The Futures of Armenian Studies
Reflections on the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide
On the Cover: The ASP community discusses the future of Armenian Studies at the opening reception of an exhibit at the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library. The exhibit, “Now or Never,” tells the story of how University of Michigan archaeologist Francis W. Kelsey and UM Staff photographer George Swain collected and documented the aftermath of the Genocide; these documents link Kelsey and Swain personally—and the University of Michigan institutionally—to one of the largest humanitarian efforts in history.

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Last year we marked the centennial of the Armenian Genocide with a series of workshops on the State of Armenian Studies. Drawing on the contributions of our Armenian Studies Program in fostering a critical dialog with emerging scholars around the globe, we explored new vistas for the study of Armenian history, literature, and the visual arts.

This year we will turn our deliberations into three discrete volumes that collectively reimage Armenian Studies. The first volume currently in progress, Words and Worlds in Motion: Armenians of the Mediterranean and Beyond, rethinks Armenian history, literature, and the visual arts. The second volume will bring the Armenian genocide into dialogue with comparative genocide studies to offer new frames and pedagogical strategies to teach and narrate mass atrocities and trauma. The third will place Armenian literature in conversation with translation theory to consider how translation between Armenian and other languages, genres, and cultural registers can contribute more broadly to the field of Translation Studies. All three volumes are testimony to a new generation of scholarship that has been nurtured by our program thanks to the patronage of the Manoogian family as we facilitate the integration of Armenian history, literature and the arts within the larger frames of academic discourse.

In the spirit of this year’s thematic focus, The Futures of Armenian Studies, our lecture series highlight the performing arts and the practice of translation. We began with Aline Ohanesian’s fictional account of the Genocide (Orhan’s Inheritance). In the winter semester we will move to the visual arts with our guest visitor Nina Katchadourian and her video installation, “Accent Elimination,” which explores themes of identity and diaspora. Our second Manoogian Visiting Fellow, Gerald Papasian, works through the medium of theater and opera, new sites for the performance of Armenian pasts. Papasian will teach a mini-course on the history of Armenian Opera and Theater.

We are organizing two workshops to further the topic of translation, a hitherto unstudied subject. Building on an inspiring workshop Tamar Boyadjian (Assistant Professor of Medieval Literature) organized last year, we will draw on the strengths of Translation Studies here at the University of Michigan to ponder the idiosyncrasies of translating from Armenian contexts. We will end in April with a graduate student organized workshop led by Etienne Charrière and Ali Bolçakan (both in Comparative Literature) on what promises to be another groundbreaking gathering entitled Translating Armenians, Armenians Translated: Rethinking Methodologies for Armenian Studies.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our three postdoctoral Manoogian Fellows: Alina Poghosyan (Slavic Languages and Literatures), Vahe Sahakyan (Near Eastern Studies) and Murat Yildiz (History). Each will present their work during our fall lecture series: Poghosyan on migration in the post-Soviet Caucasus, Sahakyan on compatriotic societies in the Armenian Diaspora, and Yildiz on the subject of sports and Ottoman body politics.

Finally, I am thrilled to announce our new hire for the Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History, Hakem al-Rustom. He received his PhD in social anthropology from the London School of Economics in 2012 and wrote an excellent dissertation, Anatolian Fragments: Armenians between France and Turkey, which is a humanistic recovery of the multifaceted Anatolian past. Al-Rustom investigates questions of identity and the ways Armenian survivors in eastern Anatolia understood, remembered, and articulated their experiences even as their Armenianness was erased by official silences. Their hidden histories are a challenge al-Rustom takes on as he maps out Anatolia through narratives of migration and family histories, “fragmented histories,” as he terms them.

Hakem al-Rustom has taught social anthropology at the American University in Cairo and at the London School of Economics, and was a visiting scholar at Columbia University in New York and Sciences Po in Paris. At the University of Michigan he will teach courses on Post-genocide Armenian History in Turkey and the Diaspora, and on History, Memory, and Silence in the Middle East and the Balkans.

I look forward to welcoming you at our events.
Azad and Margaret Hogikyan Armenian Studies Collection

Janet Crayne  
*Librarian for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies*

The University of Michigan Library recently acquired the Azad and Margaret Hogikyan Armenian Studies Collection, a gift of 483 books related to Armenian Studies. This generous gift, originally acquired and maintained by Azad and Margaret Hogikyan, was donated by their four sons: Robert, Edward, John and Norman. The Hogikyan family, in collaboration with the Armenian Studies Program and the University Library, also provided funding to build and finish the bookcase that will house these texts. This lovely oak bookcase is now installed in the Hatcher Gallery, just beside the Lab door. As titles are cataloged, they will be installed in the bookcase for patron use.

An event marking the official opening of the Collection took place on September 18, 2015 in the Hatcher Graduate Library. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the many Library staff and faculty who contributed both their time and expertise to support this project and carry it through to completion. Special thanks go out to Mr. Richard Gross and his staff, for both their infinite patience, and their meticulous work on the beautiful bookcase itself, as well as to the Hogikyan family, for their donation of this remarkable collection, and support for construction of the bookcase.

Gerard Libaridian  
*Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History (2001–12), U-M*

Tell us about the Hogikyan family. How did the ASP establish the Hogikyan Collection at the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library?

The Hogikyan family, especially Dr. Norman Hogikyan, had contacted our program when Prof. Kevork Bardakjian was Director and so the initial contact had already been established by the time I became Director in 2007. By then, Vahe Sahakyan, our graduate student in Near Eastern Studies, had prepared an inventory of the books in the collection, which holds close to 600 volumes.

