Welcome to the 2018 UCLA Colloquia in Armenian Studies
Armenian Studies at UCLA is one of the largest programs outside Yerevan and, with roots going back over half a century, is one of the oldest in the USA. Instruction is organized around two nodes, the Narekatsi Chair of Armenian Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (NELC), held by Dr. S. Peter Cowe, and the Richard Hovannisian Chair in Modern Armenian History, held by Dr. Sebouh Aslanian, which was created in 2011 in honor of Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian, presently emeritus holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation Chair in the Department of History.

Recently an introductory class in Armenian Music has been added, currently taught by Dr. Karenn Chutjian Presti, and a Research Program in Armenian Archaeology and Ethnography was endowed by Ms. Zaruhy Sara Chitjian at the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology in memory of her parents.

UCLA offers instruction in all three major standards of the Armenian language: Dr. Anahid Aramouni Keshishian is lecturer in Eastern Armenian, Dr. Hagop Gulludjian in Western Armenian. Meanwhile, Dr. Shushan Karapetian, Program Director of the High School Summer Language Program at the Center for World Languages, offers classes for Armenian heritage learners.
The Program services an Armenian concentration in the NELC department’s Middle Eastern Studies Major as well as a popular undergraduate Armenian Studies Minor. Graduate degrees are now offered in NELC, History, and Archaeology.

In 2015 the Program established memoranda of understanding between UCLA and the American University of Armenia, the Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, the National Library, and Museum of Art and Literature in Yerevan. A further MOU was signed with the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography in 2017. Currently, it is engaged in various collaborative projects with these institutions. These include a joint annual Summer School Program with AUA and a Workshop on the Contemporary Construction of Armenian Identity held in March, 2016.


The nucleus of the university’s rich Armenological holdings was formed by the bequest of the library of Dr. K.M. Khantamour in the late 60s, subsequently enhanced by the accession of the Minasian collection of manuscripts (most of which are digitized), archives, and printed books that buttressed the Program’s research capabilities. Collection development has been facilitated by a recent endowment from the Friends of the UCLA Armenian Language and Culture Studies, a support group that provides liaison with the Armenian community of Greater Los Angeles.
S. Peter Cowe is Narekatsi Professor of Armenian Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Previously, he has held positions in Armenology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Columbia University, New York. His research interests include Late Antique and medieval Armenian intellectual history, in which connection he has contributed most of the Armenian entries to the series *The Textual History of the Bible* (Brill), Muslim-Christian Dialogue, for which he has written the later entries to the series *Christian-Muslim Relations, A Biobibliographical History* (Brill), and modern Armenian nationalism, on which he has produced an extended essay (*Le Muséon*, 2013). The author of five books in the field and editor of nine, he contributes regularly to scholarly journals and is the past co-editor of the *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*. He has served on the executive board of the Society for Armenian Studies and Association Internationale des Etudes Arméniennes. A recipient of the Garbis Papazian award for Armenology, he was inducted into the Accademia Ambrosiana, Milan (Classe di Studi sul Vicino Oriente) in 2016. His latest work *The Armenians: Religious and Cultural Interchange across the Mediterranean and Near Eastern World* is to be published by Gorgias Press, New Jersey.
Dr. Aslanian received his Ph.D. (with distinction) from Columbia University in 2007. He is an Associate Professor and the Richard Hovannisian Endowed Chair of Modern Armenian History at the Department of History at UCLA. Prior to his arrival at UCLA, Professor Aslanian taught at California State University, Long Beach, Cornell University, the University of Michigan, Chicago University, and Whitman College. From 2009 to 2010, Aslanian was a Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral fellow in world history at Cornell. Aslanian specializes in the early modern world and Armenian history and is the author of numerous articles in peer reviewed journals as well as two books. His book, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), was the recipient of the PEN USA literary award for the most outstanding first book of the year from UC Press. It was also awarded the Middle East Studies Association’s (MESA) Houshang Pourshariati Prize for best book in Iranian Studies for 2011. Aslanian is currently concluding a book on global Armenian print culture and the history of reading in the early modern Armenian diaspora.
Dr. Hovannisian is Professor Emeritus of Armenian and Near Eastern History at the University of California, Los Angeles. A member of the UCLA faculty since 1962, he has organized the undergraduate and graduate programs in Armenian and Caucasian history. In 1987, Professor Hovannisian was appointed the first holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation endowed Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA. From 1978 to 1995, he also served as the Associate Director of the G.E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies. The author or editor of thirty volumes and sixty scholarly articles relating to Armenian, Caucasian and Near Eastern History, Dr. Hovannisian is a Guggenheim Fellow and has received many honors for his scholarship, civic activities, and advancement of Armenian Studies, including election to membership in the Armenian National Academy of Sciences and Encyclicals and Medals from their Holinesses, the Catholicos of All Armenians in Etchmiadzin and the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia in Lebanon. He is the author of five volumes on the Republic of Armenia and has edited and contributed to five volumes on the Armenian Genocide and fourteen volumes on the cities and provinces of historic Western Armenia.

Dr. Hovannisian is a founder and six-time president of the Society for Armenian Studies and represented the State of California on the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) from 1978 to 1994. He serves on the board of directors of nine scholarly and civic organizations and has made numerous television and radio appearances on issues relating to the Armenian people and Armenian, Near Eastern, and Caucasian history. Currently he is Distinguished Presidential Fellow at Chapman University and adjunct professor of History at USC to work with the Shoah Foundation on Armenian survivor testimonies.
Dr. Keshishian is Lecturer in Eastern Armenian at UCLA. She was the recipient of the “UCLA Distinguished Lecturer Award” for the year 2005. Dr. Keshishian has had a varied career as a researcher. She was the publisher and editor of a social and literary magazine, Eighties, the editor of a student magazine, Moutk, and the editor of the literary journal Random Agenda. She is a member of the Society for Armenian Studies and the Middle East Studies Association. Dr. Keshishian has written extensively on Armenian literary themes and on social and political issues. Her book on American-Armenian author Hagop Karapents was published in 1999 by the Academy of Sciences in Armenia. Dr. Keshishian has also been teaching an “Armenian Society and Culture” course at the American University of Armenia Summer program.

