Welcome!

Talin Lindsay, Executive Director

It is with great pleasure that I share with you ARISC’s 2014-15 accomplishments and programming in this newsletter! Since ARISC started as a nonprofit organization in 2006, we have steadily grown in our activities, funding opportunities, and reach. This third year of our four-year grant through the US Department of Education has seen our overseas offices flourish, and our support of scholars’ research in the region continue to make an impact for junior academics.

The 2014-15 year started with the opening of the Georgia Branch in fall 2014, and was celebrated with a joint lecture on Sir Oliver Wardrop, one of the Western Diplomats and academics who contributed to the recognition of the first republic of Georgia in the beginning of the 20th Century and established one of the first Georgian Studies Centers at the University of Oxford. Stephen Jones, ARISC Vice President gave the inaugural talk (see p. 30).

The highlight of our year was a symposium on the state of higher education in the South Caucasus featuring speakers from all three states as well as the US, and moderators from the US and Saudi Arabia (p. 31). The summer 2015 event underscored ARISC’s commitment to nurturing scholarly ties in the region. Videos of the papers and discussion are available on our website.

Throughout the year, we held lectures, reading groups, and film studies groups to showcase academic research being done in the region and to bring together US and local scholars (p. 26-30).

A new addition to the annual newsletter is a section on news items from you, our ARISC members (p.4)! 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, Facebook and LinkedIn, reaching a much broader audience. Keep us in the loop about any developments on your research, from grants, to publications, to breakthroughs, and beyond.

I invite you to read our “Notes From Abroad” section starting on page 5 to learn more about the most recent scholarship being conducted in the region by the next generation of scholars of the South Caucasus. We have made several awards to graduate students and junior scholars working in a variety of disciplines. We have a steady stream of archaeologists reporting on recent finds, as well as reports from the disciplines of art history, anthropology, theology, history, political science, geography, as well as ecology.

Because ARISC is a Member in Developing Status with the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), scholars interested in applying for their Multi-Country Fellowship have been able to work in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, as well as other ORC centers around the world. In this newsletter, you will find reports by Heather Badamo and Irina Levin, whose research took them through the South Caucasus as well as Turkey and Lebanon, respectively, to construct a broader picture of cultural exchanges over time (p. 22-23).

Future newsletters will be released in the fall to better capture our fiscal year. So this newsletter features two years of fellows’ reporting on their grant activities to catch up on our timeline.

I am forever grateful to our members for always stepping in to help ARISC with planning and ideas. Thank you!

All 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 2 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!
The world of research is endless, and every new piece of knowledge is a new positive emotion that leads our life. Work in ARISC is especially interesting, as it supports research in various fields and every day adds new grains of knowledge and perspectives, brings in new challenges and gives an opportunity to meet and mix with exceptional and knowledgeable people.

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.

Working for ARISC has been very appealing and at times challenging, especially the last two years. There is the lack of strong and intensive bonds among American and Azerbaijani scholarly communities and in the last years there appeared an all obvious vacuum in academic connections of the two countries. ARISC Reading Groups, public lectures of ARISC fellows, alongside the Symposium in Tbilisi in June, 2015 have been important activities in building a bridge between the American and Azerbaijani scholars.

Leyla Rustamli received her BA in IR and International Law from Azerbaijan University of Languages and MA in Middle Eastern Studies from Baku State University. In 2008-09 she studied at Rothberg International School of Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel). She is an expected PhD in IR at Philosophy and Sociology Institute of ANAS. Leyla has been teaching various courses on foreign policies of Middle East countries, international security problems and peace and conflict studies. She is the author of a number of articles on security problems and politics of Azerbaijan and Middle Eastern countries.

ARISC is a wonderful space where people of different nationalities, backgrounds, and academic spheres can interact and find a common ground. Being a participant of its events, reading groups, film study groups, symposiums and conferences, I can say that high quality, interesting topics and professionalism is what have distinguished ARISC from other similar organizations. I feel privileged for being part of ARISC and what it does.

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. In the past she has worked at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University as an administrator of the Center for Interdisciplinary Programs and Research Development, as well as that of the TSU Institute of Gender Studies. Currently, Diana also works at the Center for Social Sciences as an Administrative Director. Her research interests are: higher education, education management and policy, post-soviet transformations.
ARISC Staff

Accountants

Ketevan Gikashvili (Georgia)
I have been working for ARISC as an accountant since November 2014 and this experience has been very pleasant for me. While working in this position I have had the opportunity to meet very interesting people from Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as from the USA. I feel that I am part of ongoing and future research and projects with professionals from various countries, many of which will have important results for Georgia and science in general.

Nina Panyan (Armenia)
In our age of permanent haste, the activity of ARISC strives to examine and understand the essence of real Armenian values of past centuries, abundant in architectural and historical monuments, and has great meaning for the future generation and should be highly praised. I am happy that I can also be helpful to ARISC.

Interns

Elen Grigoryan
Interning for ARISC Armenia Branch was one of the best experiences of my year. My first day was a lot of feeling my way around and figuring out the new environment. Thanks to my direct supervisor, who did everything to create a friendly and warm atmosphere, I integrated very quickly and my internship became a pleasant experience. My supervisor wanted me to get the most out of my internship, so I was lucky to have a nice friend and a caring teacher.

The internship taught me not to be afraid. Staying confident shows the people around you that you’re comfortable, which makes them comfortable in turn. Being an intern for ARISC Armenia Branch was an experience I will not forget for all the right reasons.

Sona Hakobyan
My internship with ARISC was a wonderful experience, which opened my eyes to situations and processes that I was unaware of. It taught me valuable skills that a classroom cannot teach. The internship helped me understand what my strengths and weaknesses are and work on them to succeed in future employment opportunities. Lastly, I learned about the importance of having a great mentor, who taught me work ethic and professionalism, guiding me on the path of my career growth.
News from ARISC Members

Book Publication by Stephen Rapp
The latest monograph by Stephen H. Rapp, Jr., ARISC President and Associate Professor at Sam Houston State University in Texas, *The Sasanian World through Georgian Eyes: Caucasus and the Iranian Commonwealth in Late Antique Georgian Literature*, was published in October 2014! Learn more at [http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781472425522](http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781472425522)

US Ambassador Visits Project ArAGATS Site!
John A. Heffern, the Ambassador of the United States of America to Armenia, visited the excavations of Project ArAGATS in July 2014! ARISC Members Adam Smith, Lori Khatchadourian, Ian Lindsay, and Alan Greene are on this project. Touring excavations at Gegharot Kurgans, Gegharot Fortress, and Tsgkhakovit, the Ambassador tweeted his experience on his twitter feed: “Nice get together tonight of @cornell archeology team, Armenia Arch Institute, World Bank, @amap, @USAIDArmenia @IDeArmenia. Great team.”

For more information, see the Aragats Foundation website for more information.

