

**Winter 2018**  
**History 212**  
***An Introduction to Early Modern Armenian Paleography***  
**Professor Sebouh D. Aslanian**

[saslanian@history.ucla.edu](mailto:saslanian@history.ucla.edu)

Time: Th 2:00PM- 4:50PM (YRL Library Group Study Room, G15)

Office Hours: Th 11:00-12:00 PM or by appointment

Office: Bunche Hall 7383

The purpose of this graduate seminar is to introduce students to the history and practice of Armenian paleography, in general, and to reading documents written in various forms of early modern Armenian, in particular.

The seminar begins with a general survey of the historical scholarship on Armenian paleography and focuses on the technical dimensions of reading, transcribing, and translating documents written in Armenian script from the early years of the seventeenth to the closing decades of the eighteenth centuries. Weekly meetings will be devoted to scrutinizing, reading together, and translating archival and epigraphic documents, in high resolution digital form, chosen by genre and with consideration of students' own research needs. These will include a wide selection of epistolary writing in early modern classical Armenian or *grabar*, comprising of those written by elite members of the Armenian Church (both Apostolic and Catholic) as well as family and mercantile correspondence and commercial contracts written by barely literate more "ordinary" Armenians in Julfa dialect of Armenian or in other vernaculars. A selection of letters written by women from New Julfa in Isfahan and Diyarbakir in the Ottoman Empire in the mid-eighteenth century and stored in the National Archives in Kew (London) as well as the All Savior's monastery in Julfa will be featured. The seminar will also introduce students to early modern Armenian epigraphic writing by focusing on tombstones from the Santa Croce Armenian Church in Venice as well as from the Armenian cemeteries in Agra, Chinsura, and Calcutta. Throughout, our emphasis will be on using technical guidance regarding the rules of paleography to illuminate the reading of documents and at the same time to use documents to help explain and elucidate the technical rules. We will also use written documents to blaze our path to some of the main themes in the social and economic history of Armenians during the early modern period. Apart from the digital documents that the class will engage with collectively, there will be some pdf readings and one textbook. Students will be required to carry out five translation exercises and one in-class final transcription and translation exam.

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SYLLABUS**

Enrollment in this course implies acceptance of all rules, policies and requirements of this class. I reserve the right to make small changes to this syllabus in accordance with the specifics of the class dynamic.

### ***NOTES, CAUTIONARY AND OTHERWISE:***

- Students are required to be present at **every** class session and to be prepared for class. Unexcused absences will be penalized. Students must contact the instructor if a conflict arises that will prevent

them from attending class. Only students who have excused absences and approval from the instructor will be able to make up a missed assignment. I am not obligated to consider other absences except the following excused absences: illness or injury to the student; death, injury, or serious illness of an immediate family member or the like; religious reasons (California Education Code section 89320); jury duty or government obligation; university sanctioned or approved activities (examples include: artistic performances, forensics presentations, participation in research conferences, intercollegiate athletic activities, student government, required class field trips.) **Please contact me immediately if a situation arises that forces your absence from class. If I do not hear from you, I will consider your absence unexcused.**

▪ Consistent tardiness will not be acceptable and will result in a grade deduction. You need to let me know ahead of time if you are going to be late. If you are late to class beyond twenty minutes of class time, I will consider you absent for the day.

*Grading:*

	A = 93 – 100	A- = 90 – 92
B+ = 87 – 89	B = 83 – 86	B- = 80 – 82
C+ = 77 – 79	C = 73 – 76	C- = 70 – 72
D+ = 67 – 69	D = 63 – 66	D- = 60 – 62
	F = 0 – 59	

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS/ASSESSMENT

### ***I. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:***

- 1) FIVE TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION ASSIGNMENTS (30%)
- 2) IN-CLASS FINAL EXAM (40%)
- 3) CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION (30%)

### ***II. CLASS PARTICIPATION AND DISCUSSION***

This includes coming to class on time having read and thought about the week's material and prepared to discuss it. Attendance without participation will be insufficient and will be reflected in grades.

### **REQUIRED TEXT:**

- A. G. Abrahamyan, *Hayots' gir ev grchut'yun* [Armenian Writing and Literature] (Yerevan: Yerevani Hamalsarani Hratarakchut'yun, 1973)

Pdf readings will be available on website of the class. All digital images of archival documents and tombstone inscriptions used for seminar readings will be made available in class.