She is the founder and artistic director of the Los Angeles-based art organization, Arena Productions, through which she translates, directs and produces Armenian plays. Her solo autobiographical performance “Ka yev Chka” was successfully staged in the US, Armenia and Argentina and Lebanon. In 2015 Dr. Keshishian staged the Armenian national epic “The Daredevils of Sasun,” with the participation of her UCLA students.
Hagop Gulludjian has researched and published on medieval Armenian poetry, heritage language and language vitality, interactions between virtuality, culture and diasporas, and modern to postmodern Diaspora Armenian literature. Currently he is in charge of Western Armenian at UCLA, while working on a volume on the mystical poetry of Grigor Narekatsi, and researching and writing on Nigoghos Sarafian and Krikor Beledian. He has an extensive consulting background, having assisted both private and government entities on technology policy issues.
Dr. Karapetian received a PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures from UCLA in 2014, where she has taught Armenian Studies courses over the past eight years. Her research interests focus on heritage languages and speakers, particularly on the case of Armenian heritage speakers in the Los Angeles community, on which she has presented and lectured widely. Dr. Karapetian is also very involved with the Center for World Languages and the National Heritage Language Resource Center at UCLA, where she is Program Director of the Center’s High School Heritage Program, which offers language classes for heritage speakers of Armenian, Russian, Persian, Korean, and Japanese. She is currently serving on multiple committees in the Los Angeles Armenian community aimed at reforming Armenian language instruction and promoting the use of the Armenian language.
Karenn Chutjian Presti teaches Armenian music and is a pianist faculty member of the voice department, performing with singers and teaching song interpretation and Italian, German, French, Spanish, and English lyric diction to singers. Dr. Presti holds degrees in piano performance and collaborative arts from the San Francisco Conservatory and USC, and is a winner of the Armenian Allied Arts, Leni FéBland, MTAC Chamber Music, and US Open Music competitions. She has taught in four languages at the Munich International School, Artetonal Schule für Musik, Lark Musical Society, Pasadena Conservatory of Music, and the San Domenico School. Dr. Presti’s compositions, translations, and arrangements can be heard in her recently released book and CD, *My First Armenian Songbook*. 
H.E. MR. GRIGOR HOVHANNISSIAN

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to the United States of America

Jan 2016 – Appointed Ambassador of Armenia to the United States of America

2014 – 2016 Jan – Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to Mexico (concurrently to Panama, Costa Rica, Cuba and Guatemala)


2006 – 2009 – Executive Director of the “Shushi Revival Fund”, Armenia

2006 August - October – UN Emergency Mission to Lebanon, Field Coordinator, Saida region

2005 -2008 – Visiting Lecturer, Middle East Politics at Faculty of Oriental Studies, Yerevan State University

2004 – United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq, (Jordan), Senior Advisor to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General

2002-2003 – United Nations Field Coordinator in Palestinian territories, West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Ramallah and Gaza city)

2001–2003 – Team Leader and Emergency Planner, Office of the UN Special Coordinator (UNSCO) for the Middle East Peace Process, Jerusalem

1998-2000 – UN Secretariat Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Head of Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Brazzaville (Republic of the Congo) Offices


1994-1996 – UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Yerevan Office. Coordinator of the “Shelter” program

Diplomatic Rank
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
## OPENING REMARKS

**3:30–3:40 PM**

Director of 2018 Undergraduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies

**LUIZA HARUTYUNYAN**

*UCLA*

Narekatsi Professor of Armenian Studies

**PROFESSOR S. PETER COWE**

*Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, UCLA*

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## PANEL 1

**Two Standards in Contact: Eastern and Western Armenian**

**CHAIR: Ara Mandjikian (Biochemistry, UCLA)**

### 3:40 – 4:00 PM

**ARTI KASSARDJIAN**

*Mechanical Engineering, UCLA*

“Eastern Armenian Through the Lens of Western Armenians”

### 4:00–4:20 PM

**MESROP EGIAZARYAN**

*Biology; Minor: Armenian Studies, UCLA*

“Eastern vs. Western Armenian: Evaluating Fear Complexes Between Different Spoken Standards”

### 4:20–4:30 PM

**DISCUSSION PERIOD**

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## PANEL 2

**Topics in Modern and Contemporary History**

**CHAIR: Lilit Ghazaryan (Linguistics and Anthropology; Minor: Russian Language, UCLA)**

### 4:30–4:50 PM

**VANA GEREGIAN**

*Philosophy; Minor: Armenian Studies UCLA*

“Javakhk: Historical Overview and Current Issues of Armenians”
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| 4:50–5:10 PM | **DATEVIG KALOYAN**  
*History, Art History, UC Irvine*  
"Documenting Armenia: The History of Social Documentary Photography from the 19th Century to the Present" |
| 5:10–5:20 PM | **DISCUSSION PERIOD**                                               |
| 5:20–5:40 PM | **COFFEE/TEA BREAK**                                               |
| **PANEL 3** | **Bilingualism and Heritage Language Speakers**                     |
| CHAIR: Vana Geregian (Philosophy, Minor: Armenian Studies, UCLA) |
| 5:40–6:00 PM | **ANI ALABERKYAN**  
*Linguistics and Anthropology, Arabic, UCLA*  
"Language Ideologies in Arabic-Speaking Armenian Families" |
| 6:00–6:20 PM | **LILIT GHAZARYAN**  
*Linguistics and Anthropology; Minor: Russian Language, UCLA*  
"Metalinguistic Awareness Among Armenian-English Bilingual Children" |
| 6:20–6:40 PM | **ANAHIT POGOSSIAN**  
*Linguistics and Psychology; Minor: Armenian Studies, UCLA*  
"Ի՞նչ կա ծիծաղելի: The Role of Humor for Armenian Heritage Learners" |
| 6:40–6:50 PM | **DISCUSSION PERIOD**                                               |
| 7:00 PM     | **RECEPTION**  
(ROYCE HALL 306)                                                  |
Arti Kassardjian grew up in an Armenian family in Beirut, Lebanon and attended a Lebanese Catholic School. He moved to the United States to pursue his undergraduate education and developed an interest in Armenian studies after taking a sociolinguistic class titled “Language in Diaspora: Armenian as a Heritage Language”. Now a sophomore at the University of California, Los Angeles, he’s working towards a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering.

