoogian Simone, who passed away on February 18, 2019 (*more on page 7*).

In that spirit of movement in the past and present, *Armenian Mobilities* is the theme of this year's lecture and workshop series. Mobilities as a concept in the humanities and social sciences "encompasses both the large-scale movements of people, objects, capital and information across the world, as well as the more local processes of daily transportation, movement through public space, and the travel of material things within everyday life." We have scheduled lectures and workshops to highlight such mobilities with a focus on Armenians and things Armenian. What has been coined in the literature as the "mobility turn" assures an interdisciplinary approach that is reflected in the line up of our guest speakers who are a mix of historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and literary scholars.

We began by asking what happens to the Armenian language as a result of people's movement across borders. How do Armenian language dialects move through diasporic communities and what challenges does that movement present to Armenian language acquisition and learners? Dr. Shushan Karapetian addressed these issues based on her research in Los Angeles's Armenian community and, in particular, the difficulties of young speakers of Eastern Armenian upon enrollment into Armenian day schools that rely on Western Armenian as their language of instruction. The mobility and flexibility of language, as well as literature and translation, is a theme that has occupied Karen Jallatyan, who is joining us as one of this year's Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellows. Dr. Jallatyan will present his research on Vahé Oshagan. Focusing on the conceptual changes in Oshagan's work, Jallatyan highlights the outcomes of a dynamic mode of negotiating difference for a diasporic culture. Our second Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow is the anthropologist Anoush Tamar Suni, who joins us from the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Suni examines the movements of people and memories across an Eastern Anatolian landscape. She demonstrates how buildings and landscapes are not simply static reflections of a bygone time but are too dynamic spaces in which understandings of the past, politics in the present, and possible futures are negotiated, imagined, and enacted.

The theme of mobilities is taken up by our guest lecturers in the Fall and Winter. The historian Houri Berberian looks at the linkages of revolutionaries and revolutionary ideas at the beginning of the twentieth century. Examining the Russian, Iranian, and Young Turk Revolutions she probes the interconnectedness through the involvement of the Armenian revolutionaries whose movements and participation within and across frontiers

tell us a great deal about the global transformations that were taking shape. Like Dr. Berberian, David Gutman explores geographical and ideological boundary crossings. He does so in the context of the Armenian migratory experiences in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. An estimated 80,000 Armenians migrated from their ancestral homelands between 1885 and 1915. What was their experience as they moved across borders and state lines? He argues that the past sheds light on themes such as smuggling, deportation, and the criminalization of migration that are central to the issue of global migration in the 21st century.

Sato Moughalian presents the movement of one particular individual for this year's Distinguished Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Lecture, namely that of her grandfather, David Ohannessian, who was born in a small Anatolian mountain village and mastered the centuries-old art form of tile making in Kütahya. With the eye of a keen scholar and the heart of a granddaughter, Moughalian recounts her grandfather's encounter with violent nationalism in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire, his arrest, and eventual deportation during the Armenian Genocide. Ohannessian moved across geographies and with him his art and skills, as he established a ceramic workshop in Jerusalem under the British Mandate. His body moved across geographies and anyone who has been to Jerusalem knows that his art moved across time.

Our workshops, organized by our graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, are interested in the movement of ideas. PhD student Mano Sakayan will organize the 11th Annual International Graduate Student Workshop. Based on his interest in the history of science, medicine and psychiatry, the workshop will examine transmission, travel, and negotiation of scientific ideas and knowledge beginning in the Ottoman period. What role did Armenian thinkers, physicians, psychologists, and everyday folk play in the creation, teaching, and application of new medical knowledge of the mind and the body? Drs. Suni and Jallatyan are collaborating with faculty and students at the University of Pennsylvania to think about the myriad, changing, and dynamic *Afterlives of Western Armenia* as a space and a category. Here, the movement of people into the diaspora meant contact of Western Armenian and Armenians with other cultures and communities.

Our program this upcoming year we hope will highlight how such multiple and intersecting mobilities produce a more 'networked' patterning of economic, cultural, and social life. We hope that you will join us on the journey.



**Melanie Tanielian**  
Director, Armenian Studies Program



# GENERATIONS & LEGACIES

LOUISE MANOOGIAN SIMONE'S VISION FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES

September 13-14, 2019

**Melanie Tanielian**

*Director, Armenian Studies Program*

**Karen Jallatyan**

*2019-20 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow*

The Armenian Studies Program (ASP) at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor began the academic year by organizing and hosting a rare conference. A diverse group of scholars all of whom had been trained at some point in their careers by ASP came together not only to present their ongoing scholarly work but also to celebrate the remarkable legacy of Louise Manoogian Simone (1933-2019), former president of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (1989-2002) and the visionary patron of ASP. The gathering took place on the evening of Friday, September 13, on the 10th floor of Weiser Hall, with its majestic view of Ann Arbor.

The conference opened with "Reflections on Four Decades of Armenian Studies at the University of Michigan." In her opening remarks, the current director of the program Melanie Tanielian, Associate Professor of History, not only thanked the Manoogian family for their lasting contribution to ASP but also shared data compiled with the help of Naira Tumanyan, ASP Program Specialist that highlighted the program's impressive accomplishments in the areas of scholarship and education. The audience learned that since 2007 ASP has hosted 27 post-doctoral, 5 pre-doctoral, and 10 visiting fellows. It has organized some 160 public events since 2008, including 101 lectures, 23 workshops, 19 conferences, symposia and colloquia, 7 performances and exhibits, and 12 film screenings. Since 2002, ASP has awarded a striking 99 fellowships and grants. The program is built on the foundation of two endowed chairs, the Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History (1981) and the Marie Manoogian Chair in Armenian Language and Literature (1987), and four affiliated faculty. Since 2008, the program has enrolled 18 graduate students. Since 2011 ASP faculty have collectively taught a whopping 3411 undergraduate and graduate students!

Following this glimpse into the history of ASP, its former directors joined Professor Tanielian on stage. Each of them gave an overview of the work accomplished and the directions and innovations undertaken during their leadership. Kathryn Babayan, director from 2012 to 2019, highlighted the new research directions taken by the program, engaging with gender and sexuality, Mediterranean studies, and most recently materiality studies. Gerard Libaridian, director from 2007 to 2012, spoke of his memories of Louise Manoogian Simone. He commented on her informed, demanding, but non-interfering style of philanthropy, and the expansive vision with which she led.

Kevoork Bardakjian, director from 1995 to 2007, drew attention to the important expansion of the archival holdings of ASP from 1,000 to 18,000 books, making it one of the major centers of Armenian Studies research worldwide. Ronald Suny, the founder of the program and director from 1981 to 1995, began by sharing his memories of working with key supporters of the program, the Manoogian family in particular. He insisted that the program would not have been possible without the push and work of 'the big three.' He named Alex Manoogian, Louise Manoogian's father, Alice Haidostian, and the Beirut-born and Detroit-based writer and intellectual Edmond Y. Azadian. Dr. Suny emphasized Mr. Azadian's paramount role in informing and encouraging the Manoogians to create ASP. Suny playfully but accurately referred to Azadian, seated among the audience, as Alex Manoogian's 'Minister of Culture'. At the closing of the first evening, the audience realized that with the five former and current directors of the program sharing their insights and a large number of its research cohort present, they had not only gained insights into the history of ASP, but also into that of the university and Michigan's Armenian community.