**WEEK 1 (JANUARY 11): INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE ARMENIAN ALPHABET**

### *Readings:*

- “The Armenian Alphabet,” in *The Heritage of Armenian Literature*, volume I, 83-91.\*

- James Russell, “On the Origin and Invention of the Armenian Script,” *Le Muséon*, 107 3-4 (1994): 317-333.\*
- James Russell, “Alphabets” in *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World*, Glen Warren Bowersock, Peter Robert Lamont Brown, and Oleg Grabar, eds. (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 288-290.\*
- Dickran Kouymjian, “The Archeology of the Armenian Manuscript: Codicology, Paleography and Beyond,” in *Armenian Philology in the Modern Age: From Manuscript to Digital Text*, ed. Valentina Calzolari (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 5-22.\*

## WEEK 2 (JANUARY 18): ARMENIAN PALEOGRAPHY AND DEVELOPMENT OF SCRIPT TYPES

### Readings:

- Dickran Kouymjian, “The History of Armenian Paleography,” in *Album of Armenian Paleography*, Michael E. Stone, Dickran Kouymjian, and Henning Lehmann (Copenhagen: Aarhus University Press, 2002), 13-76\*
- Michael E. Stone, “The Development of Armenian Writing,” in *Album of Armenian Paleography*, Michael E. Stone, Dickran Kouymjian, and Henning Lehmann (Copenhagen: Aarhus University Press, 2002), 77-105\*
- Abrahamyan, “Haykakan gradesaknerë ev nrants‘ gortsatsut‘ean modavor zhamanakë,” in *Hayots‘ gir ev grchut‘yun*, 56-88.\*

## Week 3 (JANUARY 25): NUMERATION AND CALENDRIAL SYSTEMS IN ARMENIAN DOCUMENTS

### Readings:

- Abrahamyan, “T‘vanshanneri gortsatsut‘yunë” and “T‘vakannerë ev nrants‘ veratsnut‘ean skzbunk‘nerë,” in *Hayots‘ gir ev grchut‘yun*, 86-126.\*
- *Illustrative “documents”*:
  - Tombstone of Khwaja Grigor di Guerak-Mirman, founder of Venice’s Santa Croce Church, d. June 21, 1688.\*
  - “Augau Peere’s Contract for the weight of his Coffee” January 13, 1696, Bandar Surat (India). BL. IOR, E3/51.\*
  - Tombstone of Philipos the son of Shahrman buried at the Murghihatta Catholic Cathedral in Calcutta in 1755.
  - Letter from Hakob Jughayetsi Catholicos to Ter Barsegh or Basilio Barsegh and Ter Sargis, September 28, 1117 (1668). *Source*: Archivio Storico della Congregazione di Propaganda Fide [ASPF], SOCG, 223, folio 408.
  - Catholicos Nahapiet Edessats‘i, Letter of confession to the Catholic faith, 1 February 1702, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, L’Archivio Generale de la Compagnia di Gesù (Jesuit Archives), “Missiones ad Smyrnenses, Armenos, Chaldeos et Persas Gal” 97/II, folio 200.

## Week 4 (FEBRUARY 1): THE ART OF DISENTANGLING CONNECTED LETTERS

### Readings:

- Abrahamyan, “Conjoined letters” (*Kapgrut‘yun*) and “Abbreviations” (*Hamarotagrut‘yun*), in *Hayots‘ gir ev grchut‘yun*, 187-200.

- Mkhitar abbahayr, “Haghags Harmaragrut‘ean,” in *K‘erakanut‘ivn grabat‘i Lezui haykazean set‘i*, (Venice: Antonio Bortoli, 1730), 469-482.\*
- *Illustrative “documents”*:
  - Tombstone of Guliaz son of Abisoghom, Santa Croce Church, Venice, April 22, 1746
  - Tombstone of Alexan son of Aghniat in Agra (India) 1651/1652
  - Tombstone of Frank son of Grigor in Agra 1658/59
  - Tombstone of Joannes di Marcara, Saint John the Baptist Church, Chinsura, Bengal, 1698
  - Letter of Excommunication, Primate David Vardapet of Julfa to Armenian Merchants of Julfa residing in Tabriz, New Julfa, 10 May, 1679. *Source*: ASPF, S.C. Armeni, vol. 3, folios 194-196.
  - Letter of Abbot Mkhitar to Tirats‘u Gevork. 25 August 1732, *Source*: Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV), Inquisitori di Stato, busta 876\*
  - Stepanos Vardapet, *kontak* (letter of blessing) addressed to Julfan merchants in Livorno and Venice, September 25 1135 (1686). *Source*: Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASFi), Acquisti e Doni, 123.\*