“Eastern Armenian Through the Lens of Western Armenians”

Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union, the independence of Armenia, and the immigration of Eastern Armenians to predominantly Western Armenian diaspora communities, the two groups of Armenians were suddenly exposed to each other after years of relative isolation. Although the initial “shock” regarding the linguistic and cultural barrier between Eastern and Western Armenians has subsided, each standard is still subjected to stigmatization and hostility by the other group in varying degrees. To this day, little has been done to document the dynamics between the two groups. This is why I have decided to study Western Armenian communities with regards to their attitudes towards Eastern Armenian and its speakers. My research aims to address several questions: What is the general perception of Eastern Armenian in the Western Armenian community? Does it vary by location? If so, are homogenously Western Armenian communities more hostile towards Eastern Armenian? What factors contribute to the gap between Eastern and Western Armenians? I used various methods to gather data concerning the questions above, including interviewing Los Angeles Western Armenians and performing online surveys of American, Lebanese and Cypriot Armenians. The results provide a true insight into the way the demographics of a Western Armenian community affects its perceptions of Eastern Armenian and the reasons why some of these perceptions are negative. These observations can be the first step in ending the stigmatization of Armenians based on their backgrounds, thus creating a stronger and more unified Armenian community.
My name is Mesrop Egiazaryan and I will be graduating from UCLA this year with a Bachelor’s in biology. Ever since coming to this institution, one of my main goals has been to keep in touch with my Armenian heritage. I have taken many Armenian courses here, been involved in many different Armenian organizations (ASA, AEO, etc.) and now am able to participate in this year’s colloquium to discuss my research within the Armenian community—my community.

“Eastern vs. Western Armenian: Evaluating Fear Complexes Between Different Spoken Standards”

Throughout the past few decades, the Armenian diaspora in the Los Angeles County has undergone a gradual linguistic change from one literary standard to another. Western Armenian has slowly dissipated in this community while Eastern Armenian has arisen. Despite these juxtaposing trends, heritage speakers of Eastern Armenian have developed a greater fear complex of speaking their mother tongue relative to heritage speakers of Western Armenian. This phenomenon has prompted linguistic analysts to ask, “Why do heritage speakers of Eastern Armenian hesitate to speak in their linguistic standard in a community where their language is dominant as opposed to heritage speakers of Western Armenian whose standard has subsided?” This paper seeks to answer this question by providing thorough data analysis of in-depth discussions with community members who can, to some degree, speak either of the two literary standards of Armenian. It will provide insight on how modern-day schooling and family dynamic clash to either enforce or inhibit the individual speaker. In addition, it will discuss the concepts of (1) diglossia to explain when and where and why the heritage language is spoken, (2) patriarchal influence amongst hybrid heritage speakers to explain identity choice and standard competence, and (3) parental language toleration to correlate upbringings with the formation, or lack thereof, of fear complexes. Ultimately, data revealed that fear complexes dissolved when the heritage speaker reached his or her individual threshold of linguistic confidence in any given domain of life, which resulted in language maintenance within the diaspora.
Vana Geregian is completing her undergraduate degree in Philosophy and Armenian Studies at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She teaches Armenian history and language at an Armenian Relief Society Saturday school. Vana is also keenly involved in the Armenian community at UCLA and beyond. Before graduating UCLA, she plans on studying abroad in Europe, preferably in a country with limited number of Armenians. This will allow her to broaden her perspective and further appreciate diversity.

“Javakhk: Historical Overview and Current Issues of Armenians”

Javakhk is an ancient Armenian region that currently lies in the southern part of the Republic of Georgia. Javakhk is often overlooked in studies that focus on historical Armenia. My research paper provides a historical overview of Javakhk through the work of Ashot Melkonyan, titled, Javakhk in the 19th Century and the 1st Quarter of the 20th Century with an emphasis on the old Armenian migration to Javakhk and Armenians’ contribution to the development of Javakhk. The paper then discusses the current socio-economic and socio-cultural issues Armenians in Javakhk face today (e.g. discrimination, poverty, threat of assimilation etc.). The paper explores and discusses these issues with recent statistics conducted by Armenian Relief Society Eastern Region.
Born and raised in Los Angeles, California to proud Armenian parents, Datevig’s interests in the humanities and in visual studies were greatly shaped and influenced by the community and household in which she grew up in as well as by her long-standing and passionate relationship with history and film. Today, her study interests lie within the fields of History, Art History, Visual Studies (film and photographic studies), International Studies, and societal and cultural studies. In the future she hopes to pursue a Masters degree and hopefully, work in a museum setting.

“Documenting Armenia: The History of Social Documentary Photography from the 19th Century to the Modern Day”

In becoming aware of the plethora of photography and arts-oriented centers in Armenia and in being introduced to the works of Armenian documentary photographers, there was a personal cultivation of interest in learning about the history of documentary photography in Armenia. Though I have always been fascinated by Armenian art, including film, I became aware of my lack of familiarity with Armenian photography. Modern works of documentary photography explore and shed light onto not only fervent ongoing social issues, but political and economic issues as well. This promotion of change and progress through photographic work made me question the place of importance photography had in Armenian history. How has documentary photography grown and evolved from the 19th to the 21st century? How has documentation and the limits of documentation changed? How have subject matters differed throughout the centuries? How has Armenian history and the climate of Armenian culture and society been documented or portrayed? In short, what can photographs tell us about Armenia and what have they told? The purpose of this research is to learn of the role photography has played in Armenia and to track the status of social documentary photography and its subjects of documentation and portrayal throughout the years. The goal is to really trace the history of documentary photography and its significance and relationship to social progress in Armenia. Though Armenian photography is difficult to trace and to make coherent due to a number of factors including the lack of comprehensive literature on the subject, the significance of this research comes in creating coherence out of vastness. Studying Armenian photography means not only being able to see how the means of practice as well as the subject matter of documentation have changed and evolved over the years, but it also allows us to see what place Armenia, a historically and culturally rich country, has had in photography and how it has contributed to the medium.
Ani Alaberkyan’s background spans the fields of anthropology, linguistics, migration, and postcolonial studies. She will be graduating from UCLA with degrees in Arabic and Linguistics and Anthropology and looking forward to entering graduate school in Migration Studies.