Day 2, Saturday, September 14, commenced a day-long conference. Former ASP graduate students and postdoctoral fellows presented cutting-edge and field-defining work during four panel sessions. It started with a fresh look at two generally well-studied periods through the lens of gender and sexuality. A recent graduate of the program Dzovinar Derderian's presentation analyzed Armenak Haikouni's (1835-1866) polemical texts regulating marriage and hygiene in the name of science and God among Armenians for the sake of the reproductive health of the Ottoman Empire. Associate Professor at the University of Tennessee, Alison Vacca, examined the practice of two elite marriages in the medieval Caucasus comparing their accounts in Arabic, Armenian and Georgian sources. Former ASP Director and Associate Professor of Iranian History, Kathryn Babayan's insightful remarks highlighted the power dynamics involved in regulating late-Ottoman Armenian reproductive behavior and in fashioning brides as exchangeable goods in the medieval political imaginary of the Caucasus.

The second discussion of the day was concerned with Armenians' relationship to language, poetry, and literary culture. Murat Cankara, a faculty member at the Social Sciences University of Ankara, spoke of his ongoing research on the Armeno-





Conference participants

Turkish literature, that is Turkish language texts written in Armenian script. Cankara's analysis focused on the relationship of Ottoman Armenians to the Turkish language. ASP's current Language and Literature Lecturer Michael Pifer, connected Konstantin Erznkatsi's (13-14th centuries) Armenian theological poems to a larger Anatolian practice of spiritual instruction. Pifer used the image of the rose and nightingale, which also appear in the well-known Persian poet Rumi's verse, and spoke of an Anatolian poetic practice of the everyday that crossed religious traditions.

From poetry and language, the discussion moved to trace the history of Armenians and Kurds in Turkey. Ohannes Kılıçdağı, Research Affiliate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, described the relations between Kurds and Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Kılıçdağı concluded by arguing that today local Kurds know and speak much more openly about the Armenian Genocide than Turks. While at times mobilizing an economy of guilt and taking responsibility for the Genocide, Kurds often insist that their ancestors were instrumentalized by the (post-)Ottoman-Turkish state. The current Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian History, Hakem Al-Rustom, shared with the audience a chapter of his forthcoming book. Based on anthropological research that he conducted in post-Hrant Dink Turkey and among the diaspora Armenian communities in Paris, Al-Rustom argued that in post-genocide Turkey Armenian survival was "accidental and random." Some individuals, he asserted, had slipped through the violent machine which destroyed most of their compatriots and had no intention of sparing those that survived.

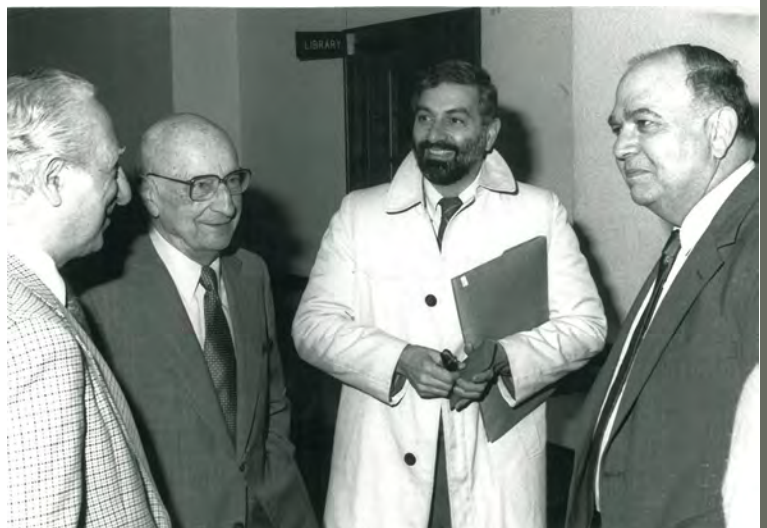
Christopher Sheklian, now the Director of the Zohrab Information Center in New York, delved into the theology of the Orthodox Armenian Church. He offered a fresh look at Christology through the lens of theories of anthropology and philosophy. The Richard Hovannisian Endowed Chair in Modern Armenian

History, Sebouh Aslanian, interpreted the extensive archive of the Armenian book production in print from 1512 to 1800. Inspired by the *Annales* school of history, he stressed the importance of confessionalism as well as the sustained nature of the early modern print revolution involving and shaping ports and port Armenians. Vahe Sahakyan, a Research Scholar and Senior Information Resources Specialist at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, deployed theories from sociology and diaspora studies to analyze institutional, discursive, and communal spaces of difference in the United States, France, and Lebanon, and the cultural objects signifying the presence and permanence of these diasporic spaces.

The day-long exhibition of the innovative and unconventional work that has defined ASP over the past four decades culminated in what was titled "Future Flashes." The audience was presented with a potpourri of five-minute-long presentations by nine current students and postdoctoral fellows of the program. The young scholars in a fast and furious, back-to-back race presented their burgeoning research ranging from Armenian medieval poetry, late Ottoman language politics, the legacy of Vahé Oshagan, oppressive heteronormativity in Ottoman Empire/Turkey during World War I, conflict studies and democracy, Kurdish and Armenian encounters in Van, the medical discourse among Armenians, the afterlives of the ruins of Van, and the acquisition of Western Armenian as a heritage language. Throughout the two days, the public witnessed the myriad ways in which ASP has not only produced and provided a home for forward-looking scholars and exceptional scholarship but also forged a space wherein community of intellectual exchange and support is practiced.



From left to right: Marie Manoogian, Ronald Suny and Kevork Bardakjian



From left to right: Avedis Sanjian, Alex Manoogian, Ronald Suny and Richard Hovannisian

## REMEMBERING LOUISE

### Ronald Grigor Suny

*Professor of Political Science, University of Michigan  
William H. Sewell Jr. Distinguished University of History*

I came to Michigan as the Alex Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian History in 1981 when we had few students and not much of a field in modern Armenian studies. I was the first chair and, in a sense, invented the program. I never asked the university for permission but simply put a page in the catalogue (we had paper catalogues then) as if a program already existed. Now that we had a program, we needed someone in language and literature, so we started to raise money for a second chair and to hire Kevork Bardakjian. The program grew slowly. Interested students signed up for our courses, and our key benefactors and supporters – most importantly, Alex Manoogian, Edmond Azadian, and Alice Haidostian – encouraged us to grow. In those early days the program was geared primarily to undergraduates and aimed at encouraging consciousness of and love for things Armenian. The major fear was that the presence of Armenians in America and the future of the nation, still under Soviet rule, were in jeopardy.