The ASP Executive Committee was very supportive of the idea of housing the Hogikyan collection at the Hatcher Graduate Library. We were lucky to have the invaluable support and assistance of Janet Crayne, the Librarian for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. In her inimitable yet convincing way, Janet made sure we were doing our best to secure the appropriate place for the collection, which we believed was at the Hatcher Library. The leadership of the Hatcher Library had some reservations, as there had been a decision to no longer accept and preserve private collections such as the Hogikyans’. It took a number of meetings, some convincing, and some adjustment on the part of all interested parties to get to this point. In addition to the basic idea of preserving the collection in a place where it would be easily accessible to readers, I should also recognize Norman Hogikyan’s leadership...
Faculty News and Updates

Kevork Bardakjian, Marie Manoogian Professor of Armenian Languages and Literatures, was awarded the Mekhitarist Congregation’s and the Diaspora Ministry of Armenia’s “The Hakob Meghapart Medal” for contributions to Armenian studies on October 3, 2014. His book, A Reference Guide to Modern Armenian Literature, 1500-1920: With an Introductory History (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), was translated into Turkish under the title Modern Ermeni Edebiyatı. This book is a comprehensive guide to Armenian writers and literature spanning five centuries. Combining features of a reference work, bibliographic guide, and literary history, it records the output of almost 400 authors who wrote both in Armenia and in the communities of the Armenian diaspora. It presents a general history of the literature, with chapters devoted to a single century and prefaced by information on the era’s social, cultural, and religious milieu, followed by a section of bio-bibliographical entries for Armenian authors, a section of bibliographies and reference works, and a listing of anthologies of literature both in Armenian and in translation. The final section contains bibliographies devoted to particular genres and periods, such as minstrels, folklore, and prosody.

Tamar Boyadjian, Assistant Professor of English and Medieval Literature, Michigan State University, published her book, it is what it is (Yerevan: Andares, March 2015). Through its visual and experimental poetic form, it is what it is tells the story of a troubadour grappling to find a means in language and sound to sing a canton of her childhood. In its struggles and “failures” to express and narrate, the book’s intertextuality and hybridity explore and challenge themes related to language, subjectivity, and translation; as well as reflect upon how the threat imposed on a dying language, such as Western Armenian, can manifest itself linguistically and textually.

Ronald Suny, Charles Tilly Collegiate Professor of Social and Political History, was named William H. Sewell, Jr. Distinguished University Professor of History. His newly published book is entitled “They Can Live in the Desert But Nowhere Else:” A History of the Armenian Genocide (Princeton University Press, 2015). Starting in early 1915, the Ottoman Turks began deporting and killing hundreds of thousands of Armenians in the first major genocide of the twentieth century. By the end of the First World War, the number of Armenians in what would become Turkey had been reduced by ninety percent—more than a million people. A century later, the Armenian Genocide remains controversial but relatively unknown, overshadowed by later slaughters and the chasm separating Turkish and Armenian versions of events. In this definitive narrative history, Ronald Suny cuts through nationalist myths, propaganda, and denial to provide an unmatched account of when, how, and why the atrocities of 1915–1916 were committed. Drawing on archival documents and eyewitness accounts, Professor Suny’s book is a vivid and unforgettable chronicle of a cataclysm that set a tragic pattern for a century of genocide and crimes against humanity.
Harry A. Kezelian III  
*U-M Law School Alumnus, 2010*

The Armenian Genocide of 1915 affected not only those who were victim to it but all Armenians the world over. Armenians who were studying at or had studied in Ann Arbor were no exception.

The first two Armenians to study at the University of Michigan, Khachadour Nahigian and Boghos Simonian, started in fall 1886. Simonian was born in Palu, Turkey, received his B.A. in 1882 from Armenia College (the American school in Kharpert, Turkey), and his M.D. from U-M in 1889. Nothing else is known except that he died in Petoskey, Michigan, around 1906.

Nahigian, a prominent Armenian Protestant, was born in 1860 in the village of Hussenig, near Kharpert. In 1880, he was a member of Armenia College’s first graduating class of ten students. He attended U-M for the 1886-1887 academic year only, listed under “students not candidates for degrees.” He studied natural science and mathematics, then returned to teach algebra, geometry, and trigonometry at Armenia College, renamed Euphrates College by government order in 1888. By 1915 he was one of seven full professors there, all Armenians. After having been arrested, he was taken out on the road on June 20, 1915 and massacred in a group that included two of the other professors. Of the seven, four were murdered, two were thrown in jail and died of disease, and only one was spared. Though some of the American schools in Turkey relocated to other countries, the doors of Euphrates College were shut forever.

When the Genocide broke out, the Detroit Armenian community had just begun to develop, and there were eight Armenians studying at U-M. In the following school year of 1915-1916, there were ten. It was during that year that the first student Armenian Club was organized. On February 18, 1916, this nascent group even held a concert for the benefit of the Genocide victims at Hill Auditorium, featuring legendary tenor and protégé of Gomidas, Armenag Shah-Mouradian, along with operatic singers Zabelle Panosian and Rose Hagopian, and violinist Krikor Aiqouni.

Who were these U-M students who came together for the first time to organize a club and even invite Shah-Mouradian to play at Hill Auditorium? Four had attended an American college in Turkey. Four were in Medical School, four became dentists, and two, engineers. Dr. Avedis Kaye (Kouyoumjian), born in Yerzinga, arrived at U-M in 1911. He became involved in Armenian affairs in Detroit, and as an orator and activist, “brought enthusiasm and activity to the community’s literary life.” He received his M.D. in 1916, and in 1918 he was one of the ten founders of the “Yeridasartats Agoump” (Youth Club) in Detroit. This club sponsored lectures, raised money for Armenian causes, and supported cultural activities, but dissolved in 1928. Sometime in 1919 or later, Kaye went to Cilicia to try to set up a clinic, but returned in 1922 when the French withdrew, settling in Boston.

A fellow founder of the Youth Club was Dr. Mihran Deirmenjian, who received his B.A. from Anatolia College in 1909, and his M.D. from U-M in 1916. In 1928, he became the first chairman of the committee which built St. John’s Armenian Church in Detroit in 1931. Dr. Sarkis Kash (Kashkashian) studied at Anatolia College from 1910-1912, received his M.D. from U-M in 1917, and was the author of a 1965 book on the Genocide, “Crime Unlimited.”