“Language Ideologies in Arabic-Speaking Armenian Families”

Armenians comprise a significant diaspora population in Southern California. Because of their wide diaspora, Armenians hold co-ethnic identities, combining their Armenian culture with that of their host countries. Armenians who arrived from Arab countries (mostly Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt) are referred to as “Arab Armenians”, form a distinct branch of the Armenian diaspora. This project looks into the relationship between language use, identity, and culture in Arab Armenian families. Through interviews, group discussion, and observations of five Armenian families residing in Los Angeles, this study aims to understand the language ideologies of Armenians from Arab countries. By conducting separate interviews and observations of ethnic Armenian immigrants from Arab countries and their American-born children, the different ideologies and uses of language of the two generations is evident. Furthermore, this project aims to understand how the language ideologies of Arab Armenians reflect the way they view their distinct culture and identity while living in diaspora.
Lilit Ghazaryan is a transfer student from Los Angeles City College. She has been working on her research for almost a year and has received the Undergraduate Research Fellows Program and the Undergraduate Research Scholars Program Scholarships at UCLA while working on her project. Lilit plans on getting her PhD in Linguistic Anthropology and dedicating her research to the multilingual community and the current linguistic dynamic in the Republic of Armenia.

“Metalinguistic Awareness Among Armenian-English Bilingual Children”

The Armenian community in Los Angeles lives in a bilingual and bicultural reality where they must navigate their way through at least two languages and two cultures on daily bases. Children who grow up in immigrant Armenian families become simultaneous multilinguals and learn to easily manipulate both languages at the same time. This project is a case study about the language practices of three five-year-old Armenian-American girls. The study concentrates on ways these children master and practice their knowledge of each language through communication with peers, especially during play time, while developing metalinguistic awareness of their multilingual identity and environment. All three of the participants come from families whose native language is Eastern Armenian. The data was collected through video-recordings and the main site of the data collection was the day care the children were attending. The observations lasted three months and were conducted in accordance to the IRB guidelines and regulations. Each of the girls has different levels of proficiency in English and Armenian and these proficiencies give them different levels of linguistic authority when changing between the languages. Throughout their play, the girls learn from each other efficiently tutoring each other in two of the languages while also developing a sense of identity as multilingual speakers. This project brings awareness to the underrepresented community of the Armenian-American diaspora, fills the gap within the field of similar studies conducted with children, and highlights the important role of play and communication with peers and its influence on children’s linguistic development.
Anahit Pogossian is a recent graduate from UCLA who majored in Linguistics and Psychology and minored in Armenian Studies. She currently works in two labs at UCLA, the Teaching and Learning lab and the Language and Cognitive Development lab. Having taken various classes with Dr. Keshishian, Dr. Karapetian, and Dr. Cowe, she has developed research interests in bilingualism and second language acquisition. Anahit hopes to pursue a graduate degree in Psychology and Education.

"Ի՞նչ կա ծիծաղելի: The Role of Humor in the Armenian Language for Heritage"

Humor has started to disprove years of negative attitudes of heritage speakers towards the heritage language, as well as facilitate a connection between the two. My research explores why Armenian comedy is attractive to heritage speakers who don’t access other media (i.e. books, newspapers, television shows) in the Armenian language, what methods the Armenian comedians in Los Angeles use to make their comedy appealing, and how comedy engages heritage speakers in their heritage language. Research shows that heritage speakers have gaps in their linguistic abilities, thus causing heritage speakers to stray away from media in Armenian. What research fails to show is why humor conducted in Armenian is so appealing to heritage language speakers. I hypothesize that heritage language speakers enjoy comedy because it is conducted in the informal level, it is relatable to everyday life as a bicultural and bilingual Armenian diasporan, and with technology and social media, it has become more accessible. I conducted qualitative research through holding interviews with 7 comedians from L.A., which include but are not limited to Antlc, Mary Basmadjian, and Demq Davo. I examined the interviews and coded for common themes. My findings show how lack of ‘cool/fun’ things in Armenian and how post Soviet immigration and 2nd generation Armenians in LA play a huge role in the success of Armenian comedy. My results show the relevance comedy conducted in Armenian has for heritage speakers as it makes the Armenian language more approachable, which is both a necessity and vitality in the diaspora.
2018
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT COLLOQUIUM IN ARMENIAN STUDIES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. S. Peter Cowe
Founder/Faculty Advisor

Luiza Harutyunyan
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Lilit Ghazaryan
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Vana Geregian
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Ara Mandjikian
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
**BREAKFAST & OPENING REMARKS**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00 AM</td>
<td>BREAKFAST</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:10 AM</td>
<td>Director of 2018 Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>JESSE SIRAGAN ARLEN</strong></td>
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<td>Near Eastern Languages and Cultures</td>
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<td><em>University of California, Los Angeles</em></td>
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<td>Narekatsi Professor of Armenian Studies</td>
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<td><strong>PROFESSOR S. PETER COWE</strong></td>
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<td>Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, <em>UCLA</em></td>
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**PANEL 1**

*Domestic and International Interactions in the Late Ottoman and post-Ottoman Periods and their Role in Memory*

**CHAIR:** Daniel Ohanian (History, UCLA)

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:10 – 10:30 AM</td>
<td><strong>AMJAD DAJANI</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>PhD in Middle East Studies Northwestern University (USA)</em></td>
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<td>“Undermining the Ottoman-Armenian Rebellion, 1894–1896: The Case of Britain’s <em>Islamic World Journal</em>”</td>
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<td>10:30 – 10:50 AM</td>
<td><strong>ARMEN MANUK-KHALOYAN</strong></td>
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<td><em>MA in History, California State University, Northridge (USA)</em></td>
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<td>“‘If Only It Would Last a Little Longer’: Imperial Visions, Ottoman Armenians, and the Outbreak of the Great War”</td>
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<td>10:50 – 11:10 AM</td>
<td><strong>ARMAN KHACHATRYAN</strong></td>
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<td><em>PhD Candidate in Interdisciplinary Studies Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (Israel)</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>“The Armenian Patriarchate in a Changing Jerusalem: Between Preservation and Modernization”</td>
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11:10 – 11:30 AM  
DAVID LEUPOLD  
PhD in Social Sciences, Berlin Graduate School in Social Sciences (Germany)  
“Contested Memories: Turkish, Armenian, and Kurdish Narratives around Lake Van”