When Mr. Manoogian passed away, the torch passed to his remarkable, energetic, and determined daughter, Louise Manoogian Simone. Kevork and I met with her on several occasions and were impressed by her commitment to our program even as her major energies were focused on the now independent Republic of Armenia. Louise made it clear to us in her own unvarnished way that we were not getting any younger and that a new generation of teachers and scholars in Armenian Studies had to be prepared. She told us that she was ready to help.

Louise had given us our mandate and our marching orders. Our job was to ready a new cohort of scholars and develop as best as we could the burgeoning field of Armenian Studies. Like her father, Louise gave but did not demand; she never interfered in the content of what we were doing. She trusted us to use what resources we were given to develop our program and the field.

Besides our discussions of funding and how the program was faring, my fondest memory of Louise came on a visit to her elegant New York apartment. She had read my book *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*, and she was



*Louise Manoogian Simone (1933-2019)*

generously complimentary. That book is more scholarly than popular. My intention in putting together the essays and talks that make up that volume (based originally on lectures given at Columbia University) was to provoke new thinking about Armenian history. The book was a challenge to older, nationalistic, narcissistic, uncritically patriotic accounts of the great deeds, triumphs and tragedies of the Armenians throughout their long history. It presented a view that the Armenian nation was the product not of God or nature but of real people acting in history to make a nation, something realized fully only in modern times.

The book stirred up more controversy than I had anticipated. It was attacked in Armenia and by many in the diaspora. But Louise told me how much she had learned from the book and how much she appreciated the new approach. I was surprised and humbled by her response. I knew I had a friend and ally in Louise Manoogian Simone.

Over the years, whenever we needed some aid, Louise came through. She would inquire about the status of the program, the number of students, but always with the thought of how to help. Without Alex and Louise, and now her brother Richard, there would be no Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan. Because of their commitments, their trust, and their generosity we are able to carry out what Alex and Louise proposed that we do.

Armenians are a deeply historical people. Sometimes we are burdened by too much history. Our program, while exploring the past and the present, thanks to the Manoogians, also has its eye on the future.

*From left to right: Ronald Suny, Melanie Tanielian, Kathryn Babayan, Gerard Libaridian, and Kevork Bardakjian*





# FACULTY NEWS & UPDATES

## ASP FACULTY

### Hakem Al-Rustom

Alex Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian History

### Kevork Bardakjian

Marie Manoogian Professor of Armenian Language and Literature

### Melanie Tanielian

Director, Armenian Studies Program; Associate Professor of History

### Kathryn Babayan

Associate Professor of Iranian History and Culture

### Ronald G. Suny

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



**Hakem Al-Rustom**, Alex Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian History, Assistant Professor of History and Anthropology, will be teaching a new seminar course that takes the Armenian genocide as a case study to navigate the historical anthropology of Post-Ottoman societies. Titled *History, Memory and Silence* the course is centered on two questions: How do historians and anthropologists research violent pasts when the evidence is destroyed?

He is currently writing ethnography on the (im)possibility of writing a history of Anatolian Armenians in postgenocide Turkey. Dr. Al-Rustom will also continue to convene the *Global Theories of Critique* initiative at Michigan. The 2019-20 theme is “Revolutions: Failed and Marginal” that aims at challenging the universalist claims of Euro-American history. He has co-organized a workshop on Theodor Adorno and Edward Said in Beirut, and presented a paper on an ongoing research topic tackling Kemalist Orientalism and the Armenian question in Turkey at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt.



**Michael Pifer** will publish his book, which he began writing as a Manoogian Fellow in 2015-16, with Yale University Press in 2020. Titled *Kindred Voices: A Literary History of Medieval Anatolia*, the book explores the ways in which Armenian, Persian, Turkish, and Greek literary cultures developed in relation to one another in pre-modern Anatolia. Dr. Pifer also taught a course over the summer, in collaboration with Sergio La Porta, on doing research with Armenian manuscripts. The course convened at the Mesrop Mashtots Institute for Ancient Manuscripts (the Matenadaran) in Yerevan, Armenia, bringing together a cohort of nine students from different universities around the world.



**Ronald Grigor Suny**, William H. Sewell, Jr. Distinguished University Professor of History and Professor of Political Science, has been busy these past months traveling and presenting at conferences in the United States, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Russia. His two books, *Red Flag Wounded: Historians, Stalinism, and the Fate of the Soviet Experiment* (Verso Books) and *Stalin, Passage to Revolution* (Princeton University Press) are currently in press. *Red Flag Wounded* brings together his essays on Stalin and Stalinism, which have emerged from research and teaching over the last decades, while his biography of the young Stalin (from his birth to the revolution of 1917) is the product of more than thirty years of archival research. This fall semester Dr. Suny is teaching in the Michigan in Washington (DC) Program and preparing a book, *Forging the Nation: The Making and Faking of Nationalisms*.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## DESTINATION DETROIT

On September 27-29, 2018, the Global Islamic Studies Center hosted the conference *Destination: Detroit - Communities of Migration in Metro Detroit* at the U-M Detroit Center where nearly 40 experts gathered to discuss the ethnic communities that have populated metro Detroit over the years. The conference explored old and new stories about settlement and resettlement, diasporic intersections, and the current challenges that immigrants face in Detroit.

The Armenian Studies Program sponsored a panel on Diasporic Intersections where Christopher Sheklian, 2017-18 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow, presented the Armenian case. Dr. Sheklian explored how uprooted Armenian refugees from Iraq, Syria and Baku have navigated the existing diasporic networks and norms, and examined the possibilities of shifting the onus of responsibility for “integration” from refugees themselves to other actors in an existing Diaspora community. The conference concluded with a reception at Bank Suey, a community space in Hamtramck which is known as one of the more vibrant cities in Michigan and is home to large Bengali, Yemeni, and Polish communities.



From left to right: Christopher Sheklian, Jonathan Matthew Schwartz, and Erin Hughes

## CULTURE ON THE MARGINS

*Panel on Armenians, Persians, and Ethiopians at the Mediterranean Seminar*

On October 27, 2018, the Armenian Studies Program hosted a panel on the theme of margins and marginality in Mediterranean Studies, examining the field from the perspective of regions that are often considered on the periphery to the Mediterranean world: Armenia, the Caucasus, Ethiopia, and the Iranian plateau. Titled "Mediterraneity from the Edge," the panel was organized by Michael Pifer (U-M) and Cameron Cross (U-M), who spoke on Armenian and Persian literature, respectively, and also featured Wendy Belcher (Princeton), who presented on Ethiopian literature.

All three panelists explored the ways in which these respective literary cultures do – and do not – fit within a broader Mediterranean Studies rubric, shedding light on how pre-modern cultural production from beyond the Mediterranean world also interfaced with it. Collectively, the panelists sought to raise questions on how "marginality" might be utilized to rethink cross-cultural exchange in the Mediterranean, considering every spot on the map as both a center and an edge, depending on one's starting point.



