A Word from the President

We’re once again excited to tell you about the many important accomplishments of ARISC’s members and fellows in 2015-16! This 4th (and final) year of our 4-year grant through the US Dept. of Education saw continued accomplishments overseas. Our support of research in the region continues to make strong impacts on the careers of junior scholars.

ARISC-funded programs included here have fostered partnerships between American and local colleagues to improve research capacities in the South Caucasus. Indeed, fostering the development of advanced research methods in the region has been an important theme this year: Dr. Alan Greene, post-doc at Stanford (now at NYU), armed with a Cultural Heritage Management Grant, collaborated with Armenian scientist Roman Hovsepyan to update and improve accessibility for the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography’s website (p.11); this kind of project—local-scale, but vital to the long-term health of scientific institutions—is one that ARISC is uniquely positioned to support.

Following the theme of capacity building, in May 2016 ARISC fostered a lively 2-day GIS workshop in New York (p.16) to foster the growth of cutting-edge spatial analysis research methods across the sciences. Building scientific capacity takes time and patience, but the 20 scholars that took part in the workshop committed themselves to future skills exchanges with local partners in the SC to train young researchers in the latest data collection methods and technologies.

One of the highlights of 2016 was an Oral History Summer School (p.17) led by US and Georgian specialists. The program trained Georgian scholars in oral history data collection strategies, which the participants will employ to document memories of Georgia’s aging Soviet-era generation.

Also be sure to check out the section on news items from you, our ARISC members (p.2), including new books, awards, job placements and other milestones! We’re excited and proud to share the great work you’re doing, not only among our members, but also on our social media outlets. Keep us in the loop about your developments.

I also invite you to read our “Notes From Abroad” section to learn more about the most recent scholarship being conducted in the region by the next generation of SC scholars. We have made several awards to graduate students and junior scholars working in a variety of disciplines. In this section Nat Erb-Satullo, a recent Ph.D. from Harvard, reports on his study of ancient metallurgy in Georgia, and Natalja Czarnecki (University of Chicago) discusses fascinating ethnographic research on the shifting social economics and safety issues surrounding the outdoor food market (bazari) in Tbilisi.

I want to make special mention of a formal external review of ARISC conducted by Dr. Christopher Tuttle (Executive Director of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers) and Dr. Joanna Regulska (Vice Provost and Associate Chancellor, and Professor of Women and Gender Studies at UC Davis). These prominent scholars traveled to the SC in early 2016 to gain an objective assessment of ARISC’s progress and priorities. We were gratified to receive a strong positive report from the reviewers and excellent suggestions for growth directions and funding opportunities that we are already starting to implement.

Our activities are made possible because of the hard work and dedication of our overseas staff, Diana Lezhava, Susan Marukhyan, and Leyla Rustamli. Read more about them on page 3 of the newsletter. We all owe them our gratitude for helping ARISC grow! Be sure to visit them when next you’re in the SC!
News from ARISC Members

ARISC Member and former Vice-President Dr. William Fierman, who speaks some six languages and is currently working on several others, was recently interviewed about the secrets of language acquisition. The interview can be found at [https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/life-bilingual/201512/the-secrets-successful-language-learner](https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/life-bilingual/201512/the-secrets-successful-language-learner).


Congratulations to Dr. Stephen Jones, ARISC Vice President, for being awarded the prestigious Ivane Javakhishvili International Scientific Prize. The award was made to Dr. Jones for his special contribution to Kartvelian studies. For more information, please see [https://tsu.ge/en/government/administration/departments/pr/news/dvicYVOZQYPyB?l=p=1](https://tsu.ge/en/government/administration/departments/pr/news/dvicYVOZQYPyB?l=p=1).

ARISC member Dr. Lori Khatchadourian recently published a book, *Imperial Matter: Ancient Persia and the Archaeology of Empires*. The book can be downloaded through the University of California Press Open Access publishing program at [http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/luminos.13](http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/luminos.13).

Congratulations to ARISC member Stephen Riegg, who successfully completed his PhD at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill! His dissertation is titled, *Claiming the Caucasus: Russia’s Imperial Encounter with Armenians, 1801-1894*. He is starting a position as an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Texas A&M, College Station as of Fall 2016.

ARISC President Dr. Ian Lindsay was recently featured in the local news for his work in Armenia using drones. Check out the report at [http://wfi.com/2016/09/14/purdue-anthropology-professor-looking-to-make-connections-to-old-societies/](http://wfi.com/2016/09/14/purdue-anthropology-professor-looking-to-make-connections-to-old-societies/).

News of ARISC Staff

We want to congratulate Leyla Rustamli, our Resident Director in Azerbaijan, and her family on the arrival of the newest addition to her family, Melek! You can see a photo of Leyla and her beautiful daughter, below. We wish them all the very best!

ARISC Member and Vice President Dr. Stephen Jones was awarded funding by the Shota Rustaveli Foundation for the “Oral History” project. The project was submitted by Center for Social Sciences (applicant), ARISC (foreign partner) and Ilia State University (local partner). The project encompassed organizing a week long summer school in Georgia comprising of the methodological training on how to do research in oral history. Within the project, a call for participation was announced in late spring, and a total of twelve participants (MA and PhD students, junior scholars) were selected to be trained. More on the Oral History Summer School can be found in later pages of this newsletter.

Do you have news you’d like to share about your research or publications? Please let us know!

![Imperial Matter: Ancient Persia and the Archaeology of Empires. Dr. Lori Khatchadourian](image)

![Ian Lindsay, a Purdue Associate Professor of Anthropology, flies a drone alongside colleague Alan Greene from New York University. The hilltop fortress of Aragatsi Berd is in the background, with a modern TV antenna on top of it. (Photo provided by Project ArAGATS)](image)

![Leyla Rustamli, our Resident Director in Azerbaijan, and her family on the arrival of the newest addition to her family, Melek!](image)

![Keti Gikashvili and her family! Keti, our accountant in Georgia, recently had a beautiful baby girl, Kato. Both mother and daughter are doing well!](image)
ARISC’s Representatives
The people who make everything happen abroad
Funding for these positions has been made possible by a grant from the US Department of Education

It is already my third year working with ARISC as its Armenia Branch Director. Throughout this time, we have been supporting the scientific research in and about the South Caucasus. Here I have met a lot of outstanding researchers both from overseas and within Armenia. Their interests differ, but they have a common goal of discovering the unknown and bringing answers to a lot of interesting questions which pertain to the geographic location where I live.

I enjoy working for ARISC, because this is the place for new ideas and an endless knowledge source.

Susan Marukhyan is a public relations and public education specialist based in Yerevan, Armenia. She graduated from Yerevan State Language University after V. Brusov in 1994. Later she studied in the Department of International Relations and European Studies at the Central European University (1996-1997). Since 1994 she has worked for different foreign and international organizations in the spheres of management and administration, public and media relations, and communication, research, translation, and publishing.

Armenia Representative

I am delighted to be in the ARISC team and take part in the implementation of ARISC’s critical mission in our region. This year was memorable with the visit of the External Review group – Dr. Christopher Tuttle and Dr. Joanna Regulska to the region. I recall meeting them with pleasure as it opened new horizons for me. It was interesting to see ARISC through professional, outsiders’ eyes. Furthermore their sincere conversations about scientific research in the US inspired me to restart my own PhD research with new passion. One of the things I love about being part of ARISC is this: it gives opportunity to know people which otherwise I hardly would meet elsewhere.