Rethinking Theories of Origin in Archaeology
Analysis of artifacts from a newly excavated site in Armenia shows that human technological innovation occurred intermittently throughout the Old World, rather than spreading from a single point of origin, as previously thought. The study, co-authored by University of Connecticut archaeology professor and ARISC Board Member Daniel Adler and more than a dozen scientists from universities worldwide, was recently published in the September 2014 issue of the journal *Science*. Also participating in the project is ARISC Member Ellery Frahm. Read more about the project in [UConn Today](http://www.uconn.edu).

ARISC Member is the New President of the Linguistic Society of America
Alice Harris, ARISC Board Member, will be the President of the Linguistic Society of America as of January 2016. Founded in 1924 to advance the scientific study of language, the Linguistic Society of America (LSA) plays a critical role in supporting and disseminating linguistic scholarship both to professional linguists and to the general public. Congratulations to Dr. Harris!

Drone Imagery of Archaeology Site
ARISC Board Member and Purdue University archaeologist, Ian Lindsay, is utilizing drone technology to capture details and data from Bronze Age field sites in Armenia. Read more at [Purdue.edu](http://www.purdue.edu).

Do you have news you would like to share with ARISC’s membership? Please send updates to admin@arisc.org.
Notes from Abroad
ARISC Grants and Fellowships
2013-14 and 2014-15

Lake Göygöl, Azerbaijan, Photo by Leyla Rustamli

Graduate Fellowships 2013-14

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

Nathaniel Erb-Satullo

“Metals, Mining, and Movement: Landscape Archaeology in Kvemo Kartli, Georgia”

Very little research on ancient landscapes has studied the intersection between metal production and settlements in mining regions. Using ARISC funds, I conducted an archaeological survey in Kvemo Kartli, mapping sites and systematically collecting ceramics. The region was chosen because it not only sits on the direct route between the Kura Lowlands and the Armenian plateau to the south, but it also contains deposits of copper, gold, and iron ores. The goal of the survey was to examine the relationship between settlement sites and metal production activities, in order to understand whether the placement of settlement sites was in part due to a desire to control access to the ore deposits. Using Google Earth imagery and on-the-ground observation, I located a large number of hilltop settlement sites, at which I subsequently conducted systematic surface collection of artifacts. Initial results show that many of the sites date to the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (c. 1500-600 BC), and several settlement sites yielded evidence of metal production. The placement of hilltop sites at key nodes within the landscape suggests that observation and perhaps control of movement through the landscape was an important factor in their placement, and the links with metal production suggests that people at these hilltop sites were involved in the production of metal.

I used Google Earth Imagery and on-the-ground observation to generate a list of possible settlement sites. After visiting these places, I conducted a systematic survey to understand in more detail the spatial and chronological extent of settlement on several different sites. I tested several different methods of systematic collection of ceramics, lithics, and metal production debris. The goal was to develop a collection method that yielded enough material to accurately assess the relative intensity of occupation in different periods, without overwhelming my recording system.

Survey results demonstrated that many hilltop sites have Late Bronze-Early Iron Age (LBA-EIA) occupation, with some
sites having almost exclusively LBA-EIA ceramics on the surface. A number of these sites are situated on hilltops overlooking major trans-regional routes, while others are situated at the entrances of narrow "dead-end" valleys which nonetheless contain ore deposits. This suggests that the sites of habitation were positioned to maximize visibility of the surrounding landscape, perhaps to monitor access to ore deposits as well as to control movement through the region.

Nathaniel recently completed his PhD in Anthropology at Harvard University.

Lara Fabian

"Between East and West in the South Caucasus: Regional Perspectives on the Roman-Parthian Borderland"

The South Caucasus is situated along a spatial fault line—a perpetual frontier of great empires and an interface between the Eurasian Steppe and the highlands of Anatolia, where local residents and political authorities have been engaged in processes of social and cultural negotiation for millennia. For this reason, it is a particularly rich site of cultural interaction and preserves a wealth of information about how borders were negotiated and empires constructed in the ancient world and beyond. My doctoral dissertation considers archaeological material from the first centuries CE in this region.

In the Roman period c. 100 BCE – 300 CE, the South Caucasus was located on the restless border between the Roman and Arsacid-Parthian (Iranian) spheres. Local dynasts built bath complexes in a Roman style, and drank from cups imported from Parthia. They wrote inscriptions in Greek declaring their ties to Rome, but had strong economic relations with Parthia, as evinced by the abundant Parthian coinage. While the borderlands of the Roman Empire have attracted much attention in recent years among scholars in Western Europe and America, the story of Roman presence in the northern reach-
that provide an excellent comparative dataset for the more locally oriented Oğlanqala material. This comparison will help to contextualize how the Şorur plain ceramics relate to Urartu.

In total, 122 ceramics were sampled, including 85 ceramics from the Oğlanqala excavations and 37 samples from survey. Nearly all samples were taken from diagnostic rim sherds, with a few exceptions occurring when a feature of a particular sherd offered unique data. When possible, I took three samples from each sherd to analyze using petrography, Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA), and Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM). All sherds will be analyzed using petrography, while NAA and SEM will be used more selectively for appropriate sub-samples. The data from these ceramics will be combined with samples collected in 2011 and 2013 for a total data set of 257 sherds.

Additionally, I conducted a seven day geological survey of Naxçivan with Deanna Grimstead (Ohio State University) and Selin Nugent (Ohio State University). The geological diversity of the Southern Caucasus makes it an excellent region to study ceramic provenience, since various geological zones have distinct signatures. Using geological maps, we selected sixteen distinct geological regions from which to sample. We drove to each area and then explored on foot to ensure that we captured the geological diversity of the target region. We surveyed Jurassic, Triassic, Devonian, Neogene and Quaternary contexts, all of the major drainage systems in Naxçivan, and developed a detailed understanding of the geological diversity in this complex region. In total, I collected 63 clay, soil, and rock samples. These samples will be analyzed with petrography and/or NAA, depending on the nature of the sample. The data from this survey will enable me provenience the raw materials used in ceramics, and thus reconstruct changing exchange networks and use of raw materials.

This trip gave me a far greater understanding of both the ceramic and geological complexity of the region. Working with Dr. Gopnik, I improved my knowledge of the ceramic typology. By studying the newly collected survey pottery in conjunction with the excavated material from Oğlanqala, we came to understand that the EIA pottery was more varied than we initially suspected, and that there was greater continuity between the EIA and MIA than I had previously realized. I came to understand that some of petrographic distinctions that I had previously drawn were the product of the limited forms and contexts I had sampled in my pilot study. With increased knowledge of the ceramic assemblage acquired on this trip, I was able to correct this bias and develop a representative sample of each period. Additionally, the geological survey gave me a better understanding of the complex geology of the region, clarifying and enriching the extremely complicated picture presented by geological maps and articles. This first-hand knowledge of particular formations will allow me to more effectively assess how ancient people may have employed their mineral resources. For example, I was able to locate several excellent clay beds close to ancient sites that were not marked in geological maps nor noted by local informants, since there has not been ceramic production in the area since the USSR. These clay beds will be analyzed using NAA and petrography, and used to reconstruct past exchange networks.