From left to right: Karla Mallette, Kathryn Babayan, Michael Pifer, Hakem Al-Rustom and Vahe Sahakyan





The panel was one of six at the Mediterranean Seminar, a collaborative workshop that convened at U-M last fall, organized by Karla Mallette (U-M), Sharon Kinoshita (UC Santa Cruz), and Brian Catlos (UC Boulder). The Mediterranean Seminar seeks to “provincialize” Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, seeking instead to understand how different cultures and peoples interacted across the Mediterranean world in ways that defy easy categorization. Under the thematic rubric of “Margins of the Mediterranean,” the participants in this seminar considered new methods for theorizing marginality in relation to the field.

The Seminar concluded its two-days of events with the book launch of *An Armenian Mediterranean: Words and Worlds in Motion*, edited by Kathryn Babayan and Michael Pifer, which was published in 2018 through the Mediterranean Studies series at Palgrave Macmillan. The volume features essays written by present and former collaborators with ASP, including many Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellows, on new directions for the study of Armenians and Armenian culture.



# CONTESTED LANDSCAPES, COMPETING NARRATIVES

*Armenian & Global Perspectives*

On February 22, 2019, the Armenian Studies Program hosted a workshop devoted to the multi-faceted topic of contested historical landscapes. Bridging Armenian and global perspectives – encompassing a vast geography from the Balkans and the Middle East to the Southern Caucasus and India – workshop participants explored competing narratives on cultural heritage, history and, ultimately, homeland. Drawing from the mutually-enriching expertise of different academic disciplines – from history and political science to sociology and anthropology – the workshop excavated from the debris of 20th century landscapes silenced narratives on disappeared populations, alien homelands and collective violence.

The workshop opened with a keynote address by Bruce M. Grant (New York University) in which he explored satire and anti-satire in Caucasus using example of the contested historical legacy of the Azerbaijani satire magazine “Nasreddin Hodja.” The keynote was followed by the first panel, chaired by Fatma Müge Göçek (U-M), which explored the thematic complex of Armenian, Kurdish, and Turkish memory landscapes. The 2018-19 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow Mehmet Polatel in his paper “In Pursuit of Local Knowledge: Reflections on People, Memory and Past in Sivas” discussed the material legacy of non-Muslims in the region of present-day Sivas, drawing from his field work conducted within the framework of a project sponsored by the Hrant Dink Foundation. His presentation was followed by Anoush Suni, doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles. In her talk, “Underground Traces: The Materiality and Temporality of Violence,” Suni explored the treasure-hunting and the quest for ‘Armenian gold’ in the Lake Van region as “a tangible engagement with an invisible underground world ( ... ) rooted in a historical understanding of

place and landscape”. The panel was complemented by the presentation by David Leupold, 2018-19 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow. In his talk “At the ‘Mnemonic Frontier’: Eastern Turkey and the Vestiges of The Disappeared” he turned to the multi-layered memory landscape of the Lake Van region to unveil ‘focal points of resistance’ around which counter-narratives that oppose the total permeation of the ‘official story’ crystallize.

The second panel, chaired by Ronald Suny (U-M) transcended the geographical boundaries of Asia Minor and the Southern Caucasus to include a set of historical case studies from the memory landscapes of the Middle East, India and the Balkans by three doctoral candidates from the University of Michigan. In her paper titled “Muslim, Albanian, or Native?” Lediona Shahollari explored ethno-national categories within the context of the Greco-Turkish population exchange. Shourjendra Mukherjee in his paper “The Unjust State and the Treacherous Nation” shed light on the semantics of claim-making among the Survivors of 1984 anti-Sikh violence, while Omar Sharir explored Jewish paramilitary groups and their role in the present-day memory politics of Israel. The workshop concluded with a roundtable discussion.







10th Annual International Graduate Student Workshop participants

## ARMENIAN STUDIES & MATERIAL OBJECTS

*10th Annual International Graduate Student Workshop*

The 2019 international graduate student workshop brought together twelve young scholars from various cultural origins based at universities in Armenia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The wide range of disciplines and backgrounds of the participants demonstrated the unique position of material objects as a subject of study in linking conversations in literary studies, anthropology, sociology, religious studies, art studies, museum studies and history. The aim of the workshop was to explore how material objects, as a unit of analysis, help us discover at once the ordinary and the extraordinary aspects of Armenian lives and cultural practices. The workshop consisted of four panels and a keynote lecture, which explored how Armenian Studies can contribute to Material Studies and vice versa.

Everyday objects (as well as iconic objects) allowed participants to make connections to broader socio-political, cultural, and economic processes. In the first panel titled “Objects and Stories of the Everyday” participants focused on everyday objects (such as clothes) appearing in public and private spaces or through literary works. Another panel titled “The Sacred and the Treasured Things” focused on manuscripts as sacred objects in contemporary Armenia, on the “hidden gold” of Armenians that contemporary inhabitants of Van are in search of, and on mirrors in medieval Anatolia as sacred objects. This panel explored how such objects can be a medium to understand cultural perceptions of religion, the past and the present among historical and contemporary actors.

During the second day of the workshop in a panel on “Photography and Materiality” the participants discussed how photographs,

as tangible objects, open a window to both the politics of the Ottoman state and the intimate lives of ordinary Armenians. The last panel, “Objects of Memory, Memory of Objects” touched on the theme of practices of shaping genocide remembrance through objects and remembering forgotten historical figures. Finally, Christina Maranci (Tufts University) gave a keynote lecture titled “Art, Materiality, and the Sacred in Medieval Armenia.”

A main theme that emerged from the workshop was that material objects helped the participating scholars to reveal the intersections of the spheres of intimacy and the everyday, on the one hand, and the sphere of politics and public spaces, on the other. Throughout the workshop objects served as a means to explore the conceptions and experiences of religion, the past and the present, gender and death among various Armenian communities. The workshop demonstrated that material objects are a generative medium through which to build productive dialogues in Armenian Studies. Material objects provided a vibrant space in which scholars from different disciplinary traditions and from various trainings — medievalists and modernists, as well as scholars working on disparate Armenian communities — were able to find a common ground while sharing their distinctive perspectives. The papers presented can also contribute to the field of Material Studies. For this reason, the organizers of the workshop, Marie-Aude Baronian and Dzovinar Derderian, have started to work on an edited volume consisting of the workshop papers.

## MULTIDISCIPLINARY WORKSHOP FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES

In the 2018-19 academic year, the Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies (MWAS) completed another successful program. Graduate students Armen Abkarian (History) and Dzovinar Derderian (Middle East Studies) coordinated MWAS with Kathryn Babayan as the faculty advisor. It is clear that MWAS, with its eight workshops this year, was not only essential to the Armenian Studies Program's intellectual community but also attracted people from other fields and across a multitude of disciplines. MWAS workshops and its capstone event were attended by students and faculty from and affiliated with Middle East Studies, History, Anthropology, Comparative Literature, Sociology, Russian and East European Studies, Slavic Studies, and Women's Studies.