In their own way, these students each had to face the Genocide as they began a new phase in their lives, even though they were living across the ocean and thousands of miles away in Ann Arbor.
International Workshops on the State of Armenian Studies

Armenian History as World History: Approaches to Teaching and Methods, January 21, 2015

Kathryn Babayan
Associate Professor of Iranian History & Culture

Armenian History as World History was the first in a series of four workshops on the State of Armenian Studies aimed at the centennial of the Genocide. This workshop addressed the question of how to study and teach Armenian history as integral to global history. Since the field of world history resists conventional periodization and frameworks based on the nation state, the organizers (Kathryn Babayan & Arsene Saparov) chose the ‘global’ as a productive entry into an evaluation of Armenian historiography. We invited three scholars, Gerard Libaridian, Sergio La Porta, and Sebouh Aslanian, to think about their work by drawing on global frames and themes of analysis. To broaden the dialogue three discussants from the University of Michigan, Douglas Northrop, Karla Mallette, and Mathew Hull, were invited to join the conversation from different geographies and temporalities.

The first set of discussions between Libaridian and Northrop highlighted the importance of decentering dominant nationalist narratives that either glorify the Armenian past or focus on victimhood to render Armenian history as unique and inviolable. The call to rethink chronology, state centered histories, and a linear unfolding of events echoed throughout the discussions. ‘Movement’ emerged as an apt heuristic to complicate the local Armenian story. Movement precipitates connectivity as the arc of a world story. ‘Simultaneity’ was another frame we discussed to produce integrated histories, because patterns of interconnection illuminate through cultures, languages, literatures, economies, and networks of trust and recognition and exchange. Northorp persuasively argued that “the Armenian story, from this perspective, may not drive the globe, but it is at a stroke—mobile yet settled, it is simultaneously local—regional—global.”

The second set of discussions between La Porta and Mallette also engaged the challenge of chronology and space. The question La Porta considered was how to draw a distinction that is meaningful and useful about a topic that scholars refer to as ‘medieval,’ or ‘Armenian’ history, literature and language. The necessity of disentangling the geographic entity ‘Armenia’ and study its construction and the processes of cultural interaction among different ethnic and religious groups became obvious.

La Porta gravitated toward the term ‘literary Armenian,’ which is a translation of the Armenian term grabar. It is descriptive of a linguistic register or style that is not necessarily historically specific or historically instantiated, but is a literary goal for writers across the centuries. Mallette spoke about how the concept of the “literary Armenian” was akin to “the notion of the cosmopolitan language which has been used in recent scholarship to describe a number of formal languages of literature – Sanskrit, Arabic, Latin, or (in the post-medieval world) global English, for instance.”

Mallette argued the cosmopolitan language is a useful concept because it transcends specific historical and geographical collocation; it is understood to be a literary register, not a mother tongue; it is presumed to exist in a network of parallel languages—mother tongues that are not used as literary instruments, as well as competitor literary languages. The distinction Mallette proposed is one “that investigates the embeddedness of each language in the others, the networks that bind one language to the others. That is the work that intellectual distinctions need to do, not isolate the object of study, but simultaneously identify it as unique and self-identical and connect it to parallel phenomena, demonstrating its relevance to similar objects of study.”
The final set of discussions between Aslanian and Hull took up the propositions proffered during the first two discussions, namely to employ movement, connectivity, and networks as frames of embedding Armenian history in global history. Using a case study of bills of exchange between Julfan Armenians and Marwari Sarrafs in early modern Isfahan and Mughal India, Aslanian surveyed the circulation of paper documents that enabled cross-cultural trade in goods between these two mercantile communities. Such documents bring to light shared norms and values among Marwaris and Julfans. Hull pointed out that broader Islamicate and Persianate culture in the world of the Indian Ocean employ a variety of sources, from legal codes, codes of personal conduct, mercantile practices, including the bills of exchange themselves that turn them into a community of practice. According to Hull, then “the story of bills of exchange became the story of how they were suited for inter-group, inter-community transactions.”

Teaching about Genocide: Approaches and Challenges, March 13, 2015

Melanie Tanielian

Assistant Professor of History, U-M

Last spring, Prof. Melanie S. Tanielian organized the second State of Armenian Studies workshop at U-M, titled Teaching about Genocide: Approaches and Challenges. This workshop brought together an interdisciplinary body of scholars who, in different ways, ask their students to grapple with the history of genocide. The workshop’s diverse participants, who come from backgrounds in screen arts, philosophy, political science, and history, discussed the challenges that arise when introducing extreme violent histories to undergraduate students. They also suggested pedagogical strategies to help students engage with emotionally and intellectually demanding materials.

Throughout the day, participants returned to the question of how to frame a course on genocide. Joyce Apsel argued for “studying genocide as part of world history,” and linking it to “events and broader processes such as war, empire, nation building, colonialism and post-colonialism, state power, development, and globalization.” This approach, Apsel contended, opens up the possibility of theoretical framing, which continues to be lacking in genocide studies. Moreover, a transnational and comparative frame allows students to identify patterns connected to ideologies, vulnerabilities, power relations, and global historical processes such as the emergence of an international human rights regime, an issue addressed by Sueann Caulfield and Kiyoteru Tsutsui.

From the larger issues of framing, the discussion moved to pedagogical challenges posed by normative discourses, abstractions, and prior-knowledges. Jeffrey Veidlinger outlined the tension between the desire “to allow the dead their voices to make silences heard” and the normative historical narrative that often exclusively focuses on perpetrator actions. Veidlinger posed that such narrative often leads to a false dichotomy of oppression and resistance. Awarding historical agency to the oppressor and the opposition, such narrative silences those who did not resist, and turns individual victims into abstractions and statistics. Hence, in Veidlinger’s case, “this perpetrator-based discourse not only mirrors ‘Nazi language,’ it exacerbates the
images of Jews going passively to their deaths.” İpek Yosmaoğlu’s presentation showcased how to complicate the normative discourses and undermine abstractions in the classroom, by assigning different memoirs, film, novels, and working with primary sources. Students’ prior-knowledge of events of mass atrocities emerged as another key challenge to successful teaching. Such prior knowledge consists of an “amalgam of facts, concepts, models, perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes,” which may be accurate and enhance learning, but often they are inaccurate or simply inappropriate. Inappropriate and inaccurate knowledge, whether coming from students’ heritage or popular culture, can “actively distort or even impede new learning.” The questions then are: How do we determine what kind of prior knowledge exists? How might we activate accurate knowledge to foster learning and de-activate, revise, challenge inaccurate knowledge that hinders learning?