This project seeks to understand how people on the periphery of the Urartian Empire responded to imperial expansion, a shift that was initially formulated as a largely chronological comparison between the period before Urartu and after Urartu. My incorporation of spatial variation was limited to noting differences between the ceramics at the more clearly Urartian site of Sədərəkkələ to the more locally oriented Oğlanqala. Though my petrographic data suggested that the Ela pottery was locally produced, I focused on how well these ceramics stylistically fit into the regional Ela grey ware horizon without fully appreciating how varied that horizon could be. However, the variation of the Ela pottery from Sədərəkkələ settlement has compelled me to revise this perspective in favor of one that pays closer attention to local dynamics of ceramic production before and after the Urartian expansion in Şorur and Şorur? Do pre-Urartian practices of ceramic production affect how Urartian methods and styles are incorporated into local production and use in the MIA?

All 122 ceramic samples and 63 geological samples were brought back to the U.S. and have been prepared for a range of laboratory based analyses. The ceramic samples are being made into thin sections and the clay/soil samples are being fired into briquettes for petrographic analysis. NAA and SEM will follow once petrographic analysis has been conducted. It is too early to offer any conclusions since the primary analyses have not yet been conducted. However, the significantly expanded dataset created by these samples will ultimately enable me to reconstruct changing ceramic production and exchange throughout the Iron Age in Şorur, Naxçivan. The pilot study I conducted in 2011 pointed to a substantial increase in variability and exchange with the expansion of the Urartian Empire. This expanded study will allow me to confirm, reject, or complicate this model, and show how changing political relationships can engender new technological practices.

Susannah is pursuing a PhD in Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania.

ARISC has provided a crucial means of connecting scholars who work in the Southern Caucasus, and I have discovered many important resources through this network.

- Susannah G. Fishman
Graduate Fellowships 2014-15

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

Elizabeth Anderson
“Syriac Manuscripts in the Matenadaran”

My dissertation, “The Anatomy of Holiness: Mysticism and Medicine in Medieval Iraq”, is a study of several previously untranslated texts on asceticism and prayer that were written by Christian physicians in Syriac, Arabic, and Armenian during the Abbasid Caliphate. I explore the ways in which the authors' medical training informs their understanding of the spiritual life, including topics such as visions and hallucinations, fasting and Eucharistic theology, passions and humors, the imagery of gestation and childbirth, and views of the bodily resurrection. Christians living in the Abbasid Caliphate played an important role as translators of Greek medical texts into Syriac and Arabic, and a number of the most important Christian theological writers had training in medicine. While their role as translators and intermediaries between the classical world and Islam has been much studied, for the most part it is only very recently that scholars have begun to look at their own original compositions and the contributions that they made to theology in their own right.

In addition to providing wider knowledge about texts that have not previously been edited or translated, this project participates in three major scholarly conversations that are currently important within religious studies. First, it helps increase the awareness of medieval Christianity as a global phenomenon, with a far greater diversity of thought and practice than has often been acknowledged. Christianity is usually still studied as though it had been exclusively a Western European religion until missionaries from the West brought it to other regions of the world. Yet this assumption is misleading, and at a time when Christianity is growing so rapidly outside of Western Europe and North America, it becomes even more essential to understand its history in a wider variety of cultural contexts.

Second, this project is a contribution to the ongoing discussion about the relationship between religion and medicine and the role of the body in religion, which has held such prominence in the scholarship of recent decades. The modern categories of “medicine” and “religion” are ultimately a product of the Enlightenment, and it is now widely accepted that they cannot be uncritically applied to the study of pre-modern or non-Western societies. While treating fresh material, therefore, this project engages closely with the work of scholars such as Michel Foucault, Peter Brown, and Carolyn Walker Bynum.

Finally, this project offers a contribution to the study of inter-religious engagement between Christians, Muslims, and Jews. While the primary focus of my work is on Christian writings, these are examined in conversation with contemporary Jewish and, especially, Muslim sources. It is clear that many of these Christian works are very much in dialogue with Muslim writings on similar themes, and in some in-

NATHANIEL ERB-SATULLO
GEORGIA

View over kurgan field

Photo by Nathaniel Erb-Satullo
stances they do not hesitate to copy large chunks of text verbatim. For example, much of Bar Hebraeus' work *The Book of the Dove* is lifted directly from al-Ghazali, and this is not an anomalous example. This kind of borrowing occurs not only when discussing questions such as science and medicine, but also when treating topics like mysticism, asceticism, and the life of prayer. Such shared texts obviously raise many puzzling questions, not only about the relationship between Christianity and Islam, but also about the extent to which it is possible or appropriate to discuss a general concept such as "mysticism" independently of the particular religious tradition in which it is contextualized. While such questions are not quickly or easily resolved, greater attention to shared texts such as these that were utilized by more than one religious community can offer an important contribution to this discussion.

The Matenadaran has a large and significant collection of Syriac manuscripts; however, because the cataloging of these is still incomplete, these have largely been ignored by scholars. Similarly, their collection of medieval Armenian manuscripts is unrivaled by anywhere else in the world, but because the catalogues are only published in modern Armenian, these manuscripts have remained largely inaccessible to scholars from outside of Armenia.

Elizabeth Anderson is a doctoral candidate in religious studies at Yale University, where her research focuses on editing and translating Syriac Christian manuscripts.

**Alexander E. Balistreri**

"From Baku to Kars: Muslim Solidarity Across the Southern Caucasus, 1910–1922"

In 1878, tens of thousands of Ottoman Muslims, most of them speakers of Turkic dialects, were annexed to the Caucasian territories of the Russian Empire. In the following decades, diverse Muslims from Baku to Kars shared a political and cultural trajectory. My research project examines how bonds of solidarity were established among various Muslims across the southern Caucasus in the last years of the Russian Empire and the early years of Azerbaijani independence. The project looks at shared histories across current political boundaries and among various Muslim groups using archival sources from Azerbaijan.

My primary source material for this project came from the Azerbaijan Republic State History Archive (pre-1918) and the Azerbaijan Republic State Archive (post-1918). The core of my research followed the traditional approach to research in post-Soviet archives. Consulting both experts in the field and archive catalogs available on site (putevoditel'), I established a list of collections (fond) I wished to examine. Most of these collections were of documents related to the foreign or interior ministries of the governments at the time. I read over the inventory (opis') for each collection and ordered documents relevant to my research questions. Archive work during the week was supplemented by weekends at the Azerbaijan National Library, where I read local newspapers from the early twentieth century. Newspapers complemented my archival research by pointing to certain events that were likely to have a documentary trail (for example, an article from 1915 which stated that refugees from Kars submitted a petition to the Baku city council led me to search for this at the State History Archive).