The workshop series began with a discussion of ruins and ruination. Anoush Suni, then still a PhD candidate at UCLA's Department of Anthropology, invited feedback on her unpublished paper "Afterlives of Ruins: The Politics of the Past in the Present." Dr. Suni shared with the group her experiences in collecting ethnological data in Van, Turkey. The ensuing conversation asked questions in regards to how one best proceeds in analyzing the materials Dr. Suni had collected over two years. What questions should and could one ask from the interviews and stories told by her informants. The October meeting took the workshop participants into Medieval Anatolia. Dr. Michael Pifer (U-M) shared with the group the introduction to his forthcoming book titled *Kindred Voices: A Literary History of Medieval Anatolia*. The questions that emerged revolved around the strategies of writing and mainly how to introduce specialized historical and literary topics to a broader audience. U-M graduate students presented their research in the November and December workshops. Armen Abkarian, a graduate student from the Department of History, circulated a paper titled "In Bitter and Grievous Times": Armenian Manuscript Colophons as a Source for Studying the Mongol Empire." Ali Bolcakan, a PhD candidate from the Department of Comparative Literature, used the opportunity to discuss a chapter from his dissertation "From Multilingualism to Monolingualism: Turkish Language Reforms and Armenians." Workshop participants, who, as always, were eager to engage in work related to Armenians across time and space appreciated both these papers' approaches and contributions.

The winter semester was equally engaging. In the cold February and March months, the two 2018-2019 Manogian Postdoctoral Fellows, Mehmet Polatel and David Leupold, provided MWAS with a glimpse into their stellar work. Dr. Polatel introduced the workshop participants to a chapter of his dissertation titled "The Hamidian Massacres and Socioeconomic Changes in the Eastern Provinces of the Ottoman Empire." Based on meticulous research in the Ottoman archives, his work here centered on the transformation of the taxation of the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire and its damaging effects on the local economies. One of the many interesting points that came up in the discussion was the limitations that information from the Turkish archives may present in the future. Presenting a paper titled "Entwined Narratives-Remembering Beyond the Nation," Dr. Leupold led the group into an exploration of modern-day consequences of the Armenian Genocide in the memories of Kurdish, Armenian, and Yezidi interviewees. Of particular interest were the methods Dr. Leupold employed in conducting interviews and the utility of his comparative approach. In April, PhD student Nazife Kosukoglu from Bogazici University presented her work on mass violence against Armenians in the Late Ottoman period. Herein, she traced the transformation of Ottoman territories into *dar al-harb* (literally "the house or abode of war." This shift, she argued, allowed the Ottoman government to treat some of its denizens as enemy combatants. The participants discussed the possibilities of improving the paper by delving deeper into the political relationships fueling the legal justifications behind the creation and management of the sphere of unchecked violence in Eastern Anatolia.

This year, with renewed funding from the university, graduate students Armen Abkarian (History), Mano Sakayan (History), and PhD candidate Ali Bolcakan (Comparative Literature) with Professor Melanie Tanielian as their faculty advisor will coordinate the Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies. It is exciting to know that MWAS will continue to provide a multidisciplinary space of scholarly debates. The group has invited graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty members, and visiting scholars to discuss their projects in progress.

*Remnants of an Armenian cemetery in Van province, 2016. Photo: Anoush Tamar Suni*





# MEET THE MANOOGIAN FELLOWS

## ANOUSH SUNI

*2019-20 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow*

Anoush Tamar Suni earned her PhD in Anthropology from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2019. Her dissertation, titled "Palimpsests of Violence: Ruination and the Politics of Memory in Anatolia," investigates questions of memory and the material legacies of state violence in the region of Van in southeastern Turkey. Herein she focuses on the historic Armenian and contemporary Kurdish communities. Dr. Suni spent over two years in Van and Istanbul (2015-17) conducting ethnographic research for her dissertation. She completed her BA in Middle East Studies at Pomona College in California in 2009 and her MA in Turkish Studies at Sabanci University in Istanbul in 2012.

### *How did you first become interested in Anthropology?*

I first became interested in anthropology and ethnographic research methods during my undergraduate studies at Pomona college. At that time, I was studying Arabic and Middle East Studies, and for my senior thesis I conducted ethnographic research on questions of gender and religion in Sana'a, Yemen. While I was completing my MA at Sabanci University, in Istanbul, I carried out ethnographic and oral history research within the Armenian community in Istanbul, as well as in a Kurdish village in Elazığ province regarding the restoration project of two Armenian fountains. My experience in Elazığ led me to ask further questions about the afterlives of the material and architectural remnants of the Armenian community of Anatolia, which became the focus of my doctoral dissertation.

### *What attracted you to apply for the Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellowships?*

I was attracted to apply to the Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellowship because of the dynamic, interdisciplinary, and cutting-edge work being done within the program. Last year, I had the opportunity to participate in two workshops organized by the University of Michigan's Armenian Studies Program and to present my work to the community. I was inspired by these workshops and impressed with how the discussions served both to deepen and enrich Armenian Studies while also pushing beyond regional and conventional boundaries, and allowing spaces to ask broader comparative and theoretical questions. I look forward to continuing these conversations with the faculty and students within the ASP program who are redefining the field of Armenian Studies.

### *What are you currently working on? What do you hope to accomplish during your postdoctoral year?*

During my postdoctoral year, I plan to focus on refining my dissertation into a book manuscript and publishing articles from my dissertation research. I look forward to working closely with the faculty within the Armenian Studies Program as I continue to develop and broaden my dissertation project. My



*Anoush Tamar Suni*

dissertation explores the overlapping histories over the past century of state violence against both Armenian and Kurdish communities in and around the city and province of Van in southeastern Anatolia, with attention to both the politics of memory as well as the material environment. It addresses the repeating cycles of violence against minority communities and the effects of these histories on the landscape through an ethnographic exploration of physical spaces of ruins.

### *Tell us a little about the course you will teach in the Winter semester.*

During the Winter semester, I will teach a course in the Department of Anthropology entitled "State Violence, Ruins, and the Politics of the Past." This class will address questions of memory and place through an investigation of past state violence against minority groups and its legacy in the present day. We will begin with contemporary Turkey as a case study and then consider other comparative examples in the Middle East and beyond. First, we will examine the case of the violent transformation of the Ottoman Empire into the contemporary Republic of Turkey with a focus on the 1915 Genocide of Ottoman Armenians and the ongoing war between the Turkish state and the Kurdish minority, in the context of a long history of state violence against minority groups. Throughout the course students will engage with various and competing narratives of histories of violence, including state denial, memories of survivors, and attempts to resurrect and commemorate the memories of repressed events.

## KAREN JALLATYAN

2019-20 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow

Karen Jallatyan received his PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of California, Irvine in 2019. His dissertation, titled "Becoming Diaspora: Global Armenian Literature and Film after 1950," draws attention to the specifically post-national and post-catastrophic nature of diasporic Armenian culture in Western Armenian. It argues that finding ways to let Western Armenian language and literature thrive in a multicultural context is the only adequate response to the needs of this surviving culture.