WEEK 5 (**FEBRUARY 8**): JULFA DIALECT: THE SMYRNA PETITION, A FORGED (?) POWER OF ATTORNEY, AND GASPAR DI SARAT LETTER

*Readings:*

- Sebouh David Aslanian, “Trade Diaspora versus Colonial State: Armenian Merchants, the East India Company and the High Court of Admiralty in London, 1748-1752,” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 13, 1 (2006): 37-100.\*
- Hrachia Acharean/Bert Vaux, *Juxtevar: The Armenian Dialect of New Julfa, Isfahan, based on Acaryan’s Բնութիւն նոր Ջուղայի Բարբառի* with revisions, additions, updates, and new glossaries and texts, 1-113.
- Alessandro Orenco, “Una Lettera del XVII secolo, scritta nel ‘Armeno dei Mercanti,’” *Ashtanak: Hayagitakan Barberagirk‘* [Ashtanak: Armenological Periodical] 3: 24-35\*
- *Illustrative “documents”*:
- The 1658 petition of Armenian Merchants in Smyrna to the Dutch Republic. *Source*: National Archief, Staten Generaal, inv. nr. 12578-40, The Hague.
- “Amsterdama ew vanaytkin Sahap Jumiat”: A Power of Attorney (1750) concerning the Santa Catharina. *Source*: The National Archives TNA (Kew Gardens), High Court of Admiralty (HCA) 42/026.
- “Letter of Gasparo di Sarat Shahriman or Sceriman to a Cardinal in Rome, dated Livorno June 1, 1669,” *Source*: Archivio Storico della Congregazione di Propaganda Fide [ASPF], S.C. Armeni, vol. 2, folio 280.

**FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE**

WEEK 6 (**FEBRUARY 15**): JULFA DIALECT: FOCUS ON *COMMENDA* CONTRACTS AND BILLS OF EXCHANGE OR AWAGS/AVAKS

*Readings:*

- Sebouh David Aslanian, “The Circulation of Men and Credit: The *Commenda* and the Family Firm,” *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian*

*Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkley, CA.: University of California Press, 2011), 121-165.\*

- Sebouh David Aslanian, “Cross-cultural Credit Networks, Legal Institutions, and 'Trust': Bills of Exchange between Julfan Merchants and Marwari Sarrafs in Early Modern Isfahan and Mughal India,” unpublished paper\*
- Edmund Herzig, “Finance and Credit,” in Edmund Herzig, “The Armenian Merchants of New Julfa, Isfahan: A Study in Premodern Asian Trade” (Doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 1991), 238-269\*
- Abraham Udovitch, “At the Origins of the Western *Commenda*: Islam, Israel, or Byzantium?” *Speculum* 37: 198-207.\*
- *Illustrative “documents”*:
  - 1659, Bilateral *commenda* contract between Hovanjan di Marcara and Khwaja Sarukhan of Baghesh,” *Source*: All Savior’s Monastery Archive (ASMA), “Namak—Aligorna, 1659)\*
  - Bilateral *commenda* contract between Hovannes son of Grigor and Petrus Usan, Nakha 7, 1741. *Source*: BL Lansdowne Ms. 1047, folio 78.\*
  - *Awag/avak* (bill of exchange) document dated Ovdan 10, 111 (?? 1726) in Isfahan, between Dateos and Bartoghmeos di Nazar Shahriman and Khwaja J’nsu (Jinsu or Jishnu) and Kimchand. *Source*: Archivio di Istituto Don Nicola Mazza (Verona): Sceriman Papers, busta 3.
  - *Awag/avak* (bill of exchange) between Gevork Vardapet of All Savior’s Cathedral, in Basra and Santiago di Barrachial in Madras, Aram 30 140 or January 14, 1755. *Source*: All Savior’s Monastery Archive (ASMA), “Arevtrakan grut’iwnner t’ght’apanak—zanazan niwt’erov,” 3.

## SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

WEEK 7 (**FEBRUARY 22**): A LETTER OF EXCOMMUNICATION FROM 1680, A PILGRIM’S MISSIVE FROM MARSEILLE (1691), A DEATH IN ROME (1698), AND MKHIT’AR’S FLIGHT FROM EPHREM GHAPANTS’I (1701)

*Readings:*

- Sebouh D. Aslanian, “Chapter Three,” in Aslanian, *Early Modernity and Mobility: Port Cities and Printers Across the Armenian Diaspora*, unpublished manuscript.
- Sebouh D. Aslanian, “Chapter Six, Print and Port-to-Port Mobility: Censorship and Letters of Excommunication in the Work of Oscan’s Press in Livorno and Marseille,” in Aslanian, *Early Modernity and Mobility: Port Cities and Printers Across the Armenian Diaspora*, unpublished manuscript.
- *Illustrative “documents”*:
  - Catholicos Hakob Vardapet, letter to Armenian merchants in Tabriz intimating excommunication, March 23, 1129 (1680). *Source*: ASPF, SC Armeni, vol. 3, folio 241\*
  - Letter by Hovannes Herapet of the city of Urha, dated Marseille January 16 1691. *Source*: ASPF SC Armeni, vol. 3, folio 277\*
  - Public notice at the Santa Maria Eggizziacca Armenian Church in Rome (Surb Mariam Yegiptats’vo yegeghets’i), June 2, 1699. *Source*: ASPF SC Armeni vol. 5, folios 535r.-548r\*
  - How Abbot Mkhitar escaped persecution in Constantinople in 1701, or passages from Matteos Evdokiats’i’s *Zhamanakagrut’iwn srbazan kargi miatsants’n Hayots’ ‘i karge srboyn Abba antoni*, folios 38-39.

## THIRD WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

WEEK 8 (**MARCH 1**): JULFA DIALECT AND MIXED VERNACULARS: WOMEN LETTER WRITERS FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

*Readings:*

- Houri Berberian, “Unequivocal Sole Ruler”: The Lives of Julfan Armenian Women and Early Modern Laws,” *Journal for the Society of Armenian Studies*, 23 (2014): 83-112.\*
- James Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1-60.\*
- *Illustrative “documents”*:
  - Letter by a Julfan mother (Mariamtatik) to her sons, Agha Grigor, Paron Hovannis, and Paron Tsatur dated Tira 1, 132 [1747]. *Source*: The National Archives TNA (Kew Gardens), High Court of Admiralty (HCA), 30/682.\*
  - Letter to Ovannes son of Sari Sargis in Basra (or somewhere in India) from his mother Sophia written in Julfa Isfahan, Jumada 25, 1740-1747. *Source*: The National Archives TNA (Kew Gardens), High Court of Admiralty (HCA), 30/682.\*
  - Letter to Ghazar son of Martiros in Bengal from his mother Yeghsik in Julfa, undated but most likely 1745. *Source*: TNA HCA 30/682
  - *Commenda* contract between Ohanes son of Issakhan as agent and Gulaziz wife of Sargis son of Yerum as capitalist, Julfa on Nadar 30, 1124 (1675) *Source*: ASMA, Zanazan Niwterov grut'iwnner, Nor Jugha).\*

**FOURTH WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE**

WEEK 9 (**MARCH 8**): SOME TRAVEL WRITING FROM THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

*Readings:*

- Artashes Mat'evosyan, “Chanaparhatsoyts' petrosi ordi Hakobi,” *Banper Madenadarani*, 8,(1967): 286-288: \*
- *Illustrative “documents”*:
  - Travel itinerary by Hakob di Petros, 1 December 1676, London. *Source*: British Library (BL) Sloane Ms. 4090, folio 025v and r.
  - Travel itinerary of Paron Maler from Calcutta to London by way of Saint Helena, Ovdan 22 (February 5), 1701. *Source*: BL Harleian Ms. 5458, folio 4.

**FIFTH WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE**

WEEK 10 (**MARCH 15**): IN-CLASS FINAL EXAM

- Seminar Participants are expected to transcribe and translate three documents from early modern Armenian, including one bill of exchange and *commenda* and one tombstone\*