For instance, Anne Berg discussed the “popular notion that the Holocaust is a truth that bears explanatory power but simultaneously defies explanation” which undermines learning. Acknowledging that Holocaust scholars long have abandoned this notion, she found that in the minds of her students this idea still dominates. In this, Berg mentioned, the act of “seeing […] was central to the formation of such ‘knowledge’ and to its unmaking,” and teaching becomes a chipping away at what students already know. Johannes von Moltke continued the discussion, highlighting the utility of Yael Hersonski’s “Film Unfinished” in challenging not only students’ prior knowledge, but also the act of seeing itself. Teaching mass atrocities through film opened a host of questions and ethical concerns. Still Marie-Aude Baronian insisted that film is useful in exposing the tensions between historical truth and representations, and more importantly is unique in its ability to “highlight the traumatic nature of genocide.”

At the end of the workshop, participants agreed that content-based pedagogical discussions are essential when it comes to teaching mass atrocities, as their introduction into any course warrants a particular sensitivity to the violence of images and narratives. Moreover, the emotional impact on both students and instructors is seldom captured in more general pedagogical seminars.

From the Armenian Genocide to the Holocaust: The Foundations of Modern Human Rights, April 2–4, 2015

Ronald Suny
Charles Tilly Collegiate Professor of Social and Political History, U-M
Fatma Müge Göçek
Professor of Sociology and Women’s Studies, U-M

As part of this the State of Armenian Studies workshops commemorating the one-hundredth anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, Fatma Müge Göçek and Ronald Grigor Suny organized a workshop entitled From the Armenian Genocide to the Holocaust: The Foundations of Modern Human Rights. The underlying theme of the workshop was that the events of 1915 constituted an important moment in the emergence and evolution of modern ideas of human rights. This bold claim was more than confirmed in the presentations of the distinguished scholars who read the results of their research during the two-day meeting.

The workshop began with the keynote address of Dirk Moses of the European University in Florence, Italy, which made explicit the case that 1915 was a moment of great significance in the discussion of “crimes against humanity.” The first time the term was used in an international document issued by governments in May 1915 when Great Britain, France, and Russia condemned the massacres of Armenians by the Ottomans, and held the Istanbul government responsible before the international community.

The themes that Moses brought out were expanded in the paper by Peter Holquist of the University of Pennsylvania, who dealt explicitly with the development of international law and concern with the laws of war in imperial Russia.
A series of reports by Keith Watenpaugh of the University of California at Davis, Melanie Tanielian of the University of Michigan, Lerna Ekmeckioglu of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Corinna Guttstadt of the University of Hamburg dealt with the consequences of the Genocide and the questions of refugees, displaced persons, orphans, and the revival of the Istanbul community of Armenians. Hülya Adak of Sabancı University broadened the discussion to include investigation of the Russian diplomat and humanitarian Andre Mandelshtam. Geneviève Zubrzycki of the University of Michigan brought the conference up to the present with her elaboration of philo-Semitism in Poland today. Eric Weitz, German historian and dean at City University of New York, concluded with reiteration of the importance of the Armenian Genocide in the generation of new understandings of human rights.

Challenging Entrenched Categories: Re-Exploring Approaches to Armenian Literature, April 17–18, 2015
Tamar Boyadjian
Professor of English and Medieval Literature, Michigan State University

This two-day workshop was the last in our series devoted to the State of Armenian Studies. It was organized around the field of Armenian literature, and invited participants to consider, challenge, and offer theoretical and methodological alternatives to frameworks presently utilized in studying literary sources from the classical to the contemporary period. In its consideration of how rigidly defined disciplinary boundaries in the study of national literatures include built-in notions of exclusion and self-referentiality, this workshop encouraged critical dialogue surrounding the reading of Armenian literary texts alongside other literary traditions to both expose moments of intercultural exchange and acculturation and to further reflect upon cultural intersections and textual transmission across and beyond geographic, textual and cultural boundaries from the classical to the contemporary period.

In order to promote fruitful discussions between presenters, faculty, and participants, the first day of the workshop included critical dialogues that integrated Armenian literature into comparative and trans-cultural contexts by reflecting on the ways in which Armenian literature and visual arts could be read alongside the literary and artistic mediums of other cultures. Papers included topics from an analysis of the figure of the larib across the medieval Mediterranean, to the notion of catastrophe and memory in Krikor Beledian’s 1997 novel Thresholds, to a theoretical and critical discussion of the place of Armenian literature in the Turkish canon, to a comparative analysis of the 19th century Armenian novel, among others.

The second day of the workshop was devoted to the question of translation, and included analytical and theoretical dialogues surrounding the translating and publication of Armenian literature, the effective ways in which Armenian literary texts can be implanted within larger intellectual discourses, and the question of the future of translating and publishing Armenian literature in the US. The concluding keynote address by Dr. Marc Nichanian, entitled Repetition, Translation, and Translatability, brought together the intricately interwoven themes of the workshop: comparative literary analysis, translation, and Armenian literature beyond national, geographic, and linguistic boundaries.
Meet the Manoogian Fellows

Post-doctoral Fellows

Alina Poghosyan

2014–2015 Manoogian Simone Foundation Post-doctoral Fellow, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures

What are your current projects?
My current research examines the effects of migration during the post-Soviet period throughout the South Caucasus. In my PhD thesis, I discuss cultural inflows from America, Europe, and Russia through the lens of migration and its influence on cultural changes in Armenia. During my post-doctoral training at the University of Michigan, I aim to further my study on cultural inflows from Russia, their effects on the cultural changes, everyday practices, public opinion, and the development of public discourses. In addition, I am going to enlarge the comparative scope of my research across the three South Caucasian countries.

What do you hope to accomplish while you are a post-doctoral fellow?
By the end of my post-doctoral fellowship I hope to write up my dissertation and prepare it for a publication as a monograph.

What course will you teach during your stay?
My course will also be on the influence of migration on the post-Soviet transition in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. It will touch upon the influences of migratory ties with Russia on the development processes and cultural sovereignty of these countries, as well as examine the influence of migration on everyday practices, public activism, development of new discourses, nationalism, and transnationalism.