### *What made you decide to study Armenian Literature?*

I have been drawn to diasporic Armenian literature in Western Armenian for its ability and potential to inscribe some of the most profound collective human experiences of this and the past centuries. I have in mind not only the 1915 Catastrophe, but also the Armenian cultural globalization that has resulted from it. Literature can serve as a valuable model to help humanity creatively and responsibly rethink the very idea of culture as home.

### *What attracted you to apply for the Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellowships?*

In April 2015, I participated in the "Challenging Entrenched Categories: Re-Exploring Approaches to Armenian Literature" workshop organized by the University of Michigan's Armenian Studies Program (ASP). Through it, I got to know the people of ASP. Their interdisciplinary commitments, scholarly enthusiasm and organizational acumen made it clear to me that being part of their program could be a highly productive and rewarding experience.



Cover of *Crossroads*, Vahé Oshagan, Beirut, 1971. Painter: Vahé Barsoumian



Karen Jallatyan

### *What are you currently working on? What do you hope to accomplish during your postdoctoral year?*

I have currently a few projects in hand. First and foremost, there is the book manuscript on Vahé Oshagan (1922-2000) — arguably the most trailblazing and least studied diasporic Armenian writer and intellectual — which I am planning to largely complete by the end of my postdoctoral year. Additionally, there are a few related articles that I am planning to send to the press as soon as possible. One of them draws from Armenian literature written in the past century to outline the modes of multilingual multiculturalism called for by diasporic Western Armenian. The other looks at the work of the Canadian-Armenian filmmaker Gariné Torossian as a nuanced instance of such a multilingual diasporic emergence.

### *Tell us a little about the course you will teach in the Winter semester.*

During the Winter semester, I will teach a course on literature and identity titled "Afterlives of Identity Politics." After reaching its height in the 1990s, identity politics in Canada and the United States tend to be subjected to two reductive pressures. On the one hand, it is dismissed as outdated by a discourse of diversity that puts the emphasis on difference and refuses making critical use of a notion of individual and collective identity. On the other hand, identity keeps being tacitly or overtly deployed in essentializing ways as a fixed pre-existent core by reactionary forces. This course invites reading literature in English from North America in ways that avoid these two extremes by taking the challenge of tracking the nuanced literary inscriptions of multicultural identity as well as by attending to their complex political implications. We will explore these questions by reading novels by Peter Najarian, Toni Morrison, Winona LaDuke, Jeffrey Eugenides and supplement them with theoretical literature, class discussions, group presentations, museum visits as well as reflective and argumentative writing assignments.



# ARMENIAN MOBILITIES

## PEOPLE, IDEAS, AND OBJECTS

### WINTER 2020



## AFTERLIVES OF WESTERN ARMENIA

As a geography and a concept, Western Armenia is a contested category. The same territory is at once imagined and claimed by disparate yet overlapping groups in often mutually exclusive ways as Western Armenia, Eastern Turkey, and Northern Kurdistan. This geography has been home to many peoples over centuries, including Armenians until the 1915 Catastrophe decimated the Ottoman Armenian community and scattered its survivors across the world, where they founded new homes in the diaspora.

As a result of the rupture of 1915, the Armenian Diaspora came into intimate contact with other communities across the globe. At the same time, on the ancestral lands of the exiled Western Armenians, the material and immaterial remnants of their community live on, animated by the memories and narratives

recounted by the muslim Kurds, Turks, and Arabs who continue to live in the region. Taken together, these constitute two asymmetrically mirroring spaces in which afterlives of Western Armenia continue to develop in dynamic relationships with contemporary political and social processes. What are the afterlives of these histories, communities, and trajectories bound up in the notion of Western Armenia? What are the ongoing effects of the 1915 Genocide of Ottoman Armenians, both in the geography where the mass killing and expropriation took place a century ago and in the diasporic communities where Armenians continue to live today? How are histories of violence and exile inscribed both on the landscape through ruins and in the memories of local communities? And how are they reinterpreted and expressed through literature, art, and language?

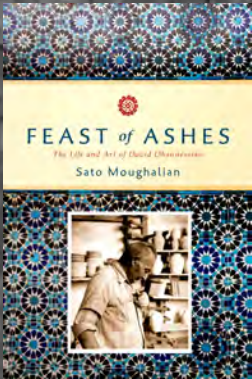
Organizers: Karen Jallatyan, Anoush Suni, 2019-20 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellows, U-M, and Hakem Al-Rustom, Alex Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian History, U-M.



*Interior of the Armenian Monastery of Surp Hovannes in Bor, near Bitlis, now used as a sheepfold. Photo by Anoush Tamar Suni, August 31, 2017*



*"Cooling Towers," 2006, oil on canvas, 6x6' by Hrayr Anmahouni Eulmessekian. Courtesy of the artist*



## DAVID OHANNESSIAN & THE ARMENIAN CERAMICS OF JERUSALEM



*Drying pottery on the terrace of Dome of the Rock Tiles, Via Dolarosa, Jerusalem c. 1922*

Along the cobbled streets and golden walls of Jerusalem, brilliantly glazed tiles catch the light and beckon the eye. These colorful wares—known as Armenian ceramics—are iconic features of the Holy City. Silently, these works of ceramic art—an art that graces homes and museums around the world—also represent a riveting story of resilience and survival.

In 1919, David Ohannessian founded the art of Armenian ceramics in Jerusalem, where his work and that of his followers is now celebrated as a local treasure. Born in an isolated Anatolian mountain village, Ohannessian mastered a centuries-old art form in Kütahya, witnessed the rise of violent nationalism in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire, endured arrest and deportation in the Armenian Genocide, founded a new tradition in Jerusalem under the British Mandate, and spent his final years, uprooted once again, in Cairo and Beirut.

Ms. Moughalian will detail the lineage of her grandfather David Ohannessian's ceramic tradition and document the critical roles his deportation and his own agency played in its transfer—aspects of the story obscured in the art historical narrative. She will speak about the process of coming to terms

with her family's past, the ways in which that served as an impetus to excavate and reconstruct her grandfather's history through archival research, and the importance of preserving the stories of peoples displaced through migration.

**Sato Moughalian** is the author of *Feast of Ashes: The Life and Art of David Ohannessian* (Redwood Press/Stanford University Press, 2019). She is also an award-winning flutist in New York City and Artistic Director of Perspectives Ensemble, founded in 1993 at Columbia University to explore and contextualize works of composers and visual artists. She serves as principal flutist of the American Modern Ensemble and Gotham Chamber Opera; guest flutist with groups including Imani Winds, American Ballet Theatre, American Symphony Orchestras, and the Orquestra Sinfonica do Estado São Paulo, Brazil. She can be heard on more than thirty chamber music recordings for Sony Classics, BIS, Naxos, as well as on YouTube, Spotify, and other major music platforms. Since 2007, Ms. Moughalian has traveled to Turkey, England, Israel, Palestine, and France to uncover her grandfather's traces, has published articles, and gives talks on the genesis of Jerusalem's Armenian ceramic art.