First, I found that there were significant cultural and administrative barriers to the establishment of cross-Caucasian Muslim solidarity prior to World War I. These barriers included linguistic, historical, and sectarian differences as well as distinct regimes under the Russian Empire (military rule in the west versus civilian rule in the east).

Second, I found that World War I was the key turning point that facilitated a rise in expressions of solidarity between Turkophone Muslims across the South Caucasus. There were several reasons why World War I was a turning point:

The fellowship facilitated my first trip to Azerbaijan, and my interactions with archive researchers, local authorities, and new friends over the course of the month all gave me new perspectives on the country.
Muslim charity work on the Caucasian front was a means of supporting both the war and assuaging Russian Muslims’ conscience about fighting against the Ottomans; it was also supported officially by Russian imperial authorities. Muslim charity work in the southwest Caucasus was fueled by competition with imperial or Christian charity organizations. Finally, rising nationalist discourse downplayed sectarian differences among the Muslims of the South Caucasus. Third, I found that Azerbaijan continued to have an interest in Kars after World War I but that it was unable to act on this interest after the establishment of the Soviet Union. Reports discovered during my research show that Kars was a battleground for Azerbaijanis who rejected and supported their country’s “sovietization.”

Alexander is a Ph.D. candidate in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University.

Claire P. Kaiser


I used my ARISC Graduate Fellowship award to spend two weeks in Tbilisi, Georgia (28 May–13 June 2015) for research related to my doctoral dissertation in history, titled Lived Nationality: Policy and Practice in Soviet Georgia, 1945-1978. During my ARISC fellowship term, I conducted research at the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ Party Archive, which holds the collection of the Georgian Communist Party’s Central Committee; at the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia, which holds Georgian-language periodicals and secondary literature; conducted meetings with academics and residents about specific events in my research; and presented my research to a public forum through the ARISC/CRRC/American Councils’ Work-in-Progress series.

My dissertation asks how nation-ness “happens” at the level of lived experience, taking up one of the central questions posed by sociologist Rogers Brubaker in his works on nationalism and identity. Though the Soviet state was founded on principles of Marxism-Leninism, which sought ultimately to transcend national distinctions, the lived experience of the Soviet project constructed and consolidated rather than dissolved nationality among its multiethnic population. Existing scholarship on Soviet nationality policies has largely focused on the interwar era from a Moscow perspective, when the state’s distinctive approach toward managing ethnic difference was conceived and initially implemented. Relying on new archival materials in Georgian and Russian, my dissertation examines nationality from the viewpoint of the post-World War Two Georgian S.S.R., when early Soviet nation-building policies came to have lived traction among the citizenry. Drawing from theories of nationalism and approaches toward lived experience in cultural anthropology, I trace a coexistence – if a fluctuating one – of Soviet and national forms of belonging among Georgians in the postwar period. By the 1970s, Soviet policies to cultivate and, ultimately, transcend ethnonational distinctions produced a “Georgian” Georgia for the first time in modern history. This study sheds new light on shifting imperial, republican, and local center-periphery dynamics in the postwar Soviet Union and situates the subtleties of the Georgian case within a broader trajectory of twentieth-century Eurasian nation-building practices.

I use the Georgian S.S.R. as a case study to examine how citizens came to inhabit and mobilize national identities forged through Soviet state institutions in the postwar era. Building upon a question posed by Bruce Grant in his study of the Nivkh, an ethnic group on Sakhalin Island, I argue that emphasizing the difference between Soviet and Georgian identities eschews “the very mechanisms that enabled the Soviet administration to recruit a patriotic” Georgian “collective” (Grant 1995). Thus, rather than speaking of identity formation in the Georgian S.S.R., I investigate identity negotiation – between Soviet and Georgian, between that of Georgians and those non-ethnic Georgians who also inhabited the republic, between national and local, and between Soviet understandings of national identity and preexisting currents of Georgian national sentiment.

The dissertation, which is divided into two thematic sections, consists of six chapters and is based on archival research. The first section, titled “Institutions of Nation-Building,” examines the productive (e.g. crafting national histories, census nationality categories, and territorial boundaries) and extractive (e.g. ethnic deportations) Soviet practices of ethnon-territorial consolidation in late Stalin-era Georgia. This reveals not only the ways in which Soviet institutions and practices constructed nationality in Georgia, but also the active participation of Soviet Georgian academic elites and local leadership in this project. The dissertation’s second part, titled “Popularizing the Nation: Event and Everyday Life,” examines the lived experience of the developing post-Stalin national social contract among Georgia’s populace between 1956 and 1978. This section contains chapters on a pro-Stalin, national demonstration in 1956,
the postwar nationalization of Tbilisi, outreach and repatriation campaigns among Georgian diasporas in Iran and Azerbaijan, and a protest movement to protect the status of the Georgian language.

A study of postwar nationality policies in the Georgian S.S.R. engages two major bodies of scholarship. Most directly, this project intervenes temporally and regionally in a developing historiography of the Soviet Union as a multinational state. Since 1991, studies of Soviet nationality policies have flourished through the contributions of scholars such as Ronald Grigor Suny, Terry Martin, Francine Hirsch, and Yuri Slezkine, who have provided groundbreaking studies of central Moscow policy and theoretical discussions of the Marxist-Leninist approach toward nationality (Suny 1994). Similarly, geographic case studies ranging from Ukraine to Uzbekistan continue to be a dynamic avenue for exploring nationality policies as realized on the ground, though Georgia remains unexamined by comparison beyond Suny’s influential longue durée study of Georgia (Suny 2006). Much of this literature focuses on nationality policies in the early Soviet era – roughly from 1921 to 1939 – when such policies were initially conceived and first implemented. My dissertation studies how early Soviet nationality policies came to have lived traction and, therefore, how Soviet citizens inhabited these policies over the course of subsequent decades.

In addition to Russian and Soviet history, my dissertation addresses theoretical questions of nationalism and national identity. The modernist and ethno-symbolist approaches in nationalism studies, in spite of their differences, both depict a developmental understanding of nationalism and the nation-state that fails to explain how nationality as a lived category took root among Soviet citizens (Gellner 1983, Anderson 2006, Hobsbawm 1992). Following Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, viewing the nation as “a category of practice” rather than a “category of analysis” permits us to understand how the idea of the nation “can crystallize, at certain moments, as a powerful, compelling reality” (Brubaker & Cooper 2000) and “come to structure perception, to inform thought and experience, to organize discourse and political action” (Brubaker 1996, 2004). Invoking the interventions made by Katherine Verdery, Grant, Brubaker, and scholars of Soviet nationality to the theoretical discussion of nationalism and its socialist variant, my dissertation reveals precisely what the consolidation of a Georgian national culture and polity while under Soviet rule tells us more broadly about models of nationalism and our received wisdom about how these polities are organized (Verdery 1999).