Vahe Sahakyan

2014–2015 Manoogian Simone Foundation Post-doctoral Fellow, Department of Near Eastern Studies

What are your current projects?
As a post-doctoral fellow, I will primarily focus on exploring the growing field of transnational history and how its methodologies can contribute to the writing of histories of modern diasporas. As I have argued in my dissertation, writing a history of diaspora is different from writing the histories of its constituent communities, institutions, associations, and organizations. While histories of diasporic communities and organizations are important, the writing of a history of diaspora should first of all deal with institutions, networks, relations, and processes extending beyond the boundaries of host-countries, which connect dispersed ethnic communities, develop certain diasporic discourses on homeland and return, shape transnational belongings, and produce diasporic cultural forms and policies. This research will help to refine the theoretical and methodological framework that I have developed in my dissertation when I revise it for book publication.

What do you hope to accomplish while you are a post-doctoral fellow?
My major goal is to work towards preparing my manuscript for book publication. I also hope to publish a few articles based on some of my dissertation chapters, participate in conferences, and get actively involved in other academic affairs of the Armenian Studies Program.

What course will you teach during your stay?
I will teach Diaspora and Ethnicity in Winter 2016. This course will critically explore the categories of diaspora and ethnicity by focusing on historical and contemporary seasonal labor migrants in Arpeni, Armenia.
experiences of Jewish and Armenian diasporas. Originally used as a reference to the scattered Jewish populations outside Judea, the concept of diaspora has acquired multiple meanings and usages, especially in the past four decades. But what is a diaspora? How are diasporic identities different from ethnic identities? How do people develop a sense of belonging to diasporas? By discussing the particularities of the Jewish and Armenian experiences in the United States and elsewhere, this course will help the students develop skills in historically and sociologically informed comparative analyses of ethnic and diasporic collectivities.

Murat Yildiz
2014–2015 Manoogian Simone Foundation
Post-doctoral Fellow, Department of History

What are your current projects?
My current projects examine the making of modernity in late Ottoman Istanbul through the lens of sports. Specifically, they focus on the intersection of the body, masculinity, subject formation, nation building, and identity in the production of a shared sports culture amongst Turkish, Armenian, Jewish, and Greek young men. This culture centered around the belief that gymnastics and “western” team sports were civic activities and the most effective means of forming robust young men, modern communities, and a civilized empire. Exploring the ways in which Ottomans from a plethora of different ethno-religious backgrounds developed, articulated, and popularized this belief requires consulting a diverse array of published and non-published sources from state, organizational, and personal archives. By bringing these different sources, archives, and histories into dialogue with one another, my research attempts to complicate the picture of an empire riven by communal rifts and highlight the shared linkages, practices, and epistemological assumptions that were part of the daily experience of many Ottoman citizens.

What do you hope to accomplish while you are a post-doctoral fellow?
Throughout the year, I will be preparing a book manuscript. The manuscript will investigate the extent to which cultural and social transformations in urban centers of the late Ottoman Empire were the combined effort of their heterogeneous population. Specifically, it will focus on the ways in which Turks, Armenians, Jews, and Greeks built civic and exclusive ethno-religious bonds while exercising, competing, and socializing.
What course will you teach during your stay?
I will be teaching a course entitled *The Body and Gender in the Making of the Modern Middle East* in Winter 2016 in the Department of History. Course readings and discussions will encourage students to consider how modern institutions, like schools, the army, voluntary associations, orphanages, the hospital, as well as the press, played a transformative role in creating, inculcating, and spreading radically reconfigured understandings of the body, gender, and sexuality throughout the modern Middle East.

Visiting Fellow
Gerald Papasian

*Winter 2016 Manoogian Foundation Visiting Fellow and Artist in Residence*

Tell us about your research interests.
As an actor/director, I am constantly on the road for tours or film shootings. Following a ‘passion’ is difficult. Yet I have always been interested in the research and the propagation of the heritage of Armenian theatre that flourished in the Ottoman Empire. A great amount of translation is needed. Most materials exist only in Armenian. Much has been scattered all over the world or simply disappeared since 1915. There is a great deal of detective work involved to find authentic manuscripts and put pieces together. The aim is to make works of ‘forgotten’ authors accessible to mainstream companies, through publications, stimulating them to consider their productions. They deserve their rightful place among their better known contemporaries.

What will you be working on as an Artist in Residence?
I will be continuing my research on the composer Dikran Tchouhadjian. I have already done a restoration work based on the unique manuscript of his first opera *Arsace Secondo*, published thanks to a grant by the AGBU of Cairo–Egypt, as well as produced his opera-buffa *Gariné* in France. But there are still music scores to be unearthed. I’ll be working on those archival materials, translating and making them accessible for contemporary performances. There are also other operas by Tchouhadjian that need to be restored. This will be my ongoing work during my residence.

What are your current projects?
I work on a contemporary French play in Paris as well as a play by George Bernard Shaw. I am also translating the lyrics of Tchouhadjian’s *Gariné* operetta into English for an upcoming production in London. Also, I am looking into the lives of the first Armenian actors, especially actresses who dared to fight against 19th century society conventions. Their biographies are worth being recognized by future generations.

What class will you teach during your stay?
My undergraduate course will be a survey of the 19th century history of Armenian Theatre in the Ottoman Empire (with the help of some video projections). I will concentrate mostly on the prominent composer Dikran Tchouhadjian as one of the most representative figures of the period. Besides focusing on two of his most important works, we will discuss the complexities that hinder media visibility and the effort needed to achieve it.
Tell us about your video installation, “Accent Elimination.” What inspired you to begin this project? How does it explore cultural identity through ‘foreign’ accents?

My six-channel video piece “Accent Elimination” (2005) was inspired by a few different things. My Armenian father (who grew up in Beirut) and my Finlandswedish mother (who grew up in Helsinki) both speak in accents that are quite noticeable to people but at the same time very hard to place. As a result, they get a lot of questions about their accents, which frequently leads to a situation where my parents end up telling their life stories in condensed form. The question of where their accents come from is not a simple one to answer, and the answers speak to a larger family story about displacement, migration, intermarriage, and diaspora. Also, although I am very close to both my parents, I have never been able to accurately imitate either of their accents, which has been a source of great frustration ever since I was a child.

