

Armenia through the Lens of Time

A 360° View

Federico Alpi, Robin Meyer, Irene Tinti and David Zakarian

The study of other languages, literatures, and cultures has been one of the central axes of research in many European and North American universities' humanities faculties in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.¹ In some instances, teaching and research in these areas are carried out by dozens of faculty members, each of whom specialises in a more or less broad subject of the field they are involved in, be that Elizabethan drama, German Romanticism, the *Troisième République*, or the development of Late Latin. One and all are expected to have a good basic understanding of the entirety of their field, but few teach frequently at advanced levels beyond their own area of specialisation.

This holds true, at least at larger institutions, for the historically dominant cultures and languages of the Old World—English, French, German, etc.—and perhaps for languages of classical antiquity like Latin and Ancient Greek; in recent decades, other languages and cultures, like those associated with the Arabic and Chinese spheres of influences, have gained some traction in this regard. Not so for a great number of others.

A case in point is the study of Armenia, its language, culture, and history. First clearly mentioned in the early 6th century BCE, the Armenian Kingdom once encompassed much of the South Caucasus, the Armenian Highlands, Asia Minor, and parts of the Levant. For millennia caught between supraregional superpowers like the Roman, Byzantine, Parthian, Sasanian, and Ottoman Empires, at times autonomous, then dependent again, the Armenian people stand out as a culture that through its sense of identity and community, through the preservation of their common language, customs, and faith has succeeded, against all odds and adversity, in remaining one, even in the geographic diversity forced upon it, most recently by the genocide of the early 20th century. This spirit is powerfully reflected in the words of the Armenian

1 This article has been jointly conceived, developed, and edited by the four authors, who are all equally responsible for its contents. As for the composition of the text, Federico Alpi wrote § 4, Robin Meyer the introductory paragraph and §§ 2, 5, and 6; Irene Tinti § 3; and David Zakarian § 1 and the colophon.

poet Eliše Č'arenc' (1897–1937): Ով հայ ժողովուրդ, քո միակ փրկությունը քո հավաքական ուժի մեջ է—“Oh, Armenian people, your only salvation lies in the power of your unity”.²

Despite its historically significant role, not least as one of the first polities to declare Christianity its state religion in the early 4th century, as well as its strategic importance in the region, the study of Armenian in most universities is tied to specific fields, like history, theology, or linguistics, all dependent on the disciplinary context of the scholar. Only in very few, select places have chairs of Armenian Studies been established, where the entire gamut of topics required by a culture with such a long and complex history can be taught and researched.

One such chair, endowed in 1965 by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, resides at the University of Oxford. Its third incumbent, Professor Theo Maarten van Lint, is one of very few scholars who, by virtue of their position, have had the opportunity—and at the same time the great challenge—to teach a subject in its entirety, from antiquity to yesterday's news, from historical geography to Soviet politics, from ancient grammar and mediaeval poetry to modern cinema and song. Not afforded a dozen and more colleagues to teach in their respective specialties, Professor van Lint has proven himself to be a Renaissance man of Armenian Studies, a master of many and adept of all other subjects in his field. It is for this versatility, this yearning for more knowledge and understanding, and for his passion of passing the very same on to others, that this *Festschrift* is dedicated to him on the occasion of his 65th birthday.

The choice of the title “Armenia through the Lens of Time” arises from the insight that everyone studying Armenia and Armenian gains early in their engagement with their individual subject: whether history, literature, philology, linguistics, or theology, an in-depth appreciation of any of these disciplines with regard to Armenia(n) is only possible if founded on an understanding of their development through time and, of course, in the context of all other disciplines as well as of the wider geographical and cultural context. The development of the modern Armenian languages is incomprehensible without knowledge of Middle and Classical Armenian as well as its geography, its history and contact with its neighbours; much of its art, at any time period, cannot be understood and appreciated thoroughly without knowledge of its diachronic development and recourse to religious and liturgical details of periods past; an

2 From Պատգամ (1933.V.9), which was written as an acrostic, and this message was formed from the second letters of each line of the poem (*Eliše Č'arenc', Erkeri žotovacu*, hator 4rd, Erevan: Hayk. SSR GA Hrat, 1968, 605).

appreciation of its modern politics and conflicts presupposes an understanding of 19th- and 20th-century identity formation processes, to name but one factor; the list could go on.

