



FLORENCE STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL
AFRO-EURASIA

2

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**Armenia
Entangled**
Connectivity and Cultural
Encounters in Medieval
Eurasia 9th - 14th Centuries



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Cultural Entanglements across Medieval Armenia

Catalogue of the Photo Exhibition

9 April – 12 June 2026

University of Florence,

Palazzo Fenzi-Marucelli

Curated by

GOHAR GRIGORYAN

ZAROUÏ POGOSSIAN

IRENE TINTI

within the ERC project ArmEn



All'Insegna del Giglio

Editors

Gohar GRIGORYAN
Zaroui POGOSSIAN
Irene TINTI

Contributors

Francesca CHELI, University of Florence
Alexandra CUFFEL, Ruhr University Bochum
Gagik DANIELYAN, Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan
Gohar GRIGORYAN, University of Florence
Andy HILKENS, University of Vienna
Hasmik HOVHANNISYAN, University of Florence
Armine MELKONYAN, University of Florence
Michele NUCCIOTTI, University of Florence

Michael PIFER, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Zaroui POGOSSIAN, University of Florence
Elisa PRUNO, University of Florence
Barbara Hjørdis ROGGEMA, University of Florence
Sara SCARPELLINI, University of Florence
Leonardo SQUILLONI, University of Florence
Irene TINTI, University of Florence
Edda VARDANYAN, University of Florence
Sara Nur YILDIZ, Middle East Technical University, Ankara

Language Editing

Michael PIFER

Maps

Francesca CHELI
Lapo SOMIGLI
Leonardo SQUILLONI

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Institutions

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Individuals

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STONE AND EARTH: FEATURES OF ARCHITECTURE IN DVIN

Leonardo Squilloni

The use of earth as a construction material—whether in the form of rammed earth walls or sun-dried mud bricks—is a practice that spans vast geographical regions and time periods, characterising both vernacular and monumental architecture.

The medieval city of Dvin (4th–13th centuries) was built almost entirely using earth, through a variety of construction techniques that reflect the coexistence of different ethnic groups, each with its own building traditions. Most structures in the city feature stone and river-pebble foundations topped by walls of rammed earth or mud brick (*Fig. 27a*). Some exceptions include buildings made entirely of large mud bricks without stone bases, such as the early 8th-century palace of the

Arab governor on the citadel (*Fig. 27b*) and sections of the city walls.

A few centuries later, a new technique appeared: foundations in fired brick combined with rammed earth walls, as seen in structures from the Seljuk period (mid-11th to late 12th century) in the lower fortress (*Fig. 27c*).

The use of earth in construction continued in the Dvin region well into modern times. Numerous village houses near the site, as well as the 19th-century church of Saint John in the village of Norashen (*Fig. 27d*), built by Armenian settlers from Iran, reflect this continuity. Even the Soviet-era House of Culture in the nearby village of Getazat was constructed entirely of sun-dried mud bricks.

27a. Earthen building on the western slope of the Lower Fortress in Dvin, 12th–13th centuries.

Photographic credit: Leonardo Squilloni.

27b. Mud-brick walls from the palace of the Arab governor in Dvin, early 8th century.

Photographic credit: Leonardo Squilloni.

27c. Rammed earth wall on a fired brick basement from the University of Florence “Area 1000” excavation in the Lower Fortress of Dvin.

Photographic credit: Leonardo Squilloni.

27d. Mud-brick Church of Saint John, Norashen, 19th century.

Photographic credit: Leonardo Squilloni.







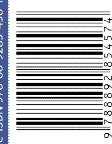
The catalogue presents 27 case studies that bear witness to cultural interactions in and around medieval Armenia. These testimonies come from multiple sources: small pieces of pottery and coins; majestic monuments and abandoned ruins; legendary narratives and visual arts; historiographical and juridical texts; lapidary inscriptions and handwritten manuscripts; and even tiny marginal notes that were intentionally erased in medieval times. Collectively, these sources and artefacts narrate a story of medieval Armenia and Armenians that spans a multitude of interconnections across Eurasia.

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