The other part of the story is that I had noticed posters in New York advertising a service called “accent elimination.” I was very curious what this was for and who desired this training, so I spoke with a few different coaches and eventually found one, Sam Chwat, who was willing to work with me in a rather unconventional way: I wanted him to teach me to speak with each of my parents’ accents, and to teach them to speak with a “standard American accent.” We took intensive lessons with Sam for several weeks, and also practiced with each other between lessons, so that eventually I could try to speak her lines in each of my parents’ accents and my parents could try to pronounce their lines with my “standard American accent.” As the video itself reflects, it was a moving, confusing, frustrating and often hilarious experience.
Two New Workshops on Translation and the Futures of Armenian Studies

Translating Armenians, Armenians Translated: Rethinking Methodologies for Armenian Studies
Seventh Annual International Graduate Student Workshop

In recent years, the notion of translation has acquired a new currency while becoming invested with a new urgency, in particular for “marginal” programs within area studies, such as Armenian studies, which are often called to engage with translation in their efforts to position themselves within broader critical conversations that extend beyond their disciplinary scope.

In an effort to expand on such conversations, including those that took place during the last Armenian Studies Graduate Student Workshop at the University of Michigan in the spring of 2015, the next workshop, which will take place on April 22 and 23, 2016, wishes to continue the conversation on this topic with a two-day event entitled Translating Armenians, Armenians Translated: Rethinking Methodologies for Armenian Studies. The workshop is sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program, and is organized by Ali Bolcakan and Etienne Charrière, both PhD candidates in the Department of Comparative Literature.

For more information about the Annual Graduate Student Workshops, and to view the call for papers, visit: http://www.ii.umich.edu/asp/events/workshops.

Explorations in Translation Theory and Armenian Literature
Organizer: Tamar Boyadjian, Professor of English and Medieval Literature, Michigan State University

This workshop invites conversations surrounding the interdisciplinary field of Translation Studies as it pertains to the transcultural analysis and translation of Armenian Literature. Seeking to move beyond purely prescriptive applications of translation, interpretation, and the localization of national literatures—and the mere translation of a “minor” literature into a major language—this workshop asks invited participants to explore questions pertaining to their translations of Armenian literature, under the umbrella of larger, non-compartmentalized cultural and theoretical frameworks and disciplines, such as comparative literature, Mediterranean studies, Post-colonial and Diaspora studies, across all periods. This workshop also considers questions pertaining to the ethics of semiotic and cultural translation, and what ways (if possible) cultural nuances transform and translate across linguistic, political, and literary mediums.
The Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies (MWAS) enjoyed a particularly active roster of events for the 2014–2015 academic year. Graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and professors from the departments of history, political science, anthropology, sociology and comparative literature regularly participated in the workshops that took place almost every other week.

Professor Houri Berberian from the University of California, Long Beach was MWAS’s guest speaker in March. She gave a lecture titled *Roving Revolutionaries and Connected Revolutions: Armenians and the Russian, Ottoman, and Iranian Revolutions*. MWAS also invited Professor Sebouh Aslanian from UCLA to discuss a working paper on future directions of the field of Armenian Studies. Both Berberian’s and Aslanian’s presentations provided new arenas on the question of how to make Armenian Studies speak to other fields and disciplines.

Finally, Professor Joyce Apsel from New York University also joined MWAS to discuss methods and problems surrounding the teaching of the Armenian genocide. Discussions with Prof. Apsel brought to the MWAS agenda questions about how to ethically use certain sources and discourses in genocide teaching.

In the upcoming academic year graduate students Etienne Charrière (Comparative Literature) and Tuğçe Kayaal (Near Eastern Studies) will be heading MWAS along with Professor Kathryn Babayan as advisor. In the course of next year, MWAS will continue to bring together graduate students from different disciplines and develop multidisciplinary discussion through the works of graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and guest lecturers. In addition to enhancing discussions on Armenian Studies within the discipline of history, which was the dominant area in MWAS last year, next year one of the goals will be to put greater emphasis on works from other disciplines such as literature and art history.
Profiles and Reflections
2015–16 ASP Graduate Students

Ali Bolcakan
PhD candidate, Department of Comparative Literature
Area of concentration: Armenian, Greek, and Turkish language debates and literatures in the late Ottoman Empire and early Republican Turkey

Etienne Charrière
PhD candidate, Department of Comparative Literature
Area of concentration: 19th-century prose fiction, Greek and Armenian novels in the late Ottoman Empire

Dzovinar Derderian
PhD candidate, Department of Near Eastern Studies
Area of concentration: 19th-century social and cultural history in the Ottoman East

Jeremy Johnson
PhD candidate, Interdepartmental Program in Anthropology and History
Area of concentration: Soviet history, languages of the Caucasus, gender

Tuğçe Kayaal
PhD pre-candidate, Department of Near Eastern Studies
Area of concentration: Childhood history and the history of Armenian orphans during the late 19th and early 20th century

Congratulations to our 2015 Graduates!

Pietro Shakarian
MA Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, 2015
Area of concentration: Soviet and post-Soviet Armenia and Caucasus

Vahe Sahakyan
Manoogian Simone Foundation Post-doctoral Fellow, Department of Near Eastern Studies, U-M
Area of concentration: Diaspora studies, Armenian diaspora

Left to right: Ali Bolcakan, Jeremy Johnson, Dzovinar Derderian, Tuğçe Kayaal, and Etienne Charrière
Fellowship Recipients and Recent Alumni

Ali Bolcakan
PhD Candidate, Department of Comparative Literature; Recipient of the Arsen K. Sanjian Fellowship

My doctoral research is situated at the intersection of the linguistics changes that Armenian, Greek and Turkish communities underwent in Constantinople/Istanbul from the early 19th century to mid-20th century. Positioning my research within current discussions of nationalism and mono- & multilingualism, the goal of my project is to examine the way in which the envisioning of a pure, standardized, national language and literature influences the self-narration of the nation and its cultural self-representation. Therefore I’m interested in challenging this self-representation by focusing on the works of authors and thinkers who aren’t considered part of the canon and whose works are often overlooked. The actual experience of exile is mirrored in exclusionary practices from the literary canon, and the works of these writers bear witness to acts of real and symbolic violence. Rejecting official narratives, my dissertation project places a heavy emphasis on the literary and non-fiction works and experiences of such excluded and so-called marginal and fringe figures to come up with a more complex and nuanced narrative for alternative cultural and literary histories.