It is for this reason that a volume like this, which aims to not only honour a multifaceted researcher and teacher, but also to reflect the intricacies of working in such an *Orchideenfach*, must by necessity span as much of the existence of Armenia, from antiquity to modern day, while being multi-disciplinary at the same time. Most of the papers collected here, penned by colleagues, friends, and many former students and mentees of the honorand, to one extent or another showcase this breadth of time as well as the synergy between two or more sub-disciplines within Armenian Studies. Nevertheless, for ease of use, the volume has been subdivided into five parts: Art History, History, Linguistics and Philology, Literature, and Religious Studies. Next to these disciplinary connections, numerous other themes unite the papers, such as the notions of gender and violence at different times in Armenian history (see Calzolari and Zakarian); questions regarding the translation of Armenian texts, notably poetry (see Calzolari, MacFarlane, Meyer, and La Porta); or the notion of Christian martyrdom (see Cowe and Zakarian). In time, they reach from the very beginnings of Armenian literary and scientific production (see de Lamberterie) to contemporary literature, cinema, and art (see Calzolari).

The laureate's breadth of interests and competences is reflected not only in the gamut of papers collected in this volume, but also in the fact that all its editors were together, at one point in time (2013–2014) albeit at different stages of their careers, under his tutelage in Oxford and there were afforded the opportunity to work together on a variety of subjects, from Armenian grammatical writing and Grecising translations to the challenge that are the letters of Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni. The atmosphere, collegial bonds, and network that Professor van Lint helped create between these (as well as many other) young scholars bore fruit and, at an Armenian Studies colloquium in Geneva in 2018, inspired the plan that in the end produced this volume.

In what follows, the five parts of this *Festschrift* are introduced thematically, and all contributions are summarised.

1 Art History

The Art History papers explore close cultural links between Armenia and other major centres of Christianity, evincing the Armenians' awareness of and engagement with various developments and innovations in religious architecture, manuscript illumination, and theological thought. The exchange of

knowledge and expertise was accompanied by the creation of unique forms of artistic expression, some samples of which are discussed in the present volume.

One of the lifelong interests of the honorand has been the theological implications and representations of the Vision of Ezekiel in the Armenian tradition, which, alongside the Vision of Isaiah, is discussed in Thomas F. Mathews's contribution. Mathews traces the development of the Christian use of the iconography of the Visions by examining examples from architectural decoration, icons, and manuscripts and by bringing together the salient elements of the rich iconography of the prophets' visionary texts from the earliest surviving works of art and monuments down to the large 9th-century wall mosaics of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

In one of the first surviving representations, the angelic Living Creatures of the book of Revelation (4:6–11) appear depicted as handsome young men gazing at the spectator (Rotunda of Thessaloniki, ca. 390s). Another early representation depicts them, in addition to a man, in their animal guise as ox, lion, and eagle (Santa Pudenziana, Rome, 400–410). From the 6th century onwards, a peacock motif becomes recurrent in the representation of the Visions, appearing in manuscripts (Matenadaran [M] 2374, fol. 228^r and 228^v), in mosaics (Nikopolis, Greece; Panagia tis Angeloktisti in Kiti, Cyprus, 6th century), and in the spectacular sculpture of perhaps thirty life-size peacocks with their tails outspread surrounding the altar of Saint Polyeuktos in Constantinople (520–527). The motif of the wheels of the Cherubim is illustrated both in the mosaics of Thessaloniki and later in manuscripts such as the Walters 537 (= BAL 537), fol. 2, dated to 966. From amongst other Armenian sources, Mathews discusses at length perhaps the most important and relatively less studied treatise “Concerning Iconoclasts” (604–607) by Vrt'anēs K'ertol.

In her contribution, Christina Maranci examines the consecration rite of a painted church—*Kanon znkarel ekelec'i awrhnel*—as preserved in the Mayr Maštoc', the Great Ritual Book of the Armenian Church, the critical edition of which was published in 2012 by Gēorg Tēr-Vardanean. The detailed, albeit short, description of the procedure of this rite offers valuable information about the attitudes towards images in mediaeval Armenia and a fresh perspective on image worship and iconoclasm amongst the Armenians. The text of the rite suggests that the interiors of early mediaeval Armenian churches were commonly decorated with consecrated paintings, concurring with the evidence provided by other sources to which Maranci refers during her analysis.

Maranci's contribution introduces an important methodological approach for studying mediaeval Armenian art and architecture which involves treating

the Maštoc' as “a vast library of interpretive tools for understanding imagery and monuments”.

A unique and intriguing artefact is discussed by Gohar Grigoryan Savary in her paper “A Jacobean Shell for Šahuk, ‘Servant of God’”. The object under scrutiny—a scallop shell containing a commemorative coin—is related to the tradition of pilgrimage to the famous sanctuary of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia. While a link between Armenia and the Galician site dedicated to Saint James may seem surprising, the author shows that there is evidence for the presence of Armenian pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela at least from the 12th century—and possibly even earlier. After all, as Grigoryan Savary remarks, “[f]or the Armenians, as for many other pilgrims, Santiago de Compostela was an important place connected with the Apostle James, right after the Armenian cathedral of Saint James in Jerusalem”. The otherwise unknown Šahuk, who is mentioned in the inscription found on the commemorative coin, was therefore connected with pilgrimage to Saint James’s sanctuary on the Atlantic Ocean: there is, however, no certainty whether he indeed went on pilgrimage or acquired the shell in some other way. It is also unclear how Šahuk managed to have a special coin minted just for him, with a unique symbolism and a personal inscription. The various possibilities are carefully described and evaluated in the paper, demonstrating how art history, archaeology, and religious studies can cooperate in advancing historical research.