As a result of my ARISC fellowship, I have further reaffirmed my project’s argument about the importance of the postwar period for the consolidation and proliferation of Georgian national identity. The archival documents and library materials I reviewed during the ARISC fellowship related to the 1978 constitution events, Georgian-Abkhaz relations in the 1970s, initiatives for public opinion polling, and the campaign to combat ancient traditions have given me a much better understanding of how Georgian politics worked in the era of “developed socialism” and the possibilities and constraints for republic-level action and innovation independent of Moscow. The new archival documents I found during my ARISC fellowship related to the 1978 constitution events, Georgian-Abkhaz relations in the 1970s, initiatives for public opinion polling, and the campaign to combat ancient traditions have been decisive in my ability to formulate my conclusions about the national consolidation of the Georgian SSR, the “developed socialism” national-social contract in Georgia, and the hegemony of the entitled nationality by the 1970s.

At the time of award, Claire was a Ph.D. candidate in modern Russian history at the University of Pennsylvania.

CLAIRE P. KAISER

GEORGIA

A pre-race supra (feast) for riders in Zevzaoba, a yearly horse race in Alvani (Kakheti)

Photo by Claire P. Kaiser
The aim of our research this year (2013) was to expand upon preliminary observations at the site of Ambroyi, a medieval settlement to the south of Arai (Bazarjugh) village in the south-central part of the Kasakh Valley, Aragatsotn. In 2013 we built upon survey data and ethnographic records and confirmed the presence of a late medieval (AD 1200-1500) village in that location. In 2014, with the support of ARISC, we returned for the task of substantively researching the nature of medieval life at this site. We opened 3 excavation units (a total of 75m2) in the southern reach of the area of preserved village. These excavations uncovered thick field stone walls (up to 1.5m across), paved working areas, and living spaces carved from the clay soil of the Kasakh Valley. These living spaces were also working spaces, as evidenced by numerous deep storage pits, and clay ovens (called tonir in Armenian). In one area of the medieval habitation, which was dated to the AD 13-14th C. using the ceramic debris found on the floors, successive ovens nested one within the other attested to an extended period of intensive production. We are still processing the data (soil samples, ceramic assemblages) which will tell us what was being produced, but it very likely was linked to the village’s relationship with the contemporary road inn or caravanatun, located 500m to the southeast.

The research project of 2014 was structured around excavations which would enable data gathering of various types and scales. Excavations were laid out based on information from satellite imagery and generated from pilot excavations in 2013. Our 5x5m excavations units were located to the north and east of the previous excavations: all units were separated by 1m barriers. These barriers, called baulks, enable us to maximize stratigraphic (soil and deposit layer) recording while still maintaining close relationships between excavated areas. We excavated according to natural levels; that is, following colors, content and contours of soils or features until they change, and recording all artifacts and samples according to those distinguished levels. Collected materials included animal bone, ceramic sherds, metal and glass artifacts. We also collected numerous 7-liter samples of soil from pits, floors, walls, and ovens: these samples were washed using 0.5mm sieves to generate macrobotanical samples, and passed through 0.5cm screens to provide heavy fraction for microstratigraphic analysis. Though these datasets and samples still await analysis, it is already possible to posit a number of conclusions from the research. The spaces excavated at Ambroyi consisted of two adjoining large rooms separated by orthogonal, thick fieldstone walls. These spaces were occupied at the same time, though the space to the south was filled in due to a collapse and then bisected with a later wall. In all, it seems that this part of Ambroyi Village was actively occupied during the late medieval period by people who were using and reshaping their space to fit their needs: they dug pits, tore down and rebuilt ovens, and built walls and their relationship to the architecture changed over time—though only perhaps a few hundred years. We still have a number of research questions which will be addressed through analyses of the collected architectural, ceramic, bone and botanical datasets: What is the temporal relationship of the architectural components uncovered this season? Specifically, how do the continuing productive activities of the northern section of the excavated area relate to the filled-and-reoccupied areas...
to the south? This question will be addressed using architectural and stratigraphic data.

What was the cuisine style of the inhabitants of Ambroyi? What kinds of tableware and dishes did they use to cook with, serve and eat from? Were these vessels made locally, or imported from other towns in Armenia? This question will be addressed using ceramic data.

What were the villagers producing in their ovens and storing in their pits? What was the nature of the production practices in this area of the village? Were they making tools? Vessels? Food? This question will be addressed using the ceramic and botanical datasets.

This research was undertaken in collaboration with several members of the RA NAS Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography. Our primary collaborator is Dr. Frina Babayan, a preeminent scholar of the late medieval period in Armenia. This summer we were also pleased to have Astghik Babajanyan as a colleague and a mentee: Astghik is currently completing her dissertation at the Institute with a focus on the material culture of the late medieval and early modern Caucasus. During her time in the field Astghik participated in all aspects of the project, actively taking part in excavations, landscape survey, pottery processing, soil flotation for botanical sampling, and analysis of washed pottery for typological and chronological analysis. Our working relationship was truly an exchange: we spent time discussing the difference between American and Armenian traditions of excavation and research, as well as the appropriateness of various strategies for the work at hand. We also took three field trips together as a project. We visited the joint American-Armenian excavations at Gegharot (a Bronze Age site in the Tsaghkahovit plain with settlement and burial contexts). As part of a preliminary discussion of ongoing collaborative work, we visited the site of the Talin caravanatun (road inn) which is contemporary with the inn at Aral/Ambroyi (and which was the focus of K. Franklin’s doctoral dissertation. Working from references in publications from the 1980’s, we successfully located the site of Ttkuni, a 14th century Ilkhanid (Mongol) castle in the eastern Ararat plain, near the site of Dvin. At both of these medieval sites (Talin and Ttkuni) we collected surface materials, took GPS points and discussed the potential for further archaeological work. We also left the washed, collected and curated ceramic, glass and metal artifacts from this year’s excavations in the medieval department at the Institute: this collection will support ongoing comparative research on the late medieval period by Astghik and other students, who are interested in developing a more systematic typology of material culture, especially plain ceramics, for this period.

Kathryn recently received her PhD in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago.

Alan F. Greene

“Late Bronze Age Political Economies in the South Caucasus: The View From Aragatsi Berd and Armenia’s Plain of Flowers”

This project conducted new archaeological excavations at the Bronze Age site of Aragatsi Berd, providing a training opportunity for an Armenian student in excavation and materials analysis techniques, and laid the groundwork for continuing doctoral-level research in the investigation of political-economic institutions in the late second millennium BC South Caucasus. Research efforts included two phases of activity in concert with the annual field research of Project ArAGATS (the Armenian-American collaboration for the Archaeology and Geography of Ancient Transcaucasian Societies): (1) excavation fieldwork at the Early (ca. 3500-2600 BC) and Late (ca. 1500-1150 BC) Bronze Age site of Aragatsi Berd in Armenia’s Tsaghkahovit Plain and (2) materials analysis and laboratory research in Yerevan following the field season.