ARISC operates in a challenging environment in the Caucasus and I believe that this makes ARISC activities even more paramount. I wish ARISC best of luck in the years ahead.

Leyla Rustamli received a BA in Intl Relations and Intl Law from University of Languages and MA in Middle East countries from Baku State University. In 2008-09 she studied at Rothberg Intl School of Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel). She is an expected PhD in Intl Relations at Philosophy, Sociology and Law Inst of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. Leyla has been teaching various courses on foreign policies of Middle East countries, international security problems and peace and conflict studies at Azerbaijan University of Languages for 5 years.

Azerbaijan Representative

When people ask me what ARISC does, I respond that it supports research in and about the South Caucasus, provides scholarships, organizes public talks and conferences, among other programs.

But most importantly, it connects people from various backgrounds and research directions, creates a platform for interaction and collaboration.

Being part of ARISC activities and its brilliant staff is a privilege. I am grateful for having the opportunity to work in this wonderful environment and to meet great people. I truly believe that ARISC’s contribution in building the high quality scientific space in Georgia, and in the South Caucasus at large, is of great significance.

Diana Lezhava holds a BA degree in Humanities (English Language and Literature) from Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, and a MA in International Affairs from the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs. Her research interests comprise: higher education, civic education, post-soviet transformations.

Georgia Representative

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ARISC’s Interns and Volunteers

Lala Soltanli, Azerbaijan, Intern

I have had a chance to intern for ARISC during 2 months. It was something that added extra value to my life. After starting work, I began to compare the brilliant communication between the representative of ARISC and myself with other working conditions. I can never forget how she congratulated our holidays which were unfamiliar in her country. This temporary position taught me to research about my own country, find extra solutions and adjust to an open working system. This job required contacting various kinds of organizations and brought me into a wider network. One more thing that I learnt precisely was appreciating the quality of work instead of the quantity. Once a week when I would have our Skype meeting with the Director, I felt so happy that I achieved each target given to me. To be a person who has contributed to the Azerbaijan portion of ARISC was a notable point in my career. I recommend everyone to have such a colorful experience to remember for the rest of their life. I look forward to furthering the prosperous activities of the American Research Institute of the South Caucasus.

Ani Asryan, Armenia, Intern

Entering any university each student dreams to become an excellent specialist. I was not an exception but starting my education I faced a problem which made me really concerned about my future. Unfortunately, education in Armenia is rather theoretical focusing too much on theory and not enough on practice. Therefore, as a young student I looked for some practical areas where I could apply my theoretical knowledge. ARISC was a great chance for me! During these four months I worked with the ARISC team which was a great pleasure and opportunity to attain my goals. This was an ideal chance for exercising my team working skills since there is always room for development and learning there. Furthermore, it inspired me to aim high in my achievements instilling leadership, decision making skills, and building critical thinking. I especially enjoyed our Reading and Film Groups, which not only created a friendly atmosphere in and outside of ARISC but also enlarged the borders of the “ARISC family” stressing the importance of cultural awareness. All in all, I was lucky to be part of this community. I especially enjoyed working with my supervisor whose friendly manners, sense of humor and cheerful disposition motivated me to become more active and collaborate effectively. I am quite sure that the learning environment offered by ARISC will tremendously foster development and science in Armenia and in neighboring countries.

Salome Pashalishvili, Georgia, Intern

I'm so thankful for this opportunity. The working atmosphere here was very friendly and warm. The sense of being needed and being helpful for others feels great and this organization has given me this pleasure. I didn’t have a proper working experience before, so the time I’ve spent here was quite educational. Hence, I would say that this job was very beneficial for my career development and the experience I gained here will definitely help me achieve my life goals. My personal, working and language skills have improved. I feel more confident in myself and my possibilities. I met lots of interesting people and made their acquaintances, which gave me an option to become more aware of what’s going on in my country as well as abroad. Even though my internship here is over, I’m planning to stay tuned and attend events carried out by ARISC in future. Moreover I would highly recommend everyone keeping in touch with this organization and using its opportunities.

Syuzi Melkonyan, Armenia, Volunteer

I had a volunteering position with the ARISC Armenia organization in summer 2016. Before getting volunteering work in ARISC I hadn’t known about that organization. Volunteering work at ARISC Armenia helped me to enhance my education and develop new skills. That was my first experience and I’m sure that this experience and gained knowledge will help me to work in other organizations in my future life.
Natalja Czarnecki  
**Daily Encounters with “The Informal”: Regulation and the Politics of Trust at the Outdoor Food Market in Contemporary Tbilisi, Georgia**

This project is an ethnographic study of a highly contentious food provisioning institution in Tbilisi, Georgia: the outdoor food market (bazari). It considers this site as indexing a convergence of institutional interests — governmental food safety regulation, Soviet-era shopping habits, and strategies of locating high-quality foods at reasonable prices. While the bazari appears to be threatened from different positions, regarded as highly problematic by both state authorities and consumers, it remains the shopping site of choice for many. How is this possible? What politics of trust are at work here? When the consumer encounters food at the bazari, does she trust in state institutions to keep her safe? Markets? Vendors? Family members? Herself?

What modes of trust do consumers’ interfaces with food at the bazari engender, and what do these forms of trust tell us about post-socialist neoliberal citizenship and national belonging?

Insofar as consumers come to expect that state agencies will (or will not) ensure their bodily safety in a political-economic context of globalized and privatized food flows, the food consumer is also a special kind of “consumer-citizen,” positioned in a politicized, ethical relation to the nation-state in transition.

I begin by defining a sociology of the bazaar according to labor patterns and habits, exchange relations, and the daily politics of trust between vendors and consumers.

Organationally, the bazaar is divided into 3 parts in Didube (Dezertirebis, Central, and Main), and privately owned, each part with a different owner(s), individual legal persons. Vendors rent space according to placement, size, and technologies (refrigeration, fish tanks, meat prep machinery). Vendors do not have to pay a portion of earnings to bazaar owners. Food operators are divided according to food type: fruit/vegetable; meat/fish; dairy (there are also nuts/dry fruit/candy/spice vendors but we focused on “live,” high-risk products).

Food vendors are gendered in their...
organization; meats/fish are sold mainly by men; chicken, fruits/vegetables mainly by women; and dairy products by both. There are many self-identified Azeris (Georgian-speaking) selling fruits/vegetables, but the majority of our informants are Georgian.

Placement within the food supply chain was also considered, with our vendors positioned as “re-sellers,” purchasing foods from sellers removed from the production point (an exception was a meat vendor, who says he raises and kills his own animals to sell in Tbilisi).

As far as consumer/vendor relations, vendors perceive their customers to be “middle class” (i.e. “not rich, not poor”), for the most part. Although vendors are largely not aware of new, EU-oriented food safety legal codes (they commonly explain that with each new week, or with each new government – i.e. a sense of arbitrariness – there are new codes and new food safety requirements that must be followed). It is quite common for vendors – most of whom have worked at the bazaar for decades – to explain that they have the experience and knowledge of foods and their quality that newly-minted “experts” do not yet have.

Furthermore, vendors argue that their expertise is validated and recognized by the regular customers that have frequented their food stands for years. (In the case of the meat vendors and Dezertierebis, these regular customers consist of restaurant owners who come very early in the morning rather than individuals shopping for themselves and families.)

As far as sentiments of uncertainty or vulnerability of the marketplace itself, there are a few primary sites of (anticipated) contention:

(1) The imagined geopolitical orientation and trajectory of Georgia itself. Vendors tend to orient towards “Russian culture” and “values” rather than that of the EU or the US.

(2) The “unofficial” outdoor vendors positioned on the streets and sidewalks outside the main 3 market places. These vendors are seen as a threat because they do not pay rent and because they are at the front line of the consumer/market interface and can potentially charge better prices. These street vendors are connected to the 3rd site of contention, that of Georgian state politics and Tbilisi’s structure of governmental regulation.

(3) The city/municipality is responsible for regulating these illegally-positioned vendors, and vendors inside the bazaar itself (i.e. “legal” vendors) complain that the Georgian Dream coalition currently in power is responsible for both a lax approach to these outside vendors and a decidedly anti-bazaar (anti-Georgian?) approach to the food market in general, introducing the French-owned Carrefour grocery chain during its incumbency. On the other hand, vendors also remember the destruction of the former official Dezertierebis building (now the site of the Main bazaar), after which vendors were scattered across different bazaar sites and lost many of their regular customers.

“As a first-time ARISC Fellow, I am of course grateful for the opportunity to work and to share my research experience and development with both Georgian locals and with other non-Georgian scholars focusing their work in the Southern Caucasus. I would really like to see this become a long-term professional relationship, both with ARISC and with my other colleagues.”

— Natalja Czarnecki

Furthermore, we were able to organize a set of key discursive exchanges, or patterns, that reflect the relationships and conditions of familiarity and trust that characterize consumer/vendor interactions. These conditions include the questions consumers ask of vendors (sometimes none at all) about food products; the degree of proximity vendors claim to regional sites of origin; the level of intimacy and familiarity between vendors and consumers (types of familiarity and ways of expressing this vary and yet recognizable patterns, or genres, emerge in our interview data).

New perspectives gained from this research include: (1) The politics and senses of competition/anxiety within the bazaar itself, and the structured nature of contention between, e.g., vendors positioned “outside” and “inside” the bazaar itself.

(2) The basic sociology of the bazaar, and the personal, experiential histories that vendors embody and really cite each day. Our vendors have worked “there” (on that territory) for decades and many cite changes (or lack thereof) across Soviet and post-Soviet moments. For example, one vendor commented that though regulations are always changing and no one knows what the details are each day, “modern” and “pre-modern (i.e. Soviet and early 90s)” regulatory practices are the same – to keep food safe. At the same time, vendors lament the former structure of the Dezertierebis bazaar (before Saakashvili’s regulations) as being a place where their business thrived, customers were plentiful, and that has now been “rebranded” as a more “modern” (and less plentiful) space of retail. (3) The degree to which the National Food Agency is not known or really thought about by food business operators at the bazaar, and the degree of arbitrariness and randomness assigned to regulations, thought to change almost daily.

New research questions include:

(1) “Bazaar”-owned laboratories that “test” food products and verify quality, cited by vendors (meat, dairy, and even some fruit/vegetable). Details of these laboratories must be investigated and understood. Where is this/these lab(s)? What do they test for? What are their institutional histories? What does it mean, for popular senses of food safety, that vendors cite labs as a place of safety’s verification, when vendors themselves cite their own experiential knowledge and regional ties (decidedly non-techno-scientific forms of expertise that the word “laboratory” indexes) as their own form of “real” expertise? (2) The food groups we have investigated are relatively “high-risk” (i.e. perishable and potential sources of “poisoning,” as Georgians often describe food dangers). As far as popular nutrition, how are the food groups taught and information about nutrition disseminated. The Ministry of Health, working with the National Food Agency, is responsible for such public health campaigns, and I would really like to learn more about that way knowledge(s) of “nutrition” (and hence of a “healthy body”) moves and perhaps informs popular senses of risk, vulnerability, and “quality” foods in Tbilisi. What are the sociohistories of such nutritional knowledge economies?

Natalja Czarnecki is a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago. She has conducted dissertation fieldwork in Tbilisi for several years, through funding from Fulbright-Hays, the University of Chicago’s Social Sciences Division, and ARISC.
Forging Communities: Investigations of Craft Production and Spatial Organization at Late Bronze to Early Iron Age Fortress Sites

Fieldwork in Summer 2016 investigated the spatial organization of fortified settlements in Kvemo Kartli, southern Georgia. Fortified hilltop sites are a defining feature of the landscape in the Late Bronze Age (LBA) and Early Iron Age (EIA) South Caucasus, serving not just as strategic military installations, but also as centers of ritual activity and economic production.

Leading an international team of Georgian, British, and Americans, I used a combination of aerial drone photography, magnetometry, and systematic surface collection to map architectural features visible on the surface and buried beneath the earth. These techniques revealed a large fortified complex with substantial evidence of settlement off of the main citadel, providing clues for how the fortified hilltop sites of the LBA-EIA evolved into towns and cities of later periods.

Fieldwork concentrated on the two sites of Mtsvane Gora and Kavakh Tepe, exploring the spatial distribution of architecture and craft production activities through total station mapping, drone photography, magnetometry and surface collections.

At Mtsvane Gora, new work provided substantial support for the identification of a possible mine first noted in the ravine to the south of the main hill in 2014. Immediately downhill from a rocky outcrop with evidence of digging, a thick layer of fine ash sediment was identified in the eroded stream section. The fine ash sediments were noted in 2015, but further erosion in the intervening year exposed a clear section of charcoal rich deposits, which we cleaned, mapped and drew. The position and content of these ash deposits strongly suggests that they are a spoil heap of material left over from the mining activities just a few meters to the north.

Charcoal samples taken from these deposits will allow us to date the mine—an exceptional opportunity, given that mines are generally difficult to date. If the mine is contemporary with metal production at the top of the hill, this would indicate a significant degree of vertical integration in production activities—something not typical in contemporary metal production elsewhere in the South Caucasus.

Geophysical survey on the hilltop of Mtsvane Gora was complicated by the very magnetic nature of the bedrock, a somewhat surprising result given the fact that the rocks appeared for the most part to be acidic (i.e., iron-poor) igneous rocks. As such, collapsed stone architecture and bedrock anomalies hindered the identification of more subtle features like furnaces or clusters of slag.

Aside from investigations at Mtsvane Gora, a considerable portion of the 2016 field season was spent surveying a large newly-discovered site that provides an intriguing contrast to Mtsvane Gora. Situated about 5 kilometers away from Mtsvane Gora across the Debeda River, Kavakh Tepe consists of a large twin peaked hill with a series of at least four walled terraces and an extensive lower town, covering approximately 15 ha. Stone architecture is visible in places at the surface, and consists of stones ranging in size from about 15 cm to 1 m in diameter.

The distribution of ceramics in the lower town is intriguing. Instead of a uniform distribution of ceramics, there are clear clusters of ceramics arranged in an arc.
Evidence of a series of smaller satellite structures also comes from surface mapping of architecture and magnetometry. Relatively small linear stone features and larger areas with stone tumble were observed at the tops of a series of low mounds surrounding the main hill.

Magnetometry over one of these hills showed that the limited architecture visible at the surface was part of a coherent complex of walls and other features. Part of a possible enclosure wall, also visible at the surface, was identified at the northwestern edge of this low mound. The quantities of ceramics found in the areas near these walls strongly suggest that they are not burials, but rather living spaces.

The discontinuous yet extensive pattern of settlement is distinctive, and provide opportunities for comparative analysis with other sites in the South Caucasus and greater Western Asia.

The process of settlement aggregation in the Late Bronze to the Classical period has been a topic of recent interest in the archaeology of the Caucasus. Much discussion has focused on the idea that fortresses drew people and materials in from the surrounding landscape, attracting (or compelling) previously mobile groups to participate in the social order of these fortresses. Data from Kavakh Tepe may capture this process of population aggregation, illustrating how discrete social groups came together to form larger communities. It is worth comparing these results with concepts such as Greek synoikism and more recent theories of urban formation processes in Mesopotamia.

Intriguingly, no clear evidence of metallurgy was found at the site, despite substantial systematic fieldwalking. The discovery of metal production at the modestly-sized Mtsvane Gora but not at larger Kavakh Tepe might indicate that there was a certain degree of community specialization in metalworking and perhaps other forms of craft production. A significant outstanding question is the relationship between the metal producers at Mtsvane Gora and the political authorities that oversaw the construction of the large fortified complex at Kavakh Tepe.

One of the most successful components of the project was the development of collaborative relationships with Georgian archaeologists, gathering a team of scholars who work well together. Dmitri Jachvliani, an archaeologist with the Georgian National Museum who recently finished his master’s degree at Leiden University, was an invaluable member of the project. He was heavily involved with all stages of research planning and execution, from total station mapping of survey grids and surface architecture to effectively navigating the intricacies of Georgian customs with the geophysical equipment.

Aside from Dmitri, a Georgian undergraduate also participated in the project for a shorter period, assisting with systematic surface collection at the site of Kavakh Tepe.

Finally, Marine Puturidze, a professor at Tbilisi State University, also collaborated with me this year. Her knowledge of ceramic chronologies was particularly useful in analyzing the finds from the present and past seasons of work. Discussions with her helped refine my own understanding of these ceramic chronologies, and her continued involvement with the project will prove very beneficial.

Dr. Nathaniel Erb-Satullo received his Ph.D. in Anthropological Archaeology from Harvard University in May 2016. His current research focuses on metal production and technological change in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages, examining how the existence of pre-existing traditions of metal production impacted the adoption of iron.
Richard W. Tate

Linking Botanical and Cultural Conservation in Adjara, Georgia (Caucasus)

This multi-faceted ethnobotanical research project seeks to tie the conservation of Adjara’s diverse plant life to the continued viability of local people’s traditional knowledge systems.

Ethnobotany is a field aptly described as a crossroads of botany and anthropology, and the discipline’s interdisciplinary nature makes it uniquely suited to examining the complex interactions of humans and the environment.

This approach has unique potential in the South Caucasus, an area that boasts an amazing wealth of sociolinguistic groups, unique biota, and a vibrant tradition of wild plant use. Through interviews with local peoples, our research team explored how cultural features, land use choices, and environmental factors affect traditional plant use patterns in the dynamic context of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.

During the summer of 2016, our research team gathered ethnobotanical data via informal, semi-structured, and group interviews. Our goal was to visit approximately 40 study sites (i.e. villages) within Adjara, with representative samples of villages selected from the predominant vegetation types in the region. True randomization of study sites was limited by transportation logistics.

Student collaborators simultaneously translated interviews from Georgian (or rarely, Russian). If consent was given by informants, interviews were recorded for transcription. Digital cameras recorded traditional harvest, preparation, and cultural use. Plant population locality information (via GPS device) was collected in walking and field interviews. Herbarium specimens were collected of useful plants if they were growing near interview locations or were otherwise encountered.

Over the course of the field season, our research team conducted 51 interviews in total, gathering plant use information from over 70 informants. We conducted interviews in approximately 31 localities throughout Adjara, ranging from sea level to over 2,200 meters in elevation. All major ecological zones and vegetation types within the region were represented in habitats surrounding sampling sites.

The team collected 55 herbarium specimens of plants used by informants for food, medicine, cultural, and material uses, denoting local names for plants. These vouchers will be filed in herbaria at the following institutions: Georgian Institute of Botany (largest collection of the flora of the South Caucasus in the world), University of Florida (broadening this institution’s geographic scope to the South Caucasus), and Missouri Botanical Garden (largest collection of flora of South Caucasus in the US; also home to the Brown Center for Economic Botany).

Informant responses reflected a deep and diverse relationship between local peoples and the flora of the region. The majority of plants cited for food and medicinal uses are elements of ruderal areas, common weeds of yards, gardens, and roadsides. In addition, the occurrence of a number of non-native taxa (e.g. Eucalyptus [Eucalyptus globulus], American pokeweed [Phytolacca americana], Japanese silverberry [Elaeagnus umbellata]) in use citations indicates a dynamic, experimental attitude towards elements of local plant life.

While most informants cited vertical transmission of familial knowledge as the primary source of their plant use lore, many also indicated that books, other written media, and the internet were sources of their knowledge. A number of titles printed in the last decade of Soviet rule in Georgia were popular and cited repeatedly. A number of informants also utilized a series of calendars possessing daily, weekly, or monthly recipes for herbal remedies. The ubiquity of such sources has both positive and negative aspects. They are helpful as accessible and trustworthy means of gaining knowledge about local plants, especially for dilettantes, but they also have the potential to act as homogenizing forces that could potentially supplant verbally-transmitted folk knowledge.

A number of informants indicated moon phases as being important either in the gathering of plants to be used as medicine or in the application of plants for a cure. For example, a healing bath was prescribed to be performed “during three days of the month before the moon disappears,” i.e. waning crescent phase. More research is needed to discover how this is deemed to be beneficial, and how this conception fits into broader regional concepts and conventions regarding plant use.

Informants indicated that a variety of wild plants hold economic potential as food, herbal remedies, teas, and other uses. These include a number of berries [Vaccinium arctostaphylos, Rubus idaeus, Fragaria viridis], teas [V. arctostaphylos, Tilia dasystyla], nuts [Corylus avellana, Juglans regia], cooking herbs [Mentha longifolia, Satureja spicigera], resin for chewing gum [Picea orientalis], and herbal medicines [Tussilago farfara, Senecio platyphylus, Sambucus ebulus]. Further research into the economics of sustainable wild plant collection seems warranted, as development of markets for natural products could help augment the economy in rural communities of the region.

Despite occasional robust knowledge of local plants, overall the trend definitely seems to be loss of knowledge. A number of informants, indicated by their community members to be experts about local plants, indicated that they simply couldn’t remember names and uses of local plants. Mean age of informants is mid-50s, and only rarely were younger people (<30) indicated to be knowledgeable about plants. As indicated above, written sources concerning plant use means local people will continue to have access to at least a portion of local useful flora, but endemic knowledge is highly
threatened with extinction. An added benefit of our project is the documentation of local plant names and related terminology (sometimes in recorded interviews), which can be used by linguists and other researchers interested in dialectical variation of the Georgian language.

It was fascinating to note local attitudes towards Islam and the Georgian identity. Adjara is home to a substantial population of Muslim Georgians. Almost predictably, members of the oldest generation identified predominantly as Muslim. Their children’s generation (people aged 30-55) were a much more heterogeneous mix of religious identity, sometimes espousing Islam, sometimes recent converts to Christianity, and occasionally possessing an ambivalent attitude towards religion all together. Children in the youngest age brackets, under 20 years, were mostly Christian. As expected, religious adherence does not seem to be a strong predictor of the suite of plants utilized by informants.

A few new research questions resulting from this research include:

When compared to Georgians living in adjacent regions of Georgia, are there quantifiable similarities between the ethnobotanical knowledge of Adjarian Georgians and people living in adjacent Turkey?

Do unique Adjarian terms for plants show influence from the Turkish language?

Does use of non-native taxa decrease as a function of elevation and/or distance from paved roads?

In terms of working with local students, the undergraduates especially found the fieldwork useful and exciting. We talked much about their future academic plans, how to find a suitable graduate program, pursuing their passion, etc. Our work was very interdisciplinary, and so student collaborators were exposed to a variety of protocols and techniques: ethnographic interviews, plant identification, medical terminology, project logistics. Some of the collaborators had never previously had the opportunity to speak with a native speaker of English, and so got a lot of practice with their language skills.

In addition, while we did not have the opportunity to work together in the field, Ceren Kazanci (Ilia State University, 2nd Year PhD student) and I have arrangements to share data and future collaborations. I made the acquaintance and friendship of a number of Georgian researchers at Ilia State University, the Georgian Institute of Botany, and Batumi Botanica Garden. I have tentative arrangements to work again with my field collaborators during the next field season, and in actively collaborating on manuscripts related to this research effort.

These contacts will be vital for future work in the region, and I will serve as a bridging node in social networks for researchers and students of the Georgian academic scene. In short, I feel this project definitely strengthened ties between the academic communities of the US and South Caucasus, and offered some opportunity for connections to be made between isolated departments at Ilia State University — between the sociology and ecology departments, for example.

Richard W. Tate is currently a graduate student at the University of Florida. He is pursuing a Ph.D. degree through the School of Natural Resources and Environment’s Interdisciplinary Ecology program.

RICHARD TATE
ARISC FELLOW 2015-16

ARISC fellow Richard Tate engaged in fieldwork near the village of Aivazacholo (Adjara, Georgia).
Collaborative Heritage Management Grant

This ARISC program, generously funded by Project Discovery! and private donations, seeks to foster joint work between American and Armenian scholars and institutions dedicated to the proper curation and preservation of heritage materials.

Alan F. Greene and Roman Hovsepyan

Website for the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography NAS RA

The purpose of this project was the creation of a digital heritage management platform and updated official website for the Armenian Institute of Archeology and Ethnography (IAE).

Our endeavor had two primary aims: (1) to provide a location where the institute's employees can curate and review heritage materials and research results, including ethnographic notes, interviews, photos, and video; folklore collections; catalogs of archaeological materials; and pre-Soviet, Soviet, and contemporary scholarly publications related to culture and heritage; and (2) to create an online space for visitors to view information about Institute research activities, access publications and other outputs, be notified of Institute events, and contact researchers.

To these ends, we have constructed a fully functional website at http://iae.am/ and/or http://archethno.am/ that now serves as a tool for heritage management, research, and publicity of Institute activities and contacts.

As of April 2016, we have completed the construction of the site with Shirak Technologies, have populated it with a wide variety of static and dynamic content, and are occupied with the continued digitization and posting of heritage related Institute documents (as well as the daily maintenance of news and event listings).

The site is available in two languages (Armenian and English), with the Armenian side providing more content than the English side. Ongoing translation work will target enhanced English capacity as it proceeds. The heritage database allows employees to upload materials and publications in postscript, text, spreadsheet, image, presentation, and audio and video formats, which are stored in SQL tables.

Visitors to the new site can find information pertaining to the Institute membership and its organizational structure, they can read about ongoing research, and they may be notified about upcoming events, including seminars, conferences, or reports.

The platform also provides an email server, allowing all interested Institute members to maintain a professional email account with the iae.am domain. As the content and storage requirements of the new IAE website grow, the Institute administration has pledged to fund and support infrastructural enhancements and software development as needed.

Dr. Alan F. Greene is an anthropological archaeologist and a visiting scholar at New York University’s Institute for the Study of the Ancient World. He studies the political economies of the Bronze and Iron Ages in the South Caucasus, as well as instrumental and digital approaches to material culture. Dr. Roman Hovsepyan is Senior Researcher the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography (NAS, Armenia), specializing in archaeobotany and ethnobotany.
ARISC Graduate Fellowships

Funding for the Graduate Fellowships is made possible by membership fees and private donations. Awards are made up to $1,500 per Fellow.

Benjamin Bamberger

Georgian Alpinism and Soviet Tourism at the Edge of Empire

My dissertation examines the role of alpinism and other forms of touring in the construction of national identities and national space in Soviet Georgia. In particular, I focus on alpinism as a key site for the contestation and consolidation of ideas about the Georgian nation and Georgian people, between both Russian and Georgian intellectuals and between Georgian intellectuals and the mountainous populations within Georgia at this time.

Georgian alpinism began in 1923 with the first ascent of Kazbegi (known locally as mq’invarts’veri) under the leadership of Georgian mathematician Giorgi Nikoladze, which marked both the first major Soviet summit and the beginning of a dedicated Georgian alpinist community.

In the pre-war period, Georgian alpinists were an integral part of the burgeoning Soviet alpinist movement and accomplished many of the first victories of Soviet alpinism. Yet, while the Georgian alpinist community became more closely integrated with Soviet sports and tourism institutions, the goals of Georgian alpinists often remained more nationally focused, causing conflict between prominent Georgian alpinists and officials in Moscow well into the 1950s. Such conflict was exacerbated by the centralization of control and resources in Moscow, and by the continued use of Orientalizing stereotypes by Russian alpinists and tourists during their travels to the Caucasus.

Relying on archival materials, newspapers, periodicals, and books from both Tbilisi and Moscow, my research examines the ways that Georgian and Russian alpinists had conflicting conceptions of Georgia as a space and different understandings of the proper relationship with local mountainous peoples. Ultimately, my research explores the limits of Soviet anti-imperialism and the complicated ways that the Soviet project was committed to supporting forms of national autonomy while never truly escaping a belief in the “backwardness” of non-Russian peoples.

Due to the generous support of ARISC, I was able to extend my research in Tbilisi by two months where I continued to focus on print materials located at the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia. There, I examined relevant books, journals, and newspapers from the period of my research (1920’s-1950s). Although my work plan had a next delineation of reading newspapers in February and books in March, in reality both months contained significant research in both types of sources as citations from one type of source would often lead me to another.

Working this way allowed me to maximize the number of sources I was able to examine and prioritize those that were most important for Georgian alpinists during the decades of my research.

One of my central research questions concerned the relationship between Georgian alpinists in Tbilisi and their counterparts in the mountainous regions like Svaneti or Khevi. Initially, I expected to find a form of “nested orientalism” — in short, that Tbilisi-based alpinists would see their regional counterparts as more primitive and backwards and in need of cultural development in a way that mirrored Russian discourses about backwardness in the Caucasus more generally.

However, my research has shown that not only was this not the case, but in fact the opposite was true. From the very beginning of Georgian alpinism in the 1920s, Georgian alpinists from Tbilisi saw the mountainous populations as equal partners in their endeavors and often made a point to include local people in their expeditions. In many instances, they explicitly rejected the Orientalizing impulses of Russian tourists, alpinists, or researchers. The result was a productive partnership between Tbilisi and the mountainous regions that led to the development of large cadres of local alpinists, especially in Svaneti. It is clear that such collaboration was part of a Georgian nation-building project that helped to better connect places like Svaneti to the Georgian nation and which helped to lay claim to the mountainous regions as inherently Georgian. But this partnership also caused a number of conflicts within the larger Soviet alpinist community based in Moscow, which sought to develop alpinism among workers in the trade unions and which continued to conceptualize places like Svaneti as separate from the larger Georgian nation.

As a result of the ARISC fellowship, I have gained a much better understanding of the continuity in the overall goals of the Georgian alpinist community from the 1920’s until the 1950’s. After their first ascent on Kazbegi (mq’invarts’veri) in 1923, Georgian alpinists articulated a set of goals that argued for cooperation with local people, a physical and discursive conquest of specifically...
Georgian mountains, and for scientific research of the “motherland.” These goals remained clear operating principles well into the 1950’s, even as the Georgian alpinist community was more closely integrated into sport and tourism structures in Moscow. By examining Georgian language works during my fellowship, I have also been able to see the many ways that Georgian alpinists continuously memorialized past expeditions and how they used these expeditions as orienting devices for future goals. This research has allowed me to understand how Georgian alpinists themselves conceptualized what was specifically Georgian about Georgian alpinism.

My current research has confirmed that conflict between Georgian alpinists and sport and tourist institutions in Moscow centered on conflicting conceptualizations of the Georgian nation, differing relationships with the mountainous populations, and ultimately contrasting ideas about how alpinism should be developed in Georgia. In the prewar period, this conflict continued to escalate and often led to outright hostility between Georgian alpinists and officials in Moscow. Unfortunately, the sources in Tbilisi were largely silent on how this relationship changed in the post-war period, since many of the most relevant materials for this period are located in Moscow archives. As a result, I spent an additional two and a half months examining documents in Russia, where I found a remarkable continuity to the pre-war period. Here, conflict between Georgian alpinists and Russian officials continued to revolve around competing ideas of space, arguments over the proper relationship with local peoples, and disagreements over the function of a nationally minded Georgian mountaineering community more generally, insights that would not have been possible without first examining many of the Georgian language sources available in Tbilisi made possible through the ARISC Graduate Fellowship.

Benjamin Bamberger is a Ph.D. candidate in History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research interests include Georgian mountaineering, Soviet nation-building, and Soviet tourism to the Caucasus.

Daniel Fittante
Connection without Engagement: The Paradoxes of North American Armenian Return Migration

Return migration has emerged as an important subfield within migration studies. The scholarship has introduced new ways of understanding migratory trajectories by incorporating the roles of migrants’ ethnicity and imagination. As such, the existing scholarship has identified novel ways of unpacking migratory patterns whose motivations are not centered on economic mobility. But the scholarship has also opened a chasm by documenting the ethnic and sentimental motivations that generate migration and the unexpected difficulties returnees encounter once they have settled in their perceived homelands. The current research project attempts to fill that void by investigating the experiences of North American Armenians who have “returned” to Armenia. It seeks to extend the existing theoretical framework by demonstrating how ethnic returnees sustain a powerful feeling of connection to a country to which they simultaneously harbor a sense of disengagement from local practices.

The research is based upon nine months of fieldwork in Armenia’s capital city, Yerevan. I lived and worked in Yerevan for the academic year 2015-16. During this time, I worked as a lecturer at the American University of Armenia (AUA). At this institution, I undertook extensive participant-observation and conducted several interviews with colleagues – many of whom were Armenian Americans. In addition, I interviewed various Armenian Americans from a wide range of organizations. While observation and field notes played a pivotal role in my fieldwork, the content of this article comes largely from in-depth interviews.

North American Armenian activities signal a shift in the way many Armenians of North America view themselves in relation to their perceived ancestral homelands. While scholars who carried out fieldwork in the 1990s characterized many Armenian
returnees’ relationship to Armenia as passive and ambivalent, the contemporary American Armenians I interviewed understand their role as active and transformative.

What began as transnational circulations of financial assistance in the wake of earthquake and war are now beginning to crystalize into migratory circulations as more and more settle in Yerevan. And those now migrating are bringing a diverse range of new perspectives and resources. Further, North American Armenians’ transformative efforts reconcile the disparity implicit in many return migration discussions: Many return migrants wish to participate in the development of their homelands. And this development involves transforming many aspects of society.

The more active and transformative role of return migrants warrants attention in case studies treating repatriation, particularly when economic and political motivations are otherwise absent. By neglecting this dimension of return migration, the scholarship has allowed a paradox to remain unanswered.

I have gained a new understanding of what sustains return migrants after they have settled in their perceived ancestral homelands. This understanding helps clarify how return migrants can at once feel tremendously connected to their homelands while also largely disengaged from local issues.

The desire to build and brand a new country – that is, to play an active transformative role in the development and image of the home society – sustains North American Armenian returnees. For those who remain and commit their resources to Armenia over the course of many years, the builder/brander motivations help close the gap that connection without engagement opens. As such, North American Armenians introduce new ways of understanding what can sustain many ethnic returnees once they have settled.

The desire to build and brand Armenia has resulted in the founding of universities, law offices, technological centers, news media organizations, exported services, etc. But this active and transformative consideration also helps explain the paradoxical connection without engagement many return migrants experience after moving to the perceived homeland. While North American Armenian diasporans are not exhaustively representative of return migration in its various complexities and iterations, they do, I believe, provide new ways of thinking about and studying return migration.

Daniel Fittante is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (NELC) at the University of California, Los Angeles. Daniel works on contemporary Armenian immigration and political incorporation.
“creeping occupation” of the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) of Georgia’s disputed territory, South Ossetia. Contributing to two major bodies of scholarship, border studies and feminist geopolitics, this project theorizes how the geopolitics of (non)recognition produce an elastic border geography, which then functions as a tool of political leverage. An analysis of interview and observational data collected from conflict affected villages adjacent to the ABL, government and nongovernmental organizations, as well as an analysis of media, maps and policy documents are used to establish a lived and gendered geopolitics of bordering. The findings of this project connect Georgia’s engagement without recognition and Russian-Ossetian state-building to the elasticity of the ABL, which translates into the restricted freedom of movement, detention, and precarity of local populations.

The ARISC Graduate Fellowship award helped me complete the most important part of my data collection for my dissertation research on borderization. Between May and the end of August 2016, I used this award to connect “big politics” to the experience of local people. I visited and completed semi-structured conversational interviews with over one-hundred villagers in a geographically stratified sample of conflict affected communities in the Kareli and Gori Municipalities in Shida Kartli. When not in the village, I interviewed and met with different representatives and officials from government, as well as international and local organizations, who are knowledgeable and invested in the interests of conflict affected populations.

Adopting a feminist ethic of care, village interviews were arranged through invitations with local contacts and approached a in conflict-sensitive manner. Individuals and small groups were interviewed within the privacy of homes, closed gardens, and occasionally birjas. Often sharing in Georgian hospitality, interview environments were kept casual and informal. Sitting around tables of watermelon, tomato and cucumber salad, khachupuri and homemade spirits, my research assistants and I carefully asked villagers to discuss their experiences and stories of life along the line following the 2008 war.

Interview questions centered on revealing gendered perspectives on border knowledge, perceptions of in/security and vulnerability, border crossing and detention, and the impacts of borderization on livelihoods. The embodied and emotional narratives that I received helped reveal the complex precarity and special vulnerabilities of conflict affected villages adjacent to the ABL. Uncertainty of the future and the potential of “border” changes contribute to a sense of helplessness, increased vulnerability to detention and feelings of insecurity. Development is at the forefront of their stories though. Participants discuss depopulation, loss of economic opportunities, problems accessing potable water and irrigation water, poor road conditions, and limited access to healthcare. Problems most closely associated with borderization concern the annexation and loss of pasture lands (which often meant villagers could no longer rely on cattle for their livelihoods), reduced opportunities for hunting, fishing and collecting firewood, and separation from friends, family, and access to churches and cemeteries on the South Ossetian side of the ABL. Among the most exciting and interesting challenges going forward will be discerning what is “normal” in terms of vulnerability for rural Georgians and what is exceptional of these “conflict affected” communities.

Ariel Otruba is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Geography at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA. Her scholarly interests include geographies of conflict and violence, border studies, postcolonial development and feminist approaches to critical geopolitics.

“I would simply like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for this award. It was instrumental to collecting a major portion of my primary data and will thus help me finish my degree in a timely way. Thank you so much for your support of my project.”
— Ariel Otruba

The installation of green banners is used to demarcate the South Ossetian Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) and caution local people about crossing.

Photo courtesy of Ariel Otruba
Donations

ARISC is very fortunate and thankful to have received generous donations from Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Giragosian, Ann Marie Kohlligian, Sona Minakian, Anoush Miridjanian, MD, Martin and Sylva Surabian and numerous anonymous donors in support of our projects. Thank you!

In Appreciation

ARISC would like to thank all our 2015-16 representatives and staff for their tremendous work. In Armenia, Susan Marukhyan and Nina Panyan have been steadily working on growing the ARISC Armenia Branch; Leyla Rustamli has been the reliable and steady ARISC Azerbaijan Representative; and in Georgia, our activities were expertly carried out by Diana Lezhava and Ketevan Gikashvili.

Many thanks to the Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography NAS RA Pavel Avetisyan, and the researchers Gayane Shagoyan, Roman Hovsepyan, Astghik Babajanyan, Harutyun Marutyan for co-organizing ARISC’s events; Angelina Hovhannisyan of the Ministry of Education and Science of RA; the Department of Cultural Studies, Yerevan State University (YSU), Yulia Antonyan; the Centre of University Continuing Education at YSU of Languages and Social Science, Samvel Karabekyan; and Sarhat Petrosyan.

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In Georgia, Timothy Blauvelt (American Councils), Natia Mestvirishvili and Mariam Sikharulidze (CRRC), and Ketevan Gurchiani (ISU) have been instrumental in coordinating co-sponsored lectures. Many thanks also to those who provided their expertise with the Oral History Summer School: Stephen Jones, Oliver Reisner, Lika Tsuladze, Amieke Bouma, Malkhaz Tordia, Jurate Kavaliauskaite, Elene Natenadze, Irakli Khvadagiani, Davit Jishkariani, Marina Tabukashvili, Gia Tarkhan-Mouravi, and Timothy Blauvelt.

We thank Dr. Joanna Regulska (UC Davis) and Dr. Christopher Tuttle (CAORC) for conducting our external review, and for providing much-needed feedback for our continued growth.

We are eternally grateful to Cheryl Gibbs, our contact at the US Department of Education, for her tireless guidance.

And many, many thanks to everyone at the Council of American Overseas Research Centers for all their assistance: Monica Clark, Christopher Tuttle, and Heidi Wiederkehr.

We wouldn’t be able to do any activities on these pages without the constant assistance of our members! From preparing grant calls, to coordinating programming, to reading through applications, you are what keeps ARISC running! Thank you!

Progress, Problems and Possibilities of GIS in the South Caucasus: An International Workshop

May 6-7, 2016 ISAW Lecture Hall, New York University

In conjunction with the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University

In May 2016, ARISC co-sponsored a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) workshop for scholars from the U.S. and the South Caucasus in New York City, in collaboration with the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University. The workshop was co-organized by ARISC President, Ian Lindsay, and past ARISC President, Karen Rubinson. The workshop focused on the current state and possibilities for expanding the capacity for advanced spatial information technologies in the South Caucasus.

Results of the workshop discussions are being prepared as a manuscript for submission to the international journal, Antiquity, and will serve as a foundation for a broader Digital Humanities and spatial data methodological skills exchange workshop in Georgia in 2018.

The workshop is supported by the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University, with $444 of additional support or 11% of the overall cost provided by the American Research Institute of the South Caucasus (ARISC) and made possible by a grant from the US Department of Education.
Oral History Summer School: Recording Georgia’s Past and Training Scholars for the Future

September 12-18, 2016
Dedoplistskaro, Ilia State University campus
In conjunction with the Center for Social Sciences (CSS) and Ilia State University (ISU)

Today, oral history research is one of the important methods used in historiography that helps in recording and documenting the memories of eyewitnesses, preserving the unique and authentic evidence of the past that otherwise will be lost.

The importance of oral history is accepted in many academic fields — anthropology, history, sociology, political science, and gender studies are among the most notable. Like any research method, it demands scrupulous attention, rules, cross checking, and careful interpretation.

Oral history is a collaborative process in which both the participant and the researcher can discover new depths, new memories, and new perspectives. Oral history is of particular importance for societies where written history is scarce, or where it has been distorted by censorship, ideological pressures, or officially imposed narratives.

Therefore, the summer school has aimed to create a cadre of Georgian scholars in multiple disciplines who would be knowledgeable about and willing to apply the methods of oral history in their research.

As part of this summer school, thirteen junior scholars interested in oral history were trained in various methodologies, such as narrative analysis, critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistic approaches, participant observation, among others.

The Oral History Summer School was the first step in training the junior scholars who would participate in a three-year project on documenting the memories of Georgia’s recent history between 1972 and 2003.

The summer school involved scholars from Georgia, US, Germany, Lithuania, and the Netherlands. The academic supervisors of the project are Professor Stephen Jones from Mount Holyoke College, USA and ARISC Vice-President, Dr. Lika Tsubadze from the Center for Social Sciences and Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, and Dr. Oliver Reisner, Ilia State University.

The project was funded by the Rustaveli National Science Foundation, and co-sponsored by ARISC, the Center for Social Sciences (CSS) and Ilia State University.

Many thanks also to those who provided their expertise with the Oral History Summer School: Stephen Jones (ARISC), Oliver Reisner (ISU), Lika Tsubadze (CSS), Amieke Bouma (Univ. of Amsterdam), Malkhaz Tonia (ISU), Jurate Kavaliauskaitė (Vilnius University), Elene Natenedze (ISU), Irakli Khvaidogiani (Sovlab), Davit Jishkariani (Sovlab), Marina Tabukashvili (Taso Foundation), Gia Tarkhan-Mouravi, Timothy Blauvelt (ISU) and Diana Lezhava (ARISC).
EVENTS News and Events from the past year

ARISC has held numerous events this past year in the South Caucasus! This section briefly lists the many, many talks held. To read the full descriptions, see our website www.arisc.org. We are grateful to all the institutions that have co-sponsored events with ARISC. In Armenia: the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, and Yerevan State University. In Azerbaijan, the Baku American Center, and ADA University. In Georgia, the American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC), Center for Social Sciences (CSS), and Ilia State University (ISU).

WiP – “Stalinism and Islam in the Soviet Periphery: The 1929 Muslim Uprising in Ajara” by Timothy Blauvelt, American Councils and Ilia State University, Giorgi Khatiashvili, Georgia Regents University. June 3, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia.


“Kura-Araxes: The Making of a Cultural Tradition” by Dr. Mitchell Rothman, Chair of the Anthropology Department at Widener University. June 11, 2015, Yerevan, Armenia. Joint lecture organized by the Institute of Archeology & Ethnography NAS RA and ARISC.


WiP – “Azerbaijan: Discourse and Self-Perception” by Chiara Loda, Dublin City University. June 18, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia.

“Applying to Graduate Programs in the US” by Talin Lindsay, American Research Institute of the South Caucasus and Purdue University. June 23, 2015, Yerevan, Armenia.

“How to Apply to Graduate Programs in the US” by Talin Lindsay, American Research Institute of the South Caucasus and Purdue University. June 25, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia.


WiP – “Georgia as NATO’s ‘Model Pupil’” by Ryan McCarrel, University College Dublin. July 8, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia.


Joint Lecture — “Mortuary Analysis at the Late Bronze Age Site Tsaghkahovit Burial Cluster 12” by Dr. Maureen E. Marshall, University of Chicago, and “Vayots Dzor Silk Road Survey: Preliminary Results and Plans for Future Work” by Dr. Kathryn Jane Franklin, University of Chicago and ARISC Fellow, and Astghik Babajanyan, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography NAS RA. July 23, 2015, Yerevan, Armenia.


“The ‘other yerevan’ Project” by Sarhat Petrosyan, urbanlab and ARISC Fellow, and Diana Ter-Ghazaryan, University of Miami and ARISC Fellow. August 27, 2015, Yerevan, Armenia.

“A Conversation with Cinematographer Thomas Burns” with Thomas Burns, award-winning cinematographer. September 9, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia.


Film Studies Group —“Mimino” by Giorgi Danelia. October 26, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia.


WiP – “Cultures of Memory and Memory Politics in Contemporary Georgia” by Oliver Reisner, Ilia State University. November 4, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia.


EVENTS

(Continued from Page 19)

WiP – “Perceived Social Support and Adjustment Among Domestic Violence Victims” by Prof. Nino Javakhishvili, Director of the D. Uznadze Institute of Psychology and Deputy Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Ilia State University, and Maka Lordkipanidze, Ilia State University. December 9, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Reading Group — “Flight from the USSR” by Dato Turashvili. December 11, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia.


Reading Group — “Missing Girls” in the South Caucasus Countries: Trends, Possible Causes, and Policy Options” by Monica Das Gupta. December 17, 2015, Baku, Azerbaijan.


Film Studies Group — “The Other Bank” by George Ovashvili. December 18, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia.


WiP – “Nomen est Omen: Renaming of Places in the Minority Inhabited Areas of Georgia” by Maria Diego Gordon, ECMI. February 3, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.
EVENTS

(Continued from Page 20)


WiP – “War, Drugs and the Post-Soviet Era” by Dessa Bergen-Cico, Syracuse University, Visiting Fulbright Scholar. February 17, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Reading Group — “Flight from the USSR” by Dato Turashvili. February 19, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.


WiP – “Georgian Alpinism and Soviet Tourism at the Edge of Empire” by Benjamin Bamberger, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and ARISC Fellow. March 16, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.


WiP – “One Fish, Two Fish… Sampling and Data Collection for Fisheries in the Bering Sea” by Lucy Flynn. March 30, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.

BENJAMIN BAMBERGER
ARISC FELLOW, 2015-16

Overlooking Tbilisi.

Photo courtesy of Benjamin Bamberger
EVENTS

WiP – “Surfing the Post-Soviet Web with Style. Text Mining Post-Soviet de Facto States” by Giorgio Comai, Dublin City University. April 6, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.


WiP – “Being Cool in Tbilisi: Musical Taste and Scene Building on Social Media” by Brigita Sebald, California State University, Dominguez Hills. April 27, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.


Film Studies Group — “Mimino” by Giorgi Danelia. May 26, 2016, Yerevan, Armenia.


DANIEL FITTANTE
ARISC FELLOW 2015-16

Delivering his talk, “Connection Without Engagement: The Paradoxes of North American Armenian Return Migration” at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, NAS RA.

Photo courtesy of Susan Marukhyan
EVENTS

(Continued from Page 22)


WiP – “The System is Not Broke, it’s Broken: The Global Crisis in Humanitarian Aid” by Elizabeth Cullen Dunn, Indiana University Bloomington. July 6, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.


“Settlement Structure and Craft Production in Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Communities in Kvemo Kartli, Southern Georgia” by Dr. Nathaniel Erb-Satullo, Harvard University and ARISC Fellow. August 30, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.


WiP – “Information War and Social Media” by Svitlana Matviyenko, University of Western Ontario. September 21, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.

WiP – “Regulatory Affairs and the Outdoor Food Market in Tbilisi, Georgia” by Natalja Czarnecki, University of Chicago and ARISC Fellow. September 28, 2016, Tbilisi, Georgia.

BESHUMI, GEORGIA

Youths and their horses at the Shuamtoba festival.

Photo courtesy of Richard Tate
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How to Become a Member

1. Determine your level of membership: institutional, individual, student, or corporate partnership. Visit our website for details.
2. Complete the appropriate form and email to info@arisc.org or mail to the address in the sidebar. Institutional Members will need to submit a hard copy of their membership form.
3. Submit annual membership fee via post or Paypal from our website.
4. Memberships run from October 1st through September 30th.

Benefits of Membership

Members have the opportunity to shape ARISC activities and offerings in the South Caucasus by serving on a variety of committees. Access to a discussion group gives members immediate news on the latest scholarly developments and opportunities in the region.

An annual newsletter and member directory are invaluable resources for following ARISC’s work and networking with a wider community of scholars. ARISC also works to publicize members’ scholarly events that are pertinent to the South Caucasus, and offers modest funds for co-sponsoring events. ARISC has worked with several local vendors to provide discounts to members.