2 History

The contributions in this section discuss Armenia’s role in the political and religious history of Anatolia, the Caucasus, and Northern Mesopotamia from late Antiquity to the late Middle Ages. The papers expand on Armenia’s entanglement in the political, socio-economic, and religious processes that took place in the wider region.

In his contribution, Phil Booth examines the policies of shah Khusrau II towards Christian communities in Roman Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Egypt in the period between 603 to 628. The area had a dominant Chalcedonian church presence and the far smaller and largely ruralised Severan church, but persecutions against the dyophysites resulted in their miaphysite opponents taking control over many religious centres in the area. However, Booth challenges the widespread modern claim that the period of Persian rule was “an era of triumph for Miaphysite orthodoxy” and provides a more nuanced evaluation of the interaction of different religious fractions. The discussion of a variety of primary sources, which mainly recount the circumstances of the union of Dvin

in ca. 616 and the union of Alexandria in 617, evinces considerable tensions between Roman and Persian miaphysites as well as great divisions within the rival factions.

The contribution by Tara Andrews and Anahit Safaryan, entitled “The Funerary Oration of Barseł *Vardapet*” offers the first critical edition—with an English translation—of the oration delivered by the little-known *vardapet* Barseł on the death of Baldwin, lord of K'esun and Maraš (in Cilicia), upon his failed attempt to storm Edessa in 1146, two years after 'Imad al-Din Zengi had conquered the city from the crusaders. The text is of great interest for the details it offers on the relationship between the Frankish ruler and his Armenian confessor Barseł: the paucity of information on these two characters is duly addressed, and the authors are methodical in pointing out what can be stated and what can only be inferred or speculated about Baldwin and Barseł.

Being part of Matthew of Edessa's famous *Chronicle*, the Armenian text of the oration has been published in both 19th-century editions of the *Chronicle*; additionally, it was published in 1869 as a separate work. None of these editions, however, can be considered critical. Andrews and Safaryan, as part of a larger project, for the first time went through all the necessary steps of recension and collation which are necessary to produce a *stemma codicum*, an essential procedure for producing the critical edition of a text. All these passages are documented in the paper, which also offers insight into how digital tools can assist the work of philologists in Armenian studies and beyond.

David Zakarian's paper deals with the representation of violence against women in T'ovma Mecop'ec'i's *History of Tamerlane and his Descendants*. The work covers the period between 1386 and the 1440s and is one of the most important sources for the study of the Timurid invasions of the Caucasus and adjacent territories and their aftermath.

Zakarian examines the passages which contain accounts of violent treatment of women and identifies the recurring patterns of representation and interpretation of these acts of violence. In particular, he points out that Mecop'ec'i strongly relies on the vivid imagery of apocalyptic writings in order to provide his audiences with role models for emulation and to moralise about the sinfulness of their lifestyles. In this respect, the story of the martyrdom of an unknown woman and her son is the most revealing. As the only substantial text composed by a Christian cleric who was a contemporary of the events, it contains many eyewitness accounts that reveal, *inter alia*, the plight of women during this volatile period of Armenian history.

3 Linguistics and Philology

It goes without saying that papers devoted to Armenian linguistics and philology consider the use of and changes in the Armenian language over time, as well as the documents in which these varieties of Armenian were written down and their individual history. Yet, all papers here assembled are also united by their use or discussion of aspects of translation—be that from ancient Greek into Armenian, Armenian into English or Italian—and the difficulties that go hand in hand with translations. Similarly, the problem of time-depth unites many of these contributions, in that the often uncertain times of composition, manuscript attestation and modern reception bring with themselves issues that require discussion, quite aside from problems concerning manuscript tradition and the cultural differences between the periods mentioned. As in the previous section, the linguistic and philological contributions, too, are ordered chronologically.