11:30 – 11:50 AM  
DISCUSSION PERIOD

11:50 – 12:10 PM  
COFFEE/TEA BREAK

PANEL 2  
The Interweaving of Art and Politics in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia  
CHAIR: Sona Tajiryan (History, UCLA)

12:10 – 12:30 PM  
SAMVEL GRIGORYAN  
PhD Student in Medieval History  
Université Paul Valéry (France)  
“Recent Discoveries in Cilicia and Their Impact on Armenian Studies”

12:30 – 12:50 PM  
EMMA CHOOKASZIAN  
PhD in Medieval History and Art History  
Université Paul Valéry (France)  
“The Four Portraits of Het’um II: New Observations Regarding the Royal Portrait of the Lectionary of 1286”

12:50 – 1:00 PM  
DISCUSSION PERIOD

1:00 – 2:30 PM  
LUNCH BREAK
### PANEL 3
**Armenian Manuscript Arts from a Multidisciplinary Perspective**

**CHAIR:** Jennifer Manoukian (Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, UCLA)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:30 – 2:50 PM</td>
<td><strong>ANUSH SARGSYAN</strong> PhD Student in Art History and Scriptorium Studies, Matenadaran Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (Armenia)</td>
<td>“An Exposition of Yohannes of Amida’s 17th-Century Miniature of Heavenly Jerusalem”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:50 – 3:10 PM</td>
<td><strong>MARTA SILVIA FILIPPINI</strong> MA in the Conservation of Paper, Book and Archival Materials Istituto Centrale per il Restauro e la Conservazione del Patrimonio Archivistico e Librario (Italy)</td>
<td>“The Archaeology and Conservation of Two Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts Rediscovered in Bologna”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:10 – 3:30 PM</td>
<td><strong>CHAHAN VIDAL-GORÈNE</strong> PhD Student in Armenian Paleography École Nationale des Chartes (France)</td>
<td>“Armenian Paleography and Handwritten Armenian Character Recognition”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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#### DISCUSSION PERIOD

### PANEL 4
**Contemporary Politics in Eurasia and the Middle East**

**CHAIR:** Alyssa Mathias (Ethnomusicology, UCLA)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:10 – 4:30 PM</td>
<td><strong>MARINE SARGSYAN</strong> PhD Candidate in History Leiden University (Netherlands)</td>
<td>“The Policy of Small States in the Strategies of the Great Powers: In the Case of the Republic of Armenia”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4:30 – 4:50 PM
MUSHEGH GHAHRIYAN
PhD in History, Armenian National Academy of Sciences (Armenia)

4:50 – 5:00 PM
DISCUSSION PERIOD

PANEL 5
Marginalized Experiences in Armenian Society
CHAIR: Armen Adamian (Ethnomusicology, UCLA)

5:00 – 5:20 PM
CARLA KEKEJIAN
MS/PhD Student in Communication Sciences and Disorders, University of Utah (USA)
“Harsneren: Language of the Armenian Bride”

5:20 – 5:40 PM
ROSIE VARTYTER AROUSH
PhD Candidate in Near Eastern Languages & Cultures, University of California, Los Angeles (USA)
“A Life of Otherness: The Significance of Familial Support and Community Inclusivity for LGBQ Armenians”

5:40 – 5:50 PM
DISCUSSION PERIOD

GUEST SPEAKER

5:50 – 6:10 PM
HIS EXCELLENCY THE HON. GRIGOR HOVHANNISYAN
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to the United States of America

6:10 – 8:00 PM
RECEPTION
(ROYCE HALL 306)
Amjad Dajani received his PhD in Middle East studies from King’s College London, University of London, in 2015. He also holds a master of letters degree in Middle East studies from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. His research interests focus on the politics and history of the modern Middle East, Pan-Islamism, and political Islam. He has taught at Northwestern University, the University of St. Andrews, and North Park University.

“Undermining the Ottoman-Armenian Rebellion, 1894–1896: The Case of Britain’s Islamic World Journal”

The Armenian question was one of the most contentious national questions of the late nineteenth century. Much of what has been written about the Armenian Massacres in current scholarship has focused on the extent of the massacres and their role in setting the stage for the genocide to come in the early twentieth century. What is neglected from this discussion, however, is the Ottoman campaign in Victorian Britain to delegitimize the Armenian narrative about the massacres of 1894–1896. This presentation will discuss this campaign by using the Islamic World journal as a case study. This periodical was a Victorian monthly published by the Liverpool Muslim Institute from 1893 to 1908. The Liverpool Muslim Institute was established in 1887 by the British convert to Islam Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam, who was appointed to the high office of grand sheikh of the British Isles by Sultan Abdul Hamid II in 1894. It is within this official Ottoman role that Sheikh Quilliam spearheaded the institute’s political advocacy challenging the Armenian narrative about the 1894–1896 massacres. The journal propagated an antinationalist message to its readers, seeking to impede British support for nationalist movements within the Ottoman Empire, particularly the Armenian question.
Armen Manuk-Khaloyan received his master’s degree in history from California State University, Northridge and his bachelor’s degree in the same field from the University of California, Los Angeles. For seven years, he was the in-house historian at a Los Angeles–based law firm that specialized in complex international litigation, genocide, and human rights law. His research focuses on the social history of the late Ottoman Empire.

“If Only It Would Last a Little Longer”: Imperial Visions, Ottoman Armenians, and the Outbreak of the Great War

The First World War has come to be remembered differently in the collective historical consciousness of the successor states and former communities of the Ottoman Empire. For the Armenians of the Diaspora and the modern republic, the genocide of 1915 occupies a prominent place in postwar space and memory. Such a selective construction of memory in the postwar literature has come at the expense of neglecting other important aspects of the war. We may shed light on one such area by examining the attitudes of Armenians toward the outbreak of this cataclysmic event in their history. How did Armenians—who considered themselves active, engaged citizens of an imperial polity—react to the string of events that began with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and ended with the empire’s decision to join the war on the side of the Triple Alliance in October 1914? How did responses come to be articulated in the mass-circulation press and other forms of media and through government-sponsored initiatives? Finally, what did individuals who hailed from urban and rural settings and from diverse backgrounds foresee in the event of the empire’s victory or defeat? My paper analyzes this little-studied period of the Armenian dimension of World War I with Rogers Brubaker’s and Fredrik Barth’s theories on ethnicity and citizenship as its guide. By looking at a diverse set of memoirs, diaries, letters, newspapers, and archival documents, I argue that Ottoman Armenian responses reflected their respective, competing visions of the future of the Ottoman state.
Arman Khachatryan is a PhD candidate in interdisciplinary studies at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. He holds a BA and an MA in cultural studies from Yerevan State University and a master’s degree in Israel studies from Ben-Gurion University. Since 2014, Arman has been a collaborating researcher for the Open Jerusalem Project. He is currently working on his dissertation, which focuses on the activities of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem during 1909–1949. His research interests include Israel studies, Armenian studies, nationalism, and ethnic and religious studies.