The generous Arsen K. Sanjian Fellowship granted me the opportunity to undertake my research this summer. By working in Istanbul, I managed to collect the out-of-print works of these Armenian authors; I conducted research in digital and physical archives to ascertain the reception and the impact of these writers and chart an intricate network of relationships. I was also able to establish contacts with academics, intellectuals and publishers to further develop a network of interlocutors that will be of great help during my research.

Dzovinar Derderian
PhD Candidate, Near Eastern Studies Department; Recipient of the Agnes H. and R. A. Yarmain Research Fellowship

The Agnes H. and R. A. Yarmain Research Fellowship helped me attend a workshop entitled The Making of Law in the Ottoman Space held at Collège de France in Paris (May 26–27, 2015). At the workshop, I presented a paper titled Marriage as a Site of Negotiating Law. My paper is based on marriage-related petitions sent from Erzurum, Van and Mush to the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul between the 1840s and 1870s. Through these petitions, I explored the ways in which Armenian inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire trespassed marriage regulations of the Armenian Church. I argued that by making use of their multi-confessional world and geographical space, Armenians were able to negotiate the regulations and cultural boundaries that the Patriarchate attempted to impose through regulating marriage.

At the workshop, I also met a number of scholars from France, Turkey and the United States whose works intersected with mine. The papers of the other presenters dealt with law-making institutions such as the parliament, the different secular and religious Ottoman courts, as well as customary practices that shaped law. The particular fields of law dealt with marriage, land ownership, slavery, passports, migration, etc. Both the presentations, as well as the questions and comments I received after presenting my paper allowed me to better situate my work in the broader context of the field of Ottoman studies and to think in a critical manner about the processes and institutions involved in law-making and law enforcement.
Jeremy Johnson
PhD candidate, Interdepartmental Program in Anthropology and History; Recipient of the Agnes H. and R. A. Yarmain Research Fellowship

With the support of the Agnes H. and R. A. Yarmain Research Fellowship, I was able to travel to Chiba, Japan (a city near Tokyo) to present my research at the International Council for Central and East European Studies World Congress. This year’s host was Kanda University for International Studies, a leading university in Japan. Kanda was a generous host and it was particularly interesting to see the ways in which a Japanese university is organized and the role of area studies in the structure of the Japanese university system. The conference brought together over 1,000 scholars from around the world whose work focuses on Eastern Europe and Eurasia. In addition to providing a forum for sharing my work and getting valuable feedback, it was a great opportunity for networking with scholars who usually don’t (or can’t) come to conferences in the United States, particularly those who are based in Russian, Chinese and Japanese universities. The highlight of the conference for me and for many others was getting to see the former prime ministers and political leaders of Russia, Japan, South Korea and China engage in a round table discussion about Russia’s role in the region, and regional cooperation.

The paper I presented explores the role of alphabets in shaping Soviet Nationalities policies in the South Caucasus, specifically focusing on attempts to write two minority languages, Kurdish and Assyrian, in Armenian script, as well as attempts to write other regional languages in non-Latin scripts (particularly, Abkhaz and Ossetian alphabets that deployed Georgian script). Prevailing literature on language and Soviet Nationalities policies focuses on the Latinization of all minority languages. This Latinization process was later followed by a Cyrillicization process in the 1930s and 1940s. However, in the South Caucasus, several minority languages did not follow this trajectory. Using archival evidence from Armenia and Georgia, my paper argued that alphabets were used in part to coopt political elites and align specific national groups with each other. It also showed the ways in which Soviet language classification schemes failed to account for languages with unofficial or multiple orthographies, and the persistence of those orthographies after latinization. The paper also illustrated the material constraints that restricted the spread of new alphabets and shaped the ways in which literacy campaigns for new alphabets were carried out.

Kristina Meyer
JD Candidate, Law School; Recipient of the Ajemian Memorial Student Travel Award

The Ajemian Memorial Student Travel Award allowed me to present my research at the 12th conference of the International Association of Genocide Scholars in Yerevan, Armenia. As a law student who had graded the courses Armenian Culture and Ethnicity as well as Introduction to Modern Armenian Literature for the Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan, I have long been interested in studying the legal issues stemming from the Armenian Genocide. My research focuses on the role of genocide denial in related present-day litigation, specifically examining cases in California.

My research was well-received at the conference and, more importantly, of particular interest to Armenian law students in attendance. Because much of my research focuses on the availability of remedies in the US courts, these students were very interested in learning more about the US court system and the recent cases in California. It was a very special honor to discuss my work with young students whose lives and studies converge on the subject that I study.
Pietro Shakarian

Alumnus; MA Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, 2015

How did you become interested in Armenian Studies?
I became interested in Russian and Soviet Armenian history due to my family history. My father’s family is Armenian and they lived in Romania during communism. Their fascinating stories and cynical political jokes inspired my interest in history. Fun fact: at the University of Bucharest, the college roommate of my uncle on my father’s side of the family was actually the future Armenian Catholicos, Vazgen I. My mother’s side of the family (of mixed Magyar-Slovak descent) also has an interesting history, and this only enhanced my interest in Russia, the former Soviet space, and Eastern Europe generally.

What was the focus of your master’s thesis?
My MA research focused on the history of the Mkhitar Sebastatsi Educational Complex in the remote Malatia-Sebastia district of Yerevan, known locally as “Bangladesh.” The Sebastatsi Edumplex was founded in 1984 as School No. 183 and played a major role in the glasnost-era Karabakh movement. It is a Montessori-style school and its teachers belong to a greater educational tradition in the former USSR, known as the pedagogy-novatory (teacher-innovators), who stress a humanistic, child-centered education focused on the individual learner.

I became interested in the Sebastatsi Edumplex due to my parents. When I was a teenager, they bought a book for me called The New Russians by New York Times journalist Hedrick Smith. The book had a whole chapter on Armenia and the Nagorny Karabakh conflict in which Smith visits the Sebastatsi school. I became fascinated by the school’s open environment (the very manifestation of Gorbachev’s glasnost). I wanted to understand how it emerged and what role it played in the Karabakh Movement.

For my MA research, I traveled to Yerevan twice where I conducted extensive interviews with the school’s faculty and staff. My finished thesis, School without Walls, was very well received by the school. In fact, they liked it so much that they are planning to translate it into Armenian.

What directions will you be taking now that you have graduated?
My ultimate aim is to earn a PhD in history and to teach the history of Russia and the former USSR at the university level.

The Armenian Studies Program would like to remember Tenny Christiana Arlen, an incoming doctoral student in Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan. Ms. Arlen passed away after an automobile accident on Tuesday, July 28. She was 25 years old.

Ms. Arlen was born in Riverside, California on April 10, 1991, to Tim and Tammy Arlen. She has two brothers: Timothy Arlen, a professor of physics at Penn State, and Jesse Arlen, a doctoral student at Notre Dame. Ms. Arlen also has three sisters, Chrissy Arlen, Chrissa Garlow, and Faith Meyer, as well as two sisters-in-law, Meghan Arlen and Lucy Arlen.

Ms. Arlen developed a passion for Comparative Literature while putting herself through an undergraduate education at the University of California, Los Angeles. Throughout these years, she served as an active member of a student organization that championed environmental responsibility at UCLA.

A joyful and self-driven student, Ms. Arlen studied both Armenian and French, as well as completed coursework in literature at the graduate level. Her interests and areas of expertise were wide-ranging, but she had a special passion for Symbolist, Decadent, and Aesthetic poetry in the French, Armenian, American, and British traditions. She also composed her own poetry in Western Armenian.

After completing her undergraduate education, Ms. Arlen spent two years living in France. It was during these particularly formative years, as she read omnivorously and deepened her knowledge of French, when she decided to pursue a career in higher education. She was admitted to the Department of Comparative Literature at U-M last spring and received a fellowship from the Armenian Studies Program for her research on Armenian literature. She also received a Rackham Merit Scholarship from the Rackham Graduate School.

Ms. Arlen is remembered by her many friends and family as being exceptionally kind, warm, and thoughtful. She will be deeply missed by her colleagues and friends in Ann Arbor.
Our Donors

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals for their generous contributions in 2014-15 (donations as of September 15, 2015). A special thanks to donors of books, audio CDs, and films to the ASP library, which is located in the International Institute. Lastly, we extend a very warm thank you to the Manoogian Simone Foundation and Alex and Marie Manoogian Foundation.

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The Armenian Studies Program serves the university and community by:

- **Preparing** the next generation of scholars in the field of Armenian studies
- **Offering** a comprehensive university-level education in Armenian studies, including undergraduate majors, MA and PhD degrees, and post-doctoral studies
- **Teaching** language, culture, literature, history, anthropology, international relations, and political science
- **Reaching out** to the larger community with an intensive program of public lectures, workshops, and international conferences
- **Answering** student and researcher questions on Armenian history and culture from the US and throughout the world.

The Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, has been there for you since its founding in 1981; we want to be there in the future and do more. Please use the envelope inserted in this newsletter to make your tax-deductible contribution.
2015–16 Event Calendar

Unless noted all events are in 1636 International Institute/SSWB, 1080 S. University, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.

**Monday, Sept 14, 6–7:30PM**
ASP Lecture
Bearing Witness Through Art
Aline Ohanesian, writer, author of a novel *Orhan’s Inheritance*.
Multipurpose room, U-M Museum of Art, 525 S. State.

**Friday, Sept 18, 4–6PM**
Azad and Margaret Hogikyan Armenian Studies Collection Opening and Lecture
A World in a Collection of Books
Gerard Libaridian, Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History (2001–12) and former Director of ASP Gallery, Room 100, Hatcher Graduate Library, 913 S. University.

**Wednesday, Sept 30, 4–5:30PM**
ASP Meet and Greet
Meet the ASP faculty and Manoogian Fellows to learn about our courses and events. Pizza will be served.

**Wednesday, Oct 21, 4–5:30PM**
ASP Lecture
Shared Activities and Communal Bodies: Sports in Late Ottoman Istanbul
Murat Yildiz, Manoogian Post-doctoral Fellow, U-M.

**Wednesday, Nov 18, 4–5:30PM**
ASP Lecture
Movements of People, Money and Cultures: Migration and its Effects on the Post-Soviet Transition Processes in the South Caucasus
Alina Poghosyan, Manoogian Post-doctoral Fellow, U-M.

**Wednesday, Dec 2, 4–5:30PM**
ASP Lecture
Local Patriotions and Diasporic Translocality: Compatriotic Societies in Modern Armenian Diaspora
Vahe Sahakyan, Manoogian Post-doctoral Fellow, U-M.

**Friday–Saturday, Feb 19–20, 10AM–6PM**
ASP Workshop
Explorations in Translation Theory and Armenian Literature
Organizer: Tamar Boyadjian, Assistant Professor of English and Medieval Literature, Michigan State University, 2609 International Institute, 1080 S. University.

**Wednesday, Mar 16, 6–7:30PM**
ASP Lecture
Talking Popcorn and Accent Elimination: The Work of Nina Katchadourian
Nina Katchadourian, Artist; Associate Professor, New York University Gallatin School of Individualized Study, Helmut Stern Auditorium, University of Michigan Museum of Art, 525 S. State.

**Wednesday, Mar 23, 6–8PM**
Dr. Berj H. Haidostian
Annual Distinguished Lecture
Moving Armenian Performing Arts from the Archives to the International Scene
Gerald Papasian, Manoogian Visiting Fellow and Artist in Residence. Amphitheater, Rackham Graduate School, 915 E. Washington.

**Friday–Saturday, Apr 22–23, 10AM–6PM**
Seventh Annual International Graduate Student Workshop
Translating Armenians, Armenians Translated: Rethinking Methodologies for Armenian Studies
Organizers: Ali Bolcakan and Etienne Charrière, both PhD candidates in the Department of Comparative Literature, U-M. 1644 International Institute, 1080 S. University.
Francis W. Kelsey Exhibit,
January 2015