Beginning in late antiquity and returning to one of the best-known and most-discussed texts of the so-called Hellenising School (*Yunaban dproc'*), Charles de Lamberterie provides new insights on the translation and adaptation techniques employed in the Armenian version of the *Téchnē grammatiké*, the *Art of Grammar*, attributed to the Alexandrian scholar Dionysios Thrax (*fl.* 2nd century BCE). After reminding the reader of the most common traits of the very divergent Hellenising translations—morpheme-by-morpheme calques of Greek words and variety of expression—de Lamberterie focuses on those occasions where the translator of the *Téchnē* chose to depart significantly from the original, e.g. in choosing different examples taken not from ancient Greece, but rather from the New Testament (Paul is mentioned instead of Socrates), or by providing linguistic material from the Armenian, not the Greek language (the Armenian patronymic suffix -Խաւի is used instead of the Greek original -ίδης). It is these and many other differences between the Armenian and Greek versions that clearly illustrate the unusual nature of the text at hand and its unclear audience, being neither a grammar of Greek translated into Armenian, nor a grammar of Armenian based on Greek precepts.

Federico Alpi, in turn, discusses one of the lifelong interests of the laureate: the œuvre of Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni (c. 990–1058), a prolific Armenian intellectual and influential political figure of the time. This paper examines the prominence of Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus* in Magistros's *Letters*, revealing interesting and hitherto unexplored parallels and tendencies. By drawing on Gohar Muradyan's recent study, Alpi discusses in detail how Magistros integrates in his writing references of varying length from Clement's work, categorising them as "long quotations (with occasional abridgements), short

quotations, and allusions (or hints)". The allusions and direct quotes' main purpose is "the embellishment of the letter in accordance with the stylistic rules of Byzantine—and late-antique—epistolography": they are clever and entertaining, displaying Magistros's erudition and shrewdness. While providing some insightful answers, this paper also poses a number of other questions which is indicative of the wealth of the legacy left by Magistros.

Remaining in the Greek sphere of influence on Armenian, Irene Tinti's paper relates the preliminary results of one of the multiple lines of research she is pursuing with regard to the comparatively little-studied Armenian Platonic dossier.

Five Platonic or pseudo-Platonic dialogues survive in ancient Armenian translations (*Timaeus*, *Euthyphro*, *Apology of Socrates*, *Laws*, and *Minos*). At the present state of knowledge, the versions, written in heavily Hellenising Armenian, are attested in their entirety only in one extant manuscript of uncertain date (17th century?), which is kept in the library of the Mekhitarist monastery of St Lazarus, Venice ([V] 1123) and has provided the basis for the (problematic) 19th-century editions. Ever since their rediscovery in 1835, the date and authorship of these texts have been the object of considerable debate, with proposed dates ranging from the 5th to the 11th century CE. Up until now, the very limited and late textual tradition has not helped in delimiting the original timeframe for the translated dialogues.

Tinti describes and analyses the traces of textual circulation and indirect tradition that she has so far been able to identify for one of the dialogues, the *Timaeus*, including some that were previously unknown and are discussed here for the first time. These new data chiefly prove that the Armenian *Timaeus* did not exist in a void; on the contrary, it seems to have had a certain amount of textual circulation in different areas of the Armenian-speaking world. Secondly, the minor witnesses provide reassuring indications as to the reliability of the Venetian manuscript, which, despite being quite recent, seems to preserve in many cases a more conservative state of the text. Lastly, Tinti shows that this type of analysis can provide meaningful clues towards solving the complex puzzle of the Platonic versions' date and attribution.

In her contribution, Anna Sirinian sheds light on some details of an Armenian manuscript (LOW 16586=ms. Arm. 14) of the Wellcome Library, London. Thanks to the digitisation of the document, which made it accessible to the scholarly community at large, Sirinian has been able to examine the colophon and to update—and correct—the information available until now with regard to the copyist and the context of the manuscript. A transcription of the colophon and an Italian translation are included in her paper. In addition, Sirinian reveals that ms. Arm. 14 also contains a handwritten note by *vardapet* Lewond

Pirġalēmean (1829–1891), a pioneer in the study of Armenian colophons. Almost two centuries have passed since the birth of the illustrious *vardapet* Pirġalēmean, but the study of Armenian colophons, as Sirinian demonstrates with her work and with this paper, remains a fruitful field of research.

Moving forward in time, Robin Meyer engages with the 18th-century Georgian-Armenian poet and bard Sayat'-Nova, well known amongst scholars of Armenian language and literature as the author of numerous poems composed in the Tiflis dialect of Armenian. His life and *œuvre*, marked by the complexities of the multilingual Caucasus and its environment, were treated extensively by Charles Dowsett, the first Chair of Armenian Studies at Oxford; an English translation of all of his poetry remains a desideratum, however.

In this paper, Meyer offers a first step in this direction, providing two different translations of one of the bard's most celebrated songs, whilst maintaining as closely as possible the original form and imagery of the Armenian version by means of a resistant translation: syllable count and rhyme are maintained, non-Armenian words borrowed from neighbouring languages are rendered either as non-English words or are defamiliarised by typographical means in order to achieve an effect similar to that created in the original.