## MEDICINE, MADNESS & MALADIES OF THE MIND IN ARMENIAN STUDIES PAST & PRESENT

*11th Annual International Graduate Student Workshop*

In recent years, the history of medicine, mental illness, and the literary, anthropological, and sociological studies of madness have gained a remarkable momentum internationally. Still, there have been virtually no substantial studies of a premodern and modern understanding of medicine, madness, and maladies of the mind in Armenia and its Diaspora. This interdisciplinary workshop aims to interrogate the stories of both medical and psychiatric sciences as well as that of the concept of madness in Armenian political, historical, literary, and cultural discussions in the past and present.

The workshop will focus on the histories of medicine and psychiatry and the portrayals of madness as a form of behavior, marker of difference, and tool of body politics across periods and geographies. The workshop organizers are interested in the broader history of medicine, but they would like to draw particular attention to the historical and contemporary landscapes in which medical professionals sought to exercise their authorities over mental illnesses and the mind itself. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, tools and theories have provided medical professionals with

renewed opportunities to intervene in the social, political and cultural spheres with the shared objective of devising and implementing therapies of madness.

In this, the workshop will initiate an inter-disciplinary conversation about the concept, diagnosis, treatment, and social construction of “madness.” The goal is to consider new perspectives, methodologies and cross-disciplinary frameworks that will put Armenian Studies in conversation with, among others, the growing fields of history of medicine, science and technology studies. In the course of the workshop, the hope is to call into question what was and is culturally defined as madness as well as medical and societal interventions to “cure” madness and “contain” the mad.

Therefore, this meeting will situate the notion of madness at the intersection of politics, medicine, literature, sociology, and anthropology and seeks to explore the changes in its definition and the underpinnings of perceptions of mental illnesses at critical junctures of history in Armenia and amongst its diasporic communities across the globe.

Please visit our website to view the call for papers: [ii.umich.edu/asp/news-events/all-events/workshops.html](http://ii.umich.edu/asp/news-events/all-events/workshops.html)

Organizers: Melanie Tanielian, Director, Armenian Studies Program, U-M  
and Mano Sakayan, PhD student, Department of History, U-M.



*"The Genius and the Crowd" (1909) by Yeghishe Tadevosyan (1870-1936)*

# PROFILES & REFLECTIONS



## Welcome to our new graduate student!

**Sosi Lepejian** is a PhD student at the Department of Sociology. She graduated from Bard College in 2017 with a degree in Human Rights and a concentration in Middle Eastern Studies. For her senior project, Lepejian explored if and how existing diasporic networks influence Syrian Armenians' mobility and migration during the ongoing war in Syria. She then worked as a paralegal at the Public Justice Center in Baltimore, where her work focused on fighting wage theft in Maryland. At Michigan, Lepejian hopes to explore environmental sociology in the context of colonialism, with a particular interest in Palestine. She is interested in ethnography, comparative-historical sociology, social movements, race and ethnicity.



## ASP FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

### Tuğçe Kayaal

*PhD Candidate,  
Department of  
Middle East Studies*

I traveled to Sydney, Australia, for the Society for the History of Children and Youth's biannual conference that took place at the Australian Catholic University between June 26-28. The theme for this year's conference was "Encounters and Exchanges" and it brought together interdisciplinary scholarship investigating how relational interactions shape the experiences and understandings of childhood and youth.

I was able to attend the conference as a panel organizer and presenter thanks to **the Haiganoosh Mengushian/Ajemian Memorial Student Travel Award**. The panel I organized titled "War, Violence, and 'Contested' Bodies: Transnational Representations of Adolescent and Youth Sexuality in the Twentieth Century" explored the various representations of youth sexuality against the backdrop of two world wars. The papers analyzed how social, ideological, and cross-generational encounters shaped youth sexuality to regulate wartime societies in ways compatible with heterosexual sex and reproduction and at times, queering youth sexuality. By showcasing the ideological connections between two world wars alongside the literary and political representations of

## 2019-20 Continuing Graduate Students

### Armen Abkarian

*PhD Student, Department of History  
Area of Concentration: The Mongol Empire, Armenian literature, Armenian historiography.*

### Ali Bolcakan

*PhD Student, Department of Comparative Literature  
Area of Concentration: Armenian, Greek, and Turkish language debates and literatures in the late Ottoman Empire and early Republican Turkey.*

### Tuğçe Kayaal

*PhD Student, Department of Middle East Studies  
Area of Concentration: History of childhood and youth in the Middle East, gender and sexuality in the late Ottoman Empire, social and cultural history of World War I.*

### Arakel Minassian

*MA Student, Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies  
Area of Concentration: Contemporary Armenian literature in the Republic of Armenia and the diaspora, literary meeting spaces, translation studies.*

### Mano Sakayan

*PhD Student, Department of History  
Area of Concentration: Intellectual history, cultural history, history of science and medicine, French colonial studies, Armenian history, late Ottoman history, the modern Arab world.*

"proper" and "improper" sexual identities and practices for youth, the papers in the panel scrutinized the ways World War I and II affected juvenile gender performativity, sexual identity, and sexual behaviors.

Alongside my role as a panel organizer, I also presented a paper titled "Condemnation of Adolescent Same-Sex Male Desire and Practices: Regulating Homosocial Bonds in Konya's State Orphanages (1914-1918)." In my paper, I analyzed the condemnation of male same-sex desire in shaping the collective and subjective identities of war orphans and how it informed orphanage policies for regulating adolescent boys' sexuality. By focusing on state-sponsored orphanages in the province of Konya during World War I, I argued that wartime state policies aimed at cultivating masculine citizens compatible with heterosexual norms. Consequently, orphan boys who were in same-sex relationships became the embodiment of sexual deviancy both on the local and national level. However, through their very acts, orphan boys contested the stigmatization by the state and the Ottoman society. Moreover, I used petitions of the mother of a fifteen-year-old Armenian boy from Istanbul, Nazareth, who got arrested by the police and sent to Konya for being "young, single, and provincial," to discuss how male youth's ethnic and religious belonging intersected with their sexuality and class. Thanks to the award I was able to share my work in a significant academic venue in my field. A revised and expanded version of this paper will be published in Historical Reflections next year.





**Arakel Minassian**  
*MA Student, Center for  
Russian, East European,  
and Eurasian Studies*

My MA research project focuses on centers of contemporary Armenian literature. Although scholarly work and school instruction in Armenian literature tend to stop in the early twentieth century, there is a vibrant literary culture in the present-day Republic of Armenia. Travelling to Yerevan in the summer of 2018, I was amazed to see writers gathering in coffee shops and other meeting places and discussing new works or important social and political issues. I wanted a greater glimpse into this literary life to determine the importance of Yerevan as a literary space (its coffee shops, publishing houses, and journals, as well as its social and political life) and to find out what is produced today in the Armenian language. Moreover, since Armenian literature has always been dispersed throughout different cities, I wanted to discover to what extent these literary worlds exist in other old, established centers of Armenian culture.