Work at Aragatsi Berd revealed substantial remains affiliated with the second millennium BC fortress and exposed the first in situ remains of the site’s third millennium village as well. Excavations were focused on the eastern slope of the site (Operation AB4), within the second occupation terrace. A Late Bronze (LB) Age room, identified from surface indications during the 2008 field season, was located and delimited approximately two meters below the contemporary ground surface. The room’s contents, including ground and chipped stone tools, pottery fragments, wool spinning implements, artifacts crafted from animal bone, sewing notions, and jewelry beads, will be analyzed over the next year to understand how the second millennium occupation in this portion of the site compares to those more substantially documented on the northern slope. Eighteen square meters of the room were opened during the excavation season, but as much as 70–100 additional square meters may remain for future research efforts. Excavations also revealed two areas of third millennium occupation on the terrace, both intruded upon by the construction activities of second millennium BC residents.

Of particular note is a typical early third millennium abandonment floor, fea-
turing multiple broken pottery vessels and delineated by stone wall architecture. This Early Bronze (EB) Age room provides intriguing contexts for future exploration of the site’s initial occupation.

Phase One of the project (June 21st–July 27th), excavation efforts at Aragatsi Berd, were conducted by one locally hired five-worker excavation crew under the supervision of the American project director and the Armenian student project member, Levon Aghikyan (Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, NAS, RA). Mr. Aghikyan acted as a project assistant, training in the monitoring and supervision of excavation, registering of finds, drawing of excavation layers, and general archaeological fieldwork documentation. Work in excavation Operation AB4, initially opened during the 2008 field season, exposed a total of 34 square meters of early third and late second millennium BC material remains, terminating at the hill’s andesite bedrock approximately two meters below the modern surface.

Recovered archaeological materials were washed at the dig house, 20 kilometers south of the site, and ceramic materials were preliminarily assessed for chronological affiliation and vessel portion. Faunal materials were analyzed by Project ArAGATS’ Belinda Monahan and Hannah Chazin (University of Chicago), while botanical remains recovered from soil samples were examined by Roman Hovsepyan (Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, NAS, RA).

Phase Two, conducted between July 29th and August 7th, involved the curation, and analysis of the recovered archaeological materials at the ArAGATS depot at the Yerevan Municipal Museum. Materials were organized, labeled, and described in detail through canonical forms of visual materials analysis. The finds were incorporated into the existing ArAGATS storage system, which holds the Aragatsi Berd materials collected during prior excavations at the site (2006, 2008). The Project ArAGATS excavation database served as the primary recording mechanism for both field and laboratory work. Field notebook journals were also employed for note-taking and drawing, during both phases of work.

This project’s research at Aragatsi Berd achieved four primary substantive results: (1) the identification and exposure of the first substantial and coherent late second millennium architectural assemblage at the site, (2) the discovery of a significant “kurgan” cemetery, located directly south of the site in the Tsaghkahovit Plain, (3) the collection of a large assemblage of LB materials from the site’s eastern second millennium occupation, and (4) the exposure of an in situ early third millennium occupation at Aragatsi Berd that both confirmed the EB village indicated by colluvial materials collected in 2008 and established the preservation level and future research potential of the site’s third millennium deposit.

Prior research into the political-economic life of Aragatsi Berd’s second millennium inhabitants, conducted in 2006 and 2008, documented an extensive LB occupation at the site and collected over 3000 botanical, faunal, and pottery samples for laboratory analysis. The excavations associated with this work, however, did not expose significant and clearly defined architecture from LB rooms or extramural spaces, leaving the site’s LB occupation significantly less well understood than that of its more extensively excavated neighboring sites. The room walls exposed during the AB4 excavations produced well preserved and substantial LB room architecture formed from several articulating wall sections. This represents an important achievement for the LB fortress and settlement archaeology of the region.

During the first week of excavation work, a cluster of what are likely Bronze Age “kurgan” burials was observed and recorded just south of the site, immediately outside the nearest survey transect associated with the Project ArAGATS settlement survey of 1998 and 2000. This discovery, like the Gegharot kurgan cemetery discovery of 2004, may represent a significant component of the site: the interment of important members of the fortress population and burial evidence that can function as an essential, complementary component to the fortress excavations. Future work at Aragatsi Berd would benefit greatly from side-by-side fortress and mortuary investigations.

Radiocarbon dates from the initial (2008) excavation work in AB4 indicated
that the second millennium occupation there, and perhaps that of the eastern hillslope more generally, was dated slightly later than that of the more extensively excavated northern and western slopes (Operations AB1–3). Unfortunately, the incomplete and modest AB4 excavations did not produce enough material to effectively compare artifacts and chronologies across these two regions of the site. With a substantial sample of materials now collected from AB4 (botanical, ceramic, faunal, lithic, etc.), extensive spatial and temporal comparison is now possible at Aragatsi Berd.

Finally, the exposure in AB4 of two spatially distinct early third millennium BC settlement deposits, both disturbed by the construction of the late second millennium room, corroborates previous surface and colluvial indications of an EB occupation at the site. While one of these spaces was represented by more ephemeral occupation floors or “lenses,” the second context, located directly uphill of a late second millennium room wall, consisted of an in situ late third millennium room surface with associated stone architecture, broken and articulated ceramic vessels, and faunal remains. These discoveries provide critical information for the understanding of the earliest occupation at Aragatsi Berd, turning it from a simple point on the EB regional map, to a location where detailed and statistically viable data will shed light on early third millennium life in this region.

Alan is a postdoctoral scholar at the Stanford University Department of Anthropology and the Stanford Archaeology Center.

Kathryn O’Neil Weber
“Transitions in Human-Animal Interactions and Social Inequality in the Bronze Age South Caucasus”

This research project involved intensive pedestrian survey focused on an area to the northeast of Tbilisi Sea, seeking archaeological remains. The research resulted in new data, useful both to the doctoral dissertation of the grant recipient and to the conservation of archaeological sites in the face of rapid urban development. The survey team, composed of Georgian archaeologists and students, discovered several new archaeological sites, primarily dating to the Classical/Antique and Medieval periods, as well as obsidian flakes likely dating to earlier periods. In addition to these particular archaeological finds, this survey contributes to the ongoing enhancement of survey methodology in the region, tailored to respond to local conditions of topography and vegetation.

The survey area of this project was located to the northeast of Tbilisi Sea. The potential survey area was within a 25 km radius of the center of the city of Tbilisi. The first two weeks of survey involved a "windshield survey," in which several potential survey zones were considered, and previously known sites recorded by GPS. Survey zones were evaluated based on topography (whether they were flat enough for the kind of survey described in the project design), vegetation (to maximize visibility), and the presence of existing archaeological sites. The Tbilisi Sea area was chosen because it had relatively low slopes, had the least heavy vegetation, and was already known to have several kurgans (burial mounds). Six weeks of the project involved intensive pedestrian survey. The survey team walked transects at 20 meter intervals. Areas with urban development or heavy vegetation where ground visibility was low were left unsurveyed. Though mobile campsites and animal enclosures leave minimal material traces, the goal of the survey was not 100% coverage, but to use transects as a systematic sampling technique. We collected all lithics and non-modern ceramic sherd found. The geospatial location of all finds were recorded with GPS devices, then categorized and described in a database.

In the first place, this research has demonstrated that the landscape around the city of Tbilisi is highly variable in terms of the exposure of sites dating earlier than

Kathryn O’Neil Weber
GEORGIA

Surveying North of Tbilisi Sea, June 5, 2014

Photo by Kathryn O’Neil Weber
the Classical or "Antique" period. While it is difficult to identify such sites, the recovery of obsidian debitage and cores in the course of the survey suggests that certain topographical and geological conditions make site discovery more likely. The analytical phase of the research, which will be done in the autumn of 2014, aims to qualify these conditions.

As for archaeological results, the survey demonstrated that there are several sites dating to the Classical/Antique and Medieval periods within the survey area. Most of the 306 ceramic sherds collected appear to belong to these periods. In addition, 54 lithics were discovered in 40 locations, indicating sites of greater antiquity. The next phase of research aims to identify whether any of these lithics are located in proximity to Bronze Age mortuary sites. In addition to 14 previously known kurgans (for which the project recorded geographic coordinates), the survey identified 45 possible burials (kurgans, cromlechs and other graves).

In terms of survey methodology, the research performed with fellowship funds demonstrated the inadequacy of strictly systematic archaeological pedestrian survey. It became clear that one can quickly identify areas that will be unproductive of archaeological material, primarily as a result of deep soil deposits and modern dumping. In the future, I intend to deploy a more flexible survey strategy, that begins by ruling out such unproductive areas and more intensively targets areas in which existing sites have been found.

This experience has also demonstrated the necessity of including test excavations as part of future project design. While we were able to identify several important locations for further investigation, we would have been able to more clearly describe the nature of such sites with test pits. Likewise, we could better determine whether mounds were or were not burials with the removal of some of the soil covering these mounds.

A major question prompted by the results of the current research project is why the survey area (to the northeast of Tbilisi Sea) is so relatively unpopulated, despite evidence of occupation throughout the last millennium. In addition, the project has increased my interest in identifying alternative styles of kurgan construction. It remains difficult to identify kurgans in this landscape, especially given the piles of stones produced by agricultural field clearing and the remains of modern dumping. It would be beneficial to know whether there are regional variations in size (diameter and height) of kurgans. If such variation can be identified, I will attempt to do so as a part of my dissertation project.

The project allowed me to build a network of young Georgian scholars with whom I anticipate working closely in the future. We have already discussed several subsequent research projects, including further survey and excavation. As a result of these ties, I have been invited to visit several ongoing archaeological expeditions. In addition, the survey gave the opportunity for several students who had not previously engaged in this kind of systematic survey to be trained in the practices which it requires. Such training will facilitate future archaeological engagement in the area. Most importantly, this survey complements a commitment on the part of a contingent of Georgian graduate students to surveying, recording, and mapping the cultural history of the country in a comprehensive way. At the time of this report we are in the beginning stages of planning a conference dealing with survey and geospatial analysis. [N.B. The conference mentioned, ICAANE was held in April 2016 in Vienna.]

Kathryn is a doctoral candidate from Cornell University.
Maureen E. Marshall

“Lived Experience in the Late Bronze Age South Caucasus”

The Late Bronze Age in the South Caucasus is marked by a dramatic change in the socio-political sphere as populations shifted from practicing a highly mobile form of agro-pastoralism to a more settled way of life. Populations in the Late Bronze Age have been interpreted as settled or partially settled based on the relatively sudden appearance of hilltop citadels and vast burial fields consisting of clusters of “cromlech” tombs. The fortresses have been interpreted as evidence of burgeoning political institutions and centralized authority. Yet we know little about the lived experiences of individuals within the socio-political context of an early complex polity. A combination of looking at how people were treated in death through mortuary analysis with their practices in life through bioarchaeological analysis can illuminate the lived experience of subjects in early complex polities in the Late Bronze Age (1500-1150 B.C.) South Caucasus.

Previous mortuary and bioarchaeological research at the Late Bronze Age cemetery Tsaghkahovit Burial Cluster 12 (TsBC12) in the Tsaghkahovit Plain, Armenia revealed variation in individuals’ lived experience, particularly in terms of diet, movement, activity, and participation in violent activities. In addition, differences were noted in mortuary practices (location, tomb architecture, associated materials, etc.) within the cemetery. Yet these observations led to further questions about how differences in mortuary practices might relate to the individuals’ experiences in life. As a first step towards investigating this relationship, the 2015 research (funded by an ARISC Junior Research Fellowship and Project ArAGATS) sought to clarify the archaeological context in an area of the cemetery that appeared to have a complex construction history with densely packed overlapping tombs combined with terrace walls that separated the tombs into groups. Excavations were designed to investigate the construction history of the cemetery and the temporal and spatial relationships between tombs.

Tsaghkahovit Burial Cluster 12, or TsBC12, is situated 350m southeast of the Tsaghkahovit fortress and covers an area of approximately 5.5 hectares. TsBC12 is comprised of approximately 140 small (3-8m in diameter) circular stone tumuli, “cromlechs”, that are spread over two facing slopes of a narrow valley. While tombs are divided topographically by the two facing slopes and basalt outcrops, architectural “sub-clusters” are also noticeable in terms of placement and alignment of tombs. Analysis of materials from ten previously excavated tombs revealed differences between the two slopes in terms of chronology (LBI and LBII) and sub-surface construction (pit and stone cist), associated materials (undecorated bowls vs. decorated jars), as well as demonstrated variation in post-mortem treatment of the deceased (full articulation, partial articulation, disarticulation and excarnation, and burials without bodies). Bioarchaeological analysis showed that two individuals interred in Subgroup 3 on the south slope showed evidence of healed depressed fractures to the frontal bones of the crania while another showed evidence of a habitual activity, perhaps tool or weapon making. In contrast, none of the individuals interred in Subgroup 1 or 2 on the North Slope showed evidence of trauma or activity related pathologies, although this may have been the result of these individuals having young ages-at-death.

In order to illuminate both the mortuary context at TsBC12 and bioarchaeological information we conducted excavations in a topographic area of the ceme-
tory termed Subgroup 1. The project was designed according to the following research questions: (1) What is the temporal and spatial relationship between tombs and terrace walls in Subgroup 1; (2) Are the differences in mortuary architecture and associated materials between Subgroup 1 and Subgroup 2 due to changes in practices over time or the result of different mortuary practices; (3) Did any of the excavated individuals from Subgroup 1 participate in similar activities to those previously excavated in Subgroup 3? The excavation team consisted of M. Marshall, Armenian graduate student Levon Aghikyan, and eight team members from the town of Tsaghkahovit.

To investigate the temporal-spatial and architectural questions, we opened a large trench, approximately 182m², that encompassed a terrace wall, four complete circular cromlechs and 1 rectangular cist north-east of (or upslope from) the terrace wall, one complete cromlech south-west of (or downslope from) the terrace wall. The portion of the terrace wall captured by the trench consisted of seven large shaped blocks that run linearly NE-SW across the 10m of the width of the trench. The largest measured 1.8m x 1.15m x 0.8m. Many have a modified face on their downslope (southern) side.

Four of the complete tombs located upslope from the wall were selected for excavation based on their close spatial relationship to each other and feasibility of excavation in relation to time constraints. These excavations revealed a variety of surface and sub-surface architectural styles, associated materials, and possibly post-mortem treatment. “Burial 01” consisted of a “standard” cromlech (diameter = 3.8m) type and a deep oval earthen pit (1.26m x 1.02m x 1.66m). The pit contained a single primary inhumation of an individual placed in a flexed position on its right side with the head in the south-east part of the chamber and facing east. Preliminary bioarchaeological analysis suggests that this individual has an ambiguous skeletal sex and was approximately 40-50 years old at death.

Meanwhile, “Burial 04” directly next to, or north-east of Burial 01, was a standard cromlech (diameter = 3.17m) filled with cobbles on its southern half. The subsurface architecture consisted of a “cist” chamber (1.38m x 0.71m x 0.86m) with stone lined walls on three sides; the north-eastern and south-western walls were constructed from three courses of shaped medium and large blocks, while the north-western wall was constructed from four courses of shaped and lightly worked small and medium blocks. The south-eastern side was closed with a large capstone, set at an angle and topped with the cobbles. The chamber included a single primary inhumation of an individual placed in a flexed position on its right side with the head in the north-west of the chamber and facing west. The deceased’s body was placed on top of one large bowl with a second small vessel placed between the legs and chest, a jar placed west of the deceased along the south-western wall, and a final large jar was found on its side east of the deceased’s remains along the north-eastern wall. Three obsidian projectile points and a single bronze button were interred with the deceased. Based on preliminary bioarchaeological analysis, the deceased was a male individual aged 40-50 years old at the time of his death.

Just south-east or down slope from Burials 01 and 04, excavations revealed two more tombs with still different architecture. “Burial 03” was an oval shaped standard cromlech with single ring of stones measuring approximately 3.2m x 2.1m with three large capstones on the north-eastern side. Materials, including human remains and an obsidian projectile point, were found throughout the fill of the earthen pit (2.13m x 1.83m x 0.87cm). This situation suggests that the tomb may have been looted in the past. Partially articulated and disarticulated remains were found in two main concentrations in the western and eastern part of the pit. A crania was found on its right side next to a large smashed jar. Given the fractured state of the remains, additional analysis and reconstruction are necessary to determine the skeletal sex and age of the deceased individual.

To the north-east of Burial 03, “Burial 02” consisted of a rectangular surface construction. There was no surface cromlech architecture visible, instead a rectangle (2.47m x 2.8m) was constructed by a southern wall consisting of two large shaped blocks that were aligned lengthwise east-west (also separating Burial 02 from Burial 03), a northern wall consisting of 5-6 medium blocks, and eastern and western walls with long flat (lentil like) worked blocks. The interior of the rectangle was filled with cobbles. Below this first course of blocks, the subsurface architecture was a rectangular earthen pit with curved corners (1.03m x 1.5m x 1.19m). The pit contained one fully articulated primary interment with the deceased placed in a tightly flexed position on its left side with the head in the south corner of the chamber. Three vessels were placed behind the deceased’s back, along the northern wall of the pit. A single white paste bead was found underneath the crania. Based on preliminary bioarchaeological analysis, the skeletal sex of the deceased was female and the age-at-death was 35-55 years old.

Maureen is a bio-archaeologist whose work focuses on early complex polities and empires in the South Caucasus and Eurasia.

Based on my own experience, I believe that ARISC’s Junior Research grants are critical to young scholars transitioning from dissertation work to formulating the basis for new long-term research projects in the region and thus developing international scholarship of the South Caucasus. - Maureen E. Marshall
Jeanene Mitchell

“At the Confluence of Transnational and Local Actors: Transboundary River Management in Azerbaijan”

My research links multi-level governance initiatives to their effects on local participation in transboundary resource management. Using the Kura river basin of Azerbaijan and Georgia as a case study, I explain the processes of negotiation which occur among the mélange of societal organizations, state institutions, and development organizations involved in transboundary river basin governance. I particularly focus on flood management programs in the Kura basin, and how development organizations can both facilitate and impede connections between local communities and regional, national, and transnational actors.

My research methods were primarily qualitative, relying upon interviews, participant observation, process tracing, and content analysis. My research design was a combination of comparative political science and ethnographic observation.

While in Azerbaijan, I was given the opportunity to conduct an ethnography of the third phase of a UNDP-GEF aid project designed to implement integrated water resource management in the Kura basin between Azerbaijan and Georgia. Over the summer, I was included in every single meeting, interview, and email correspondence conducted by the project leaders. I was also invited to travel to Georgia for nine days with the project leadership to observe how the development community negotiates with all parties in a transboundary river project. I also traveled several times to the regions, once to observe a community engagement meeting of a UNDP flood management project in the Ismayilli region, the other time to engage in independent observation of flood-prone tributaries to the Kura near Gabala and talk with local residents. Through over 60 meetings and interviews I either attended as an observer or conducted on my own, I came to a nuanced understanding of the complex negotiations over water management which occur between development organizations, state actors, local community members, and representatives of civil society (academia, community members and formal NGOs).

My major conclusion is that development projects, in their efforts to connect local communities to national and transnational policy processes, do create an epistemic community with the capacity to pursue policy and technical measures to improve water management.

However, in this process, development projects can simultaneously end up reinforcing the institutional structures which impede local involvement in the first place. This is because development projects must collaborate with government ministries in order to conduct their projects. Particularly in Azerbaijan, different objectives among ministries related to water management create obstacles not only to transboundary water management in general, but to flood management specifically. For example, the Ministry of Energy wants to keep high water levels behind dams, but the Ministry of Emergency Situations wants to keep water levels lower to reduce the need to spill water in case of a flood. Neither ministry officially trumps the other.

Any development project collaborating with one of these ministries must be respectful of that particular ministry’s interests while trying to encourage dialogue with other ministries. Facilitating such dialogue, however, is a very delicate diplomatic dance, with only incremental gains at the national level.

At the transnational level between Azerbaijan and Georgia, negotiations are further complicated by delays in signing bilateral water agreements. These agreements affect flood management because upstream countries’