Next to the translations themselves, Meyer introduces the poet, his work, and the Tiflis dialect of Armenian and discusses, from a theoretical and practical point of view, the challenges of translation in general and of multilingual poetry in particular.

4 Literature

The section on literature takes the reader from the beginnings of Armenian written culture, with the earliest authors addressed, albeit tangentially, in Alessandro Orenco's paper, to the reception of Siamant'ō's poem in 21st-century cinema and music discussed by Valentina Calzolari.

Careful and often innovative assessments of the historical context and/or pertinent biographical data form the basis for in-depth analyses of the literary texts which are the main focus of each contribution. Thus, all the articles deal, in different ways, with the interactions (whether positive or hostile), influences, and cross-fertilisations between Armenian and neighbouring cultures, and/or with often-fraught interreligious relations, continuing one of the main themes of the present collection.

Both secular and religious literature, prose as well as metre are represented, but poetry—and the contexts of poetic performance—features prominently in this section, as elsewhere in the volume, in keeping with the laureate's own

scholarly and personal interests. The issues involved in translating Armenian texts into modern languages, discussed from a metalinguistic perspective in the philological and linguistic section, also resurface directly, if not always explicitly, in the offerings of some of the authors. The contributions have been broadly organised in chronological order, although the wide scope of some of the articles makes a certain degree of overlapping inevitable. Two of the papers are in Italian, to honour the honorand's love for the language.

Alessandro Orenco's article is devoted to the autobiographical genre, which seems to have developed later and to a lesser extent in the Armenian tradition than in the Graeco-Latin and/or Christian worlds. Although a few 5th-century authors give some autobiographical information in their works, mostly while referring to their literary patrons and/or with the intent of presenting themselves as direct witnesses of the events they are relating, the first true Armenian autobiography dates to the 7th century and is ascribed to Anania Širakac'i. The text survives in two versions and might have been originally conceived as an introduction to Anania's *K'nnikon*. In it, the author details the obstacles he faced in order to improve his education as well as the opposition he encountered from his peers.

After Anania, biographical information can be found in colophons, letters, travelogues, and literary writings, but the next truly autobiographical text that Orenco brings to the reader's attention was authored by Oskan *vardapet* Erewanč'i in the 17th century. Written in the third person, it constitutes the 57th chapter in the *History* by Aṙak'el Davrižec'i, which was published in Oskan's own printing house in Amsterdam. Interestingly, Oskan's autobiography shows a similar structure to Anania's and focuses on the author's efforts to acquire a good education and, once again, the hostility he encountered.

Orenco argues that these similarities do not necessarily suggest that Oskan knew and was consciously imitating Anania, but rather that autobiographical texts might have been associated in Armenia with the authors' desire to give their own version of controversial events, underlining their own successes, as well as criticising their adversaries. This preliminary hypothesis will be put to the test in future research.

Sergio La Porta's contribution focuses on a 14th-century dispute poem between personified wine and an unnamed philosopher, authored by Tērtēr Erewanč'i, a scribe whose biographical details and activities are analysed and contextualised. La Porta offers a critical analysis of the composition, placing it within the historical, cultural, and religious context of the Crimea, where Tērtēr ended up living and where he wrote the miscellaneous manuscript (M 8029) containing the poem. He then provides a diplomatic edition based on the author's own manuscript, with new and better readings as opposed to the pre-

vously available one, which was based on a 16th-century manuscript. Finally, he offers a rhymed English translation, meant to reproduce the sense and the rhyming scheme of the Armenian original rather than providing a literal translation thereof.

Alex MacFarlane's piece draws on their ongoing research on the Armenian translation of the Greek *Alexander Romance* and tracks the slippage between this tale and that of the *History of the City of Bronze*, which has antecedents in Arabic literature. It does so by focusing on short monorhymed poems called *kafas*.

Kafas that repeat or introduce new details have been added to the text of the Armenian *Alexander Romance* itself from the late 13th or early 14th century onwards. Some of these expand on the episode of Alexander's visit to the palace of queen Kandakē of Meroë. MacFarlane traces the process of rewriting that, from the 14th to the 17th century, transformed the palace of Kandakē into the City of Bronze. The paper then turns to a manuscript of the *History of the City of Bronze* with *kafas* about Alexander added at the bottom of select pages to accentuate the tale's lesson about the inevitability of death. The Armenian text of the relevant poems is accompanied by an annotated English translation.

The article contributes significantly to our understanding of the different layers making up the Armenian translation of the *Alexander Romance*; furthermore, it offers insights into the role of Armenian scribes who saw connections between the remote landscapes and moral themes present in both tales and thus re-elaborated and expanded upon the materials they copied.