**The Haiganoosh Mengushian/Ajemian Memorial Student Travel Award** greatly helped me in this regard. I used my funding from the Armenian Studies Program to conduct my fieldwork in three different centers of Armenian culture: Yerevan, Beirut, and Istanbul. I explored the Armenian literary life in each city by visiting bookstores and publishing houses, attending writing events, interviewing writers, and improving my Armenian language skills. Travelling to each of these places was invaluable for my research project because the physical space of the cities helped me understand and feel the nuances of the contemporary Armenian literary world. All of these impressions will filter directly into my MA thesis.

I am extremely grateful to have received the Haiganoosh Mengushian/Ajemian Student Travel Award. This funding helped me cover my travel and living expenses as I conducted my fieldwork and allowed me to buy books unavailable in the United States, but essential to my research. Without this fellowship, I would not have had the opportunity to travel to these three cities, and learn as much as I did this summer.



**Annika Topelian**  
*BA Student  
Department of Linguistics*

My research project for my Honors thesis in Linguistics aims to investigate Western Armenian as a heritage language and will involve a study on bilingual heritage speakers of Western Armenian in Michigan. This study will determine some of the linguistic features of Western Armenian as spoken by this particular population of speakers. A study examining Western Armenian as a heritage language is extremely important, as heritage languages are under constant threat since they are difficult to maintain, given their existence primarily as minority languages in bilingual communities. They are also subject to a number of effects, especially due to bilingual contact with the dominant language in the community, as is the case with English in the US. This study is also an important step in understanding the nature of languages spoken in diaspora populations, especially since Western Armenian is spoken primarily in bilingual settings, and few, if any, monolingual speakers are left.

**The Haiganoosh Mengushian/Ajemian Memorial Student Travel Award** I received through the Armenian Studies Program allowed me to attend the Programme of Armenian Studies' Summer Intensive Language Course for Intermediate Western Armenian in Budapest, Hungary this summer. The instruction I received and the experiences I gained through this course improved my knowledge and proficiency in Western Armenian, which will permit me to collect and analyze Western Armenian oral production data from native speakers for my project in the coming semester.

Through the summer language program, I met scholars and academics from all over the world specializing in Armenian studies and related fields. I met Armenians from California, New York, Mexico, and Istanbul. Three of the students participating in the course were also native speakers of Western Armenian. My daily interactions with them provided me with exposure to the language as it is used by native speakers in everyday speech and conversation, further contributing to my proficiency in the language. Conversations and discussions with my cohort also promoted a greater understanding of the contexts and environments in which speakers from Armenian communities in different parts of the world use the language. It was enlightening to share our experiences as members of diaspora communities from different parts of the world as well. I hope through the connections I have made with these scholars in the field we can continue to share resources and perspectives to promote the future of Armenian studies.

I am very grateful to the Armenian Studies Program for providing the funding which made this trip possible. Not only have I improved my Western Armenian language skills, which will be extremely useful for collecting and analyzing Western Armenian oral production data for my Honors thesis, but I have made invaluable connections with scholars in the field whom I may have never met otherwise. I look forward to continuing my research project in the coming semester, and I hope that this research will contribute to future preservation and maintenance efforts for the Western Armenian language.



# 2019-20 EVENT CALENDAR

*Unless otherwise noted, all events will be held in Weiser Hall Room 555  
(500 Church Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109).*

## SEP

**13-14**  
fri & sat

**Conference:** "Generations and Legacies: Louise Manoogian Simone's Vision for Armenian Studies."  
**Friday: 7PM-9PM; Saturday: 9AM-6PM**

**18**  
wed

**Roundtable:** "Pluricentric Armenian in a Diasporic Context: Reflections on Second Dialect Acquisition."  
**Shushan Karapetian**, Deputy Director of the Institute of Armenian Studies, University of Southern California; **Tamar Boyadjian**, Associate Professor of Medieval Literature, Michigan State University; and **Vahé Sahakyan**, Research Scholar, Senior Information Resources Specialist, U-M-Dearborn.  
**6PM – 7:30PM**

## OCT

**09**  
wed

**Lecture:** "Palimpsests of Ruins: Between Armenian and Kurdish Histories in Anatolia."  
**Anoush Tamar Suni**, 2019-20 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow, U-M.  
**5PM-6:30PM**

## NOV

**13**  
wed

**Film Screening:** "Head of State" (Directed by Hrant Yeritskinyan; 2016).  
**7PM-9PM**

**20**  
wed

**Lecture:** "Roving Revolutionaries: Armenians and Connected Revolutions in the Russian, Iranian, and Ottoman Worlds."  
**Houri Berberian**, Meghrouni Family Presidential Chair in Armenian Studies; Director, Armenian Studies Program, University of California, Irvine.  
**5PM-6:30PM**

## JAN

**14**  
tue

**Film Screening and Artist Talk:**  
"Post-disciplinary Inscriptions of Armenian Diaspora: 'Vahé Oshagan: Between Acts (2016)'" **Hrayr Eulmessekian**, artist, filmmaker and **Taline Voskeritchian**, writer, translator and faculty member at Boston University.  
**6PM-8PM**

**15**  
wed

**Lecture:** "Overwhelming Absurdity: Vahé Oshagan's Discourse of Diasporic Culture."  
**Karen Jallatyan**, 2019-20 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow, U-M.  
**5PM-6:30PM**

## FEB

**05**  
wed

**Film Screening:** "Armen and Me"  
(Directed by Maxim Airapetov; 2018).  
**7PM-9PM**

**13**  
thu

**Opening Keynote Address:** "Afterlives of Western Armenia."  
Hussey Room, Michigan League, 911 N University Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.  
**5PM-7PM**

**14**  
fri

**Workshop:** "Afterlives of Western Armenia."  
Organizers: **Karen Jallatyan**, **Anoush Suni**, 2019-20 Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellows, U-M, and **Hakem Al-Rustom**, Alex Manoogian Professor of Modern Armenian History, U-M.  
**10AM-6PM**

## MAR

**18**  
wed

**Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Annual Distinguished Lecture:**  
"David Ohannessian and the Armenian Ceramics of Jerusalem."  
**Sato Moughalian**, award-winning flutist and author of "Feast of Ashes: The Life and Art of David Ohannessian."  
Room 1010, Weiser Hall, 500 Church Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.  
**7PM-9PM**

## APR

**01**  
wed

**Lecture:** "Sojourners, Smugglers, and Dubious Citizens: The Politics of Armenian Migration to North America, 1885-1915."  
**David Gutman**, Associate Professor of History, Manhattanville College.  
**5PM-6:30PM**

**10-11**  
fri & sat

**Eleventh Annual International Graduate Student Workshop:**  
"Medicine, Madness, and Maladies of the Mind in Armenian Studies Past and Present."  
Organizers: **Melanie Tanielian**, Director, Armenian Studies Program, U-M and **Mano Sakayan**, PhD student, Department of History, U-M.  
**10AM-5PM**

*Jay Weissberg, 2019 Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Annual Distinguished Lecture*





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*Geghard, Armenia, 2019 (Credit: Predrag Milosavljevic)*