“The Armenian Patriarchate in a Changing Jerusalem: Between Preservation and Modernization”

My research aims to study the political and intellectual activities of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem from 1909 to 1948, with a special emphasis on the political relations between the patriarchate and the late Ottoman and British mandatory administrations. The paper will investigate the transformation in the patriarchate’s political attitude toward the changing authorities, especially after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire followed by the occupation of Jerusalem by the British. Specifically, it will concentrate on the role of the patriarchate “as one of the many political actors of Palestine and as an Armenian national-religious institution” in the process of shaping a new Armenian identity in Palestine. Consequently, I am interested in the relationship between the patriarchate and the Armenian community of Jerusalem and Palestine as a whole with reference to cultural, social, and educational dynamics. Thus, the main hypothesis I bring forward is that the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, apart from its religious activities, was deeply engaged in national activities, shaping a new Armenian identity, and organizing the educational programs of the Armenians living in Palestine. In order to succeed in its initiatives, the patriarchate used its political relations with the changing authorities of Jerusalem. This paper will be mainly qualitative and will be based on a large amount of data from six archives, including the archive of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Most of the information from this archive is being studied for the first time within the framework of my research.
David Leupold holds a BA in Ottoman and Iranian studies from Bamberg University and an MA in social sciences from Middle East Technical University in Ankara and Humboldt University in Berlin. He recently submitted his doctoral thesis titled “Contested Geographies: Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish Narrative Trajectories” to the Berlin Graduate School in Social Sciences. It was supervised by Silvia v. Steinsdorff, Klaus Eder, and Ronald G. Suny.

“Contested Memories: Turkish, Armenian, and Kurdish Narratives around Lake Van”

After being served some delicious glorik, the Kurdish family lit a small logwood fire and, while drinking black chay, delved into stories of a past when the streets of the Dzaprkor district of Paghesh had been filled with the voices of Assyrian tradesmen and Armenian craftsmen. Voices that had remained mute for a century. The streets of today are filled with quite different voices: Turkish commands distorted in the megaphone of an armed “akrep” jeep mingle with infuriated Kurdish chants. In my ongoing research, I explore national myth and collective forms of memory in the threefold-contested geography referred to as Eastern Turkey, Western Armenia, and Northern Kurdistan. My focus lies in the relationship between biographical trajectories, memories of violence, and collective boundaries in the Lake Van area, a geography where collective violence stretches back continuously from the Armenian Genocide (1915) of the past to the Kurdish conflict (1984–today) of the present. My field work is spatially rooted in the extended region surrounding Lake Van (the former provinces of Van and Bitlis) as an exemplary locus of memory at the intersection point where competing Armenians, Kurdish, and Turkish national narratives collide. The region, which is today located within the territory of the Republic of Turkey, was characterized by a substantial Armenian population in the past and a Kurdish majority population in the present. I have conducted narrative interviews in both Turkey and Armenia to determine narrative patterns that can bridge memory on the Lake Van area across the divide of the currently residing (mainly Sunni and Alevi Kurds) and the expelled (Armenians and Kurdish-speaking Yezidis) and reconcile the contested memory on collective violence beyond state-propagated history.
Samvel Grigoryan is a PhD student in medieval history at the Center for Medieval Studies at Université Paul Valéry, France. Currently, he is working on his thesis titled “The Armenians and the Franks: An Historical Geographical Study of the Genesis, Implantation and Evolution of the Nobility in Mediterranean Armenia, 1097–1375.” His research interests include the relations between Armenians and the West and the history of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia and Isauria, with a special emphasis on discovering and studying new monuments and artefacts from that period.

“Recent Discoveries in Cilicia and Their Impact on Armenian Studies”

In recent years, twelve Armenian inscriptions and fragments of inscriptions were found in Cilicia. Before this, the epigraphic heritage from the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia encompassed only about twenty Armenian, Old French and Latin texts. My paper presents a study of the inscriptions discovered in 2016–2017 among the church ruins in the village of Maksutoluğu (northeastern Cilicia) and in so-called Dağlı Kalesi (western Cilicia), as well as a review of other epigraphic pieces found recently in other parts of Cilicia.

I will also make a presentation of the ecclesiastical edifice situated in the village of Kıbrıslar (northern Cilicia). Earlier, I had identified this medieval site with the holy cloister of Drazark, burial place of the kings and queens of Armenia, other members of the Armenian princely and royal house, as well as of catholicoi. Further study, in which Prof. Patrick Donabédian (Head of the Laboratory of the Mediterranean Medieval and Modern Archeology, Aix-Marseille University) and Jirair Christianian (Independent Researcher) are taking part, revealed that some architectural elements of the structure resemble those of Eastern Armenian memorial churches dated within the first half of fourteenth century (Surb Astuacacin / Eghvard; “Burtʿelashen” Surb Astuacacin / Noravank ; Surb Minas / Kaputan). This part of the paper includes the first presentation of a hidden medieval cave complex located near Kıbrıslar-Drazark.

By the end of the presentation, the audience will have information about contributions of these recent discoveries to various issues of Armenian studies and about perspectives for further research in this field.
Emma Chookaszian is a doctor of medieval history and art history, a medievalist, and a specialist of Armenian art and miniature painting. She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Yerevan State University and her doctoral degree from Université Paul Valéry in France. Her dissertation was titled “The Iconographical, Historical and Theological Analysis of the Manuscripts Commanded by the First Three Kings of the Hethumid Dynasty.” She has received scholarships from the Government of France, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Sirarpie Der-Nersessian Fund, and the Armenian General Benevolent Union.

“The Four Portraits of Hetʿum II: New Observations Regarding the Royal Portrait of the Lectionary of 1286”

This paper is devoted to one of the most mysterious characters in the history of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia: King Hetʿum II—a king who was never coronated and never married, who became a Franciscan monk, and who has been “stoned” by Armenian historians. Hetʿum was a patron of manuscripts and a well-educated person who was a big connoisseur of art. In this paper, four portraits of Hetʿum that represent him at different points of his life will be discussed. These portraits are preserved in different works of art: two in manuscripts, one on a thirteenth-century silver reliquary, and one as a mural on the walls of a Franciscan convent in Venice. In this paper, we are going to show, for the first time, our discovery concerning the royal portrait in the lectionary ordered by Hetʿum II in 1286, which, in reality, is a portrait of the dynasty of the Hetʿumids beginning with Hetʿum I (who was considered not to have had a portrait of himself that had come down to us). Our discovery is based on the comparative analysis of all the portraits of Hetʿum II showing him in different ages and on the texts of the colophons of contemporaneous manuscripts. This analysis permits us to make a psychological portrait of the Franciscan king and to better understand his tastes in art.
Anush Sargsyan received her BA in history from Yerevan State University in 2004 and her MA in history from the Armenian National Academy of Sciences in 2007. She is currently working toward her PhD at the Matenadaran Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, where she is employed as a researcher in the Department of Art History and Scriptorium Studies. Her research interests include the motif of the tree in medieval Armenian art, the genealogy of Christ and its interrelations with Western art, the scriptorium of Amida, and early modern art.

“An Exposition of Yohannes of Amida’s 17th-Century Miniature of Heavenly Jerusalem”

The priest Yohannes was the principal scribe of the metropolitan of the Armenian Mesopotamian Amida scriptorium at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Despite being a little-studied figure, he was a miniaturist of high artistic quality and, from colophon data, it is evident that he was a highly educated person. One of his major works was a manuscript entitled “Abridged Bible,” to which he contributed the opening full-page miniatures depicting Heavenly Jerusalem. The main multi-layer composition features the Holy Trinity on the throne surrounded by cherubim and angels with the Garden of Eden, including its trees, flowers, and the four rivers of Eden—a combination that was a new variant in iconography.

Making use of iconographic, formal, and comparative methodology, this paper shows how the artist applied and transformed theories from miniature art and exegetical literature in his composition of Heavenly Jerusalem. After placing the iconography in the context of Byzantine and Eastern Christian art, I discuss one of the general motive trees, interpreting it through the lens of Canon Table commentaries. Due to its multi-layered composition and the combination of its pictorial elements, the miniature in the iconographic index is ordinary for the iconography of its time. By reading the general motive tree in the context of Canon Table commentaries, it becomes clear that there is a mutual relationship with its other pictorial elements and allegorical representations such as color and number symbolism. Finally, I explain how the miniature corresponds to the tenth Canon Table, which symbolically represents Heavenly Jerusalem.
Marta Silvia Filippini received her MA in the conservation of paper, book and archival materials from the Istituto Centrale per il Restauro e la Conservazione del Patrimonio Archivistico e Librario in Rome (2016), where she specialized in the study and conservation of Armenian manuscripts. She is currently working in the conservation department of the same institution. Her focus is the analysis and conservation of an Armenian illuminated gospel from the fifteenth century as well as other Oriental codices. Her interests include the archaeology of medieval Armenian, Syriac, and Georgian manuscripts and cultural transmissions among these traditions.

“The Archaeology and Conservation of Two Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts Rediscovered in Bologna”

In 2014, two Armenian illuminated manuscripts were discovered in the Museum of the Friars Minor Capuchin in Reggio Emilia: a maštoc’ from the 14th century and a gospel from the 15th century. The codices escaped destruction during the Armenian genocide, as they were entrusted to the Capuchin missionaries in Trebizond and brought to Italy. Being extremely deteriorated, in 2015, they were taken to the Istituto Centrale per il Restauro e la Conservazione del Patrimonio Archivistico e Librario (ICRCPAL) in Rome for analysis and conservation. After a three-year project, the manuscripts have now been restored: pages, illuminations, wooden boards and leather covers have been consolidated and repaired. Codicological evaluation and diagnostic analysis have allowed us to reconstruct the process by which the two codices were made. Bindings, paper, parchment, inks, and pigments were investigated using non-invasive techniques, UV-visible diffuse fiber optic reflectance spectroscopy (FORS), Raman spectroscopy, energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (SEM-EDS), and laboratory analysis. The palettes used by the illuminators were identified and compared with those known in the literature. The conservation treatments have proved to be an invaluable occasion for researching the hidden structures of the codices, thus contributing to the sum of knowledge in Armenian codicology. This paper will focus on the new findings obtained from this archaeological analysis, including the composition of inks and pigments and the peculiar Armenian sewing structure of the quires.
Armenian paleography is a field of study that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century with the Mekhitarist Y. Tašean. He, first, provided a very detailed description of Armenian letters and an academic argument regarding their evolution. Many authors have since debated and enhanced his work: H. Ačarean (1928), A. Abrahamyan (1940, 1958, 1973), and, foremost among them, D. Kouymjian and M. Stone (2002), who turned their attention to 193 extracts of whole and dated manuscripts. However, they focused strictly on dated manuscripts. Yet, between the supposed invention of the Armenian script in 405 CE and the first complete and dated manuscript in 862 CE, there is a time gap of more than 450 years. Only lapidary inscriptions and fragments of manuscripts have survived from this era. Armenian paleography is suffering from this gap. This presentation is based on a study of those manuscript fragments. It aims to cover this laconic period thanks to an overall vision of Armenian handwritten characters based on the textual database of Calfa.fr and comparisons with Latin paleography.

The paper has several purposes. It is about, on the one hand, bringing to light a new perspective on Armenian writing (a representation of the development of letters, of dating criteria for manuscripts, etc.). On the other hand, I intend to study purely paleographical criteria, which allows a streamlining of the problems specific to the automatic recognition of handwriting. This presentation is based on a multidisciplinary approach that pulls from the fields of cognitive sciences and artificial intelligence.
Marine Sargsyan is a PhD candidate at Leiden University, Institute for History and a visiting research fellow at the Davis Center, Harvard University. Before starting her PhD, she studied history at Yerevan State University and human rights law at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute in Sweden. She is an alumna of the Fund for American Studies’ American Institute on Political and Economic Systems program and has been a visiting fellow at Columbia University’s Harriman Institute. Her research interests include regional geopolitics, Russia, the Caucasus, Armenia, the European Union, and the Eurasian Economic Union.


More than ever, Armenia’s economic ties with the Russian Federation are strengthening, reinforced by bilateral agreements and the establishment of an economic union. This research project investigates how Armenia has charted its political course, spanning the declaration of independence in 1990 until the U-turn decision of September 2013. It examines how the competing interests of major political and economic powers such as the EU and Russia impact on the economic relations and political alliances of the Republic of Armenia from the collapse of the Soviet Union. From a theoretical point of view, this work evaluates how small states formulate and maintain their policy priorities in the context of interaction with, and between, larger and stronger powers. Why study Armenia as a case for small states’ politics in relation to the major powers? With the fall of the Iron Curtain and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, global politics entered a new era of power play and international relations. The formation of a multipolar world order raised the importance of small states in big politics, uncovering new ground to study the policies of small states and investigate how they conduct relations with the great powers. In the last decade of the twentieth century, the European Union came into the political arena as a major power, becoming Russia’s second rival after the USA in the race for economic dominance in Eurasia. In this context, Armenia, a country located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, is a pertinent case for studying the politics of small states caught between the competing interests of the EU and Russia. It vividly illustrates aspects of competition, power struggle, policy and decision making in regional geopolitics.
Mushegh Ghahriyan received his PhD in history from the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Armenian National Academy of Sciences, where he is currently a research fellow. He holds a BA and an MA from the Department of Arabic Studies at Yerevan State University. His research interests include the Kurdish issue, the Armenian communities of the Middle East, and the modern history of Arab countries.


This paper is devoted to exploring the transformations in the Armenian community of Aleppo during the ongoing Syrian Crisis. The Armenian community in Aleppo has been one of the most important educational, religious, cultural centers of the Armenian Diaspora for decades. The Armenians of Aleppo strongly preserved their identity and kept alive the traditions of their ancestors from Western Armenia. The Syrian crisis, which started in 2011, had horrendous consequences not only for Aleppo but also for the Armenian community, which suffered heavily and was weakened. The purpose of my research is to study the impact of the Syrian Crisis on the Armenian community of Aleppo and to analyze the changes that the community is undergoing. While the media in Armenia and the Diaspora pay much attention to the problems of the Armenian community in Syria, this issue is less explored in the academic field and lacks a thorough and comprehensive study. To achieve the goal of this research, I have analyzed a number of documents; primary and secondary resources; and media in Armenian, Arabic, and other languages, both in Armenia and in the Diaspora. Interviews with the representatives of the Armenian community in Aleppo have been conducted. I have also applied a comparative approach by comparing the situation in the Armenian community of Aleppo with the destiny of the Armenian communities of Iraq and Lebanon to suggest possible scenarios for Armenian Aleppo’s future.
Carla Kekejian is an MS/PhD student in communication sciences and disorders at the University of Utah. Her work blends clinical and research efforts to improve how speech-language pathologists assess and address language impairment in bilingual children. Carla completed her MA in human development and psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she worked on a number of studies on language learning, instruction, and assessment of bilingual populations.

“Harsneren: Language of the Armenian Bride”

Harsneren, meaning “Language of the Bride” in Armenian, was a signing language that married women developed due to imposed restrictions on their speech. The fieldwork for my ongoing study of Harsneren was in the villages of Baghanis, Voskepar, Voskevan, and Noyemberyan in the Tavush province of present-day Armenia. My research revealed that a young bride employed this sign language in order to communicate basic needs, such as asking for food or water, mainly to her husband and in-laws. However, women utilized the signs only when it was absolutely necessary, as communication was often prohibited for the young bride. While Harsneren is no longer in active use in the four villages today, it is possible that its use was widespread in different regions of Armenia since the circumstances that generated it extended across historical Armenian spaces. During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to film uses of the nearly forgotten sign language. Such documentation had not been done since 1935 by Georgian scholar, D.P Karbelashvili. In addition to documenting firsthand accounts on uses of Harsneren, my research involved uncovering and translating Karbelashvili’s study, “Manual Speech in the Caucasus: Research on Baranchinsky Region Armenian SSR,” into English from the original Russian text. In this paper, I will provide an overview of the role and situation of married Armenian women in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and share my research findings by displaying the signs that women demonstrated and discussing notions that played a role in the development and continued use of Harsneren across generations.
Rosie Vartyter Aroush is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she is emphasizing in Armenian Studies with a concentration in Gender Studies. She received her B.A. in Sociology and International Studies from the University of California, Irvine. Her dissertation research investigates the role of the family and the impact of the Los Angeles diasporic community on the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer Armenians while exploring the struggles endured and strategies employed in the negotiation of their identities. LGBTQ Armenians have yet to be directly represented within the discourses of either LGBTQ Studies or Armenian Studies. As a pioneer in bridging these two fields, her research eliminates the current gap and promotes the growing body of knowledge in Gender & Sexuality Studies by adding Armenian to the representation of groups studied within the field.

“A Life of Otherness: The Significance of Familial Support and Community Inclusivity for LGBQ Armenians”

Diaspora as a permanent phenomenon and Los Angeles as host to one of the largest and most heterogeneous Armenian diasporic communities provide the ideal backdrop for an expansive illustration on familial and communal networks. The trauma from events leading to the creation of these communities has led to the insular nature of most Armenian-American families and their fear of Others, both conceptual and tangible. This paper explores the experiences of those Othered Armenians, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer [LGBQ] Armenians, who are living on the border of simultaneously being an insider and outsider. The research indicates that LGBQ Armenians use distinct disclosure strategies in approaching coming out with their family and community members, not only to belong in these heteronormative spaces, but also to maintain coexisting relationships. This project employs qualitative research methods and is based on a series of interviews with LGBQ Armenian adults aged 21-51 from Los Angeles, consisting of questions relating to their ethnic and sexual identity, familial relations, and community involvement. In this paper, I will present several emerging themes from my research findings on coming out, familial relationships pre- and post-disclosure, modes for resolution, reasons for antipathy, and conclude with a discussion on the significance of familial support and community inclusivity.
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