The still understudied bardic tradition of mediaeval Armenia is discussed by S. Peter Cowe in light of the career of Yohannēs Xlat'ec'i, an Armenian bard active at the court of the Kurdish emir of Xlat' (Ahlat) in the mid-15th century. Particular attention is given to the role of improvisation in performance practice, as well as the inclusivity of local tastes, open to different musical aesthetics. Such tolerance, however, was not reflected to the same extent in the religious sphere. Yohannēs crossed both religious and ethnic boundaries by becoming a famous bard in the Armenian and Kurdish communities. He converted to Islam but soon regretted his decision and reaffirmed his Christian identity, for which he was martyred. Interestingly, a Kurdish woman entertainer played a role in the events that ultimately led to his death.

The account of his martyrdom has survived in the original as well as in a redacted version. Alongside an English translation of the main texts, Cowe provides an in-depth literary, historical, and theological analysis thereof, and shows that the narrative of Yohannēs's martyrdom contains several divergences from the genre of martyrology and offers unique insights into the intercommunal relations of the time.

Despite the fact that both were composed by clerics, the original, plainer and more factual version reflects the mores and values of the community's lay population, while the redaction emphasises the protagonist's spiritual commitment and readiness to engage in religious polemics and reflects a monastic context and audience. Thus, the accounts of Yohannēs's martyrdom give us a tantalising glimpse into intracommunal relations as well.

The final article in this section takes the reader to a significantly later moment in Armenian history, namely the early 20th century. Valentina Calzolari offers an annotated Italian translation of and commentary upon "The Dance", a poem by Western Armenian author Siamant'ō (Adom Yarjanean [Atom Earčanean]), who perished during the Genocide of 1915. This is the first Italian version to be based on the Armenian original and appears here for the first time.

The translation and comment are preceded by a presentation of the poet and the context in which he was active. The text belongs to a collection called *Bloody News from My Friend*, inspired by the letters sent by Dr Diran Balak'ean (Tiran Palak'ean) to his family shortly after the Adana massacres in 1909, which Siamant'ō was able to read. The titular dance refers to a particularly gruesome episode: a German nurse witnesses and describes the terrible fate of a group of twenty young Armenian brides, forced to dance to the sound of drums by their tormentors while burning alive.

Calzolari's historical and literary analysis puts the poem in the wider context of the fate of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, addressing once again the gendered dimension of violence that had been previously discussed by Zakarian in connection with much earlier events. Furthermore, it focuses on the role of the witness and the inherent difficulties associated with testifying and giving literary and aesthetic expression to a catastrophe of this magnitude. The final section deals with the reception of the poem in 21st-century cinema and music, and addresses the (im)possibility of translating these events into images within an aesthetic work. While each strophe is translated and analysed separately in the body of the article, the *Appendix* includes the Armenian text of the poem followed by the complete translation, for ease of consultation.

5 Religious Studies

It is hard to overstate the importance of religion in Armenian Studies. The bond between Armenians and Christianity, still so strong today, is ancient, almost obvious, and surely well-established. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that, since hundreds of years before the baptism of King Trdat in the 4th cen-

tury and down to present day, pre-Christian or non-Christian religions played a key role in Armenian history, as the work of Adontz, Toumanoff, and Russell (to name just a few) illustrates.

On both sides of the watershed marked by the conversion to Christianity, one constant feature in the relationship of Armenia to religion(s) may be observed: the tendency to take into serious consideration the religious thought of others, and meditate upon it, while developing her own. The fact that religion in Armenia—more specifically in Christian Armenia, which is incomparably better documented—developed more through knowledge than through conflict is perhaps one of the correlates of this tendency. Only rarely supported by a strong secular arm, Armenian religious thinkers learned to defend the uniqueness of their faith with the only weapons they could wield: philosophy, theology, and preaching, among others. Thus, they refined these weapons not only by developing their own religious thought, but also by paying due attention to the surrounding religious landscape. This knowledge was vital in order to define and negotiate continuously what lay within as well as what was situated beyond the boundaries of faith.

As a result, any scholar of religion will find this section interesting not only in its own right, for the particular developments of thought just described, but also for what these developments in religious thought have to say about other traditions, past and present. This is evident in the fact that while the contributions in this section cover the period of Christian Armenia, they all show abundant and deep connections with its historical, cultural, and religious context.

In his paper entitled “Ephrem and Persian Martyrs in the Armenian Synaxarion”, Sebastian Brock explores the presence of Syriac saints in the Armenian calendar of commemorations, chief amongst whom is St Ephrem, many of whose works were translated into Armenian at an early stage of Armenian literary production. The entry for Ephrem, based on the Armenian translation of the Syriac *Life of Ephrem*, includes a number of anachronisms and inaccuracies, for instance Ephrem’s status as a monk rather than a deacon or his supposed contact with the Cappadocian and Desert Fathers; these traits betray the age and audience of the translation. In addition to a detailed comparison of the Syriac versions of this life, Brock also outlines which episodes are not found in the Armenian translation, and why. In the ensuing discussion of the Persian martyrs commemorated in the Armenian synaxarion, it becomes evident that the latter is remarkable for its inclusivity, uniting elements of Eastern and Western Christianity through the veneration not only of local saints, but of those from other regions of the world too, including for instance Sts Benedict and Thomas of Canterbury.

Turning to another, quintessentially Armenian Saint, Nazenie Garibian explores the eschatological dimension of the *Vision of Saint Gregory* as preserved in Agat'angelos's *History of the Armenians*. Garibian's detailed analysis of the text with references to all available recensions reveals specific Armenian realities and aspirations of the Armenian ecclesiastical authorities dating back to the beginning of the 5th century when the text of the *Vision* was committed to writing. These realities reflected general ideological tendencies of the Christian world related to the Second Coming of Christ, the expectation of which had intensified at the end of the 4th century.

The *Vision* aimed at presenting the Armenians as God's new chosen people, for whom Vałaršapat, the spiritual centre and patriarchal see of the Armenian Church, was to become the New Jerusalem. It was the place where the holy Hrip'simē and her companions shed their blood and where St Gregory received the vision in which he saw the descent of the celestial army guided by the luminous figure of the Only-Begotten. Thus, Vałaršapat transforms into a holy city where the Parousia of Christ was expected.

The contextual study of figurative and written documents from Armenian history has emerged in the last years as a promising avenue of research. Michael E. Stone and Edda Vardanyan show the potential of that type of endeavour with their investigation on "Jacob and the Man at the Ford of Jabbok". As the title goes, the paper focuses on the representation of Jacob in the famous church of the Holy Cross of Ałt'amar, which is discussed in its art-historical and biblical context. The analysis of the elements of the frieze, conducted with attention also to linguistic and Christological approaches, allows the authors to note the presence and meaning of non-biblical elements in Jacob's depiction. These elements, as Stone and Vardanyan note, "are to be understood against the background of Near Eastern culture from antique times and down to the present". In addition to that, the importance of paying attention also to apocryphal texts when discussing figurative material (and vice-versa) is highlighted.

Combining her scholarly pursuits with her literary talent, Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan's paper "Acrostics in Armenian Ecclesiastical Poetry" provides a typological overview of the use of this form of poetry in the Armenian hymnal, the *šaraknoc'*. Next to historical developments, common formulae and topoi, and the relationship between Greek acrostics and their Byzantine Greek counterparts, her contribution details how Armenian authors have overcome certain structural hurdles (e.g. the scarcity of words commencing with the letters *r* or *w*). All observations and explanations are richly illustrated with examples from the hymnal. The paper ends with an acrostic composed in honour of the *laudandus* on the basis of Nersēs Šnorhali's *Instruction for studious youngsters*.

6 Homage

The final chapter of this volume is an homage to ageing and memory penned by James Russell and entitled “*Gemara* and Memory”. Russell paints a picture of how increasing age and one’s ability to remember correlate, and how scholars in particular come to terms with the at times disquieting changes entwined with ageing. While the literary and religious nobility—Shakespeare, T.S. Elliot, Nabokov, Dante, St Augustine, Mani, and many others—are given a moment in the limelight, the focus of this essay lies clearly on age and memory in the Jewish tradition as enshrined in the Talmud. Its message is unequivocal: respect and honour scholars—Talmudic and otherwise—for even in old age and with their memory not quite what it used to be, they have forgotten more than many others have ever known.

7 Further Thoughts

The time depth and range of subjects collected in this volume stand as a monument to the variety of students and colleagues the honorand has, over the years, influenced and indeed helped to become the scholars they are today. His generosity of time and spirit and his kind but consequent insistence on wide reading and careful analysis are emblematic of the kind of scholarship a subject like Armenian Studies requires and demands. Inter- and multidisciplinary are basic requirements for a culture, language, and region that, for almost three millennia, has been at the hotly contested borders between other cultures and languages and has been influenced, changed, and enriched by them.

And yet, while any linguist dealing with Armenian must know about its literary and social background as well as the languages surrounding it, and every historian dealing with one period or another of this culture is acquainted, too, with the periods preceding and following it as well as its archaeological and literary evidence, interdisciplinarity by itself is not enough. The maintenance of these *Kleine Fächer*, these subjects of whose existence the public at large and thus future students and researchers are less aware than of mathematics, psychology, or English literature, can only be guaranteed if they are given sufficient room to flourish on their own, independently from other larger disciplines and outside of the country most closely associated with them. This independence of subject allows scholars to develop a more holistic understanding of the area in which they work and, in creating wider interest in a greater number of research centres, ensures the survival of non-endemic perspectives on the field in question.

As a tribute to Professor Theo Maarten van Lint, and in keeping with long-standing tradition, this 360° view of the contributions composed in his honour ends with a colophon, traditionally a short note of the author(s) and scribe(s) of a manuscript giving some information about them and the time and location of the manuscript's production.



Փառք ամենասուրբ Երրորդութեանն՝ Հայր եւ Որդոյ եւ Հոգւոյն Սրբոյ, որ արժանի արար զմեղուցեալ զապասաւորս բանի Դաւիթ, նաեւ զիմ հոգեւոր քոյրն Իռենէ, եւ զիմ եղբարս հոգեւորս՝ Ռոբին եւ Ֆեդերիկո, հասանել ի վերջին գիծս, ի թուականութեանս Հայոց ի ՌՆՀԱ, ի զահակալութեան Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ.Տ. Գարեգին Բ Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոսի ի վերայ Մայր Աթոռոյ Էջմիածնի եւ Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ.Տ. Արամայ Ա կաթողիկոսի Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ ի վերայ Սրբոց Աթոռոյն Անթիլիասի եւ Ն.Ա.Տ. Նուրհան արքեպիսկոպոսի Երուսաղիմայ ի վերայ Սրբոց Աթոռոյն Սրբոց Յակովբեանց Երջանիկ Առաքելոցն:

Եւ արդ եղէ սկիզբն գրոյս թին ի ՌՆԿԹ, երբ տարածեաց յաշխարհս ամենայն մահ տարածամ, եւ անհամար արք եւ կանայք, ծերք եւ տղայք մահուամբ փոխեցան յԱստուած. եւ վաղվաղակի փակեցան դրունսն քաղաքաց եւ երկրաց, եւ բազումք ի տունս եւ յամրոցս իւրեանս ապաստան եղէն: Եւ զի սաստկացեալ էր մահ տարածամն եւ մեղքն Հայոց իշխանաց ծովացեալ, ի Սեպտեմբեր ԻԷ գունդք անարիւնաց կատաղաբար հարձակեցան ի վերայ ժողովրդին Հայոց, մանաւանդ ի վերայ նահանգին Արցախայ: Եւ եկին եւ առին զբերդն Շուշի, եւ հայրենագուրկ արարին զբազում Արցախցիս. եւ թշնամին անարէն սկսաւ այնուհետեւ ի բազում տեղիս արձակել զգարս, եւ զոր գտանէին զբազմութիւն մարդկանն վարեցին ի գերութիւն. եւ դամբար ի ձեռն առեալ հրձիգ առնէին զբազում տեղիս. եւ տապալէին քանդէին զեկեղեցիս Աստուծոյ:

Արդ պարտ է յիշել եւ զմտաւ ածել նաեւ զբանսն պատմահարն մերոյ թե «վրդովեցաւ խաղաղութիւն, ամրատացաւ անկարգութիւն. դրդուցաւ ուղղափառութիւն, կայկայեցաւ տգիտութեամբ չարափառութիւն» զի պառակտումն տիրեաց ի Հայս: Վասն այսորիկ յերեսս անկեալ աղաչեմք զքեզ Տէ՛ր Աստուած ողորմեա զբազմամեղ ժողովորդս Հայոց եւ փրկեա զերկիրս ի չարէն՝ թե ներքոյ եւ թե արտաքոյ, զի քո է արքայութիւն եւ զարութիւն եւ փառք յաիտեանս, ամէն:

Եւ կազմեցաւ զմատեանս այս վասն ԿԵ տանի ծննդեան հոգեւոր հայր մերոյ Թեո վան Լինթի յերկիրն Անգլիոյ եւ Իտալիոյ, համագործակցութեամբ բազում լուսապայծառ գիտնականաց ազգաց ազգաց: Եւ աղաչեմք զսուրբ ընթերցողս յիշել սրտի մտաւք եւ ի մաքրափայլ աղաւթս ձեր

զատացող գրոցս զվարդապետն մերոյ Թեոն եւ զիմաստուն կողակիցն իւր զՆաթալի տիկինն, եւ զԱստուածառաք դուստրն իւրեանց զՀռիփսիմէ եւ զԺնաւոսն իւրեանց եւ զամենայն արեան մերձաւորաց իւրոց՝ կենդանեաց եւ հանգուցելոց, ամէն: Այլ եւ յիշեցէք ի սրբազան յաղոթս ձեր եւ զողորմելիս Դաւիթ, Իռենե, Ռոբին, եւ Ֆեդերիկո, եւ Աստուած, որ առատն է ի տուրս բարեաց, ձեզ ողորմեսցի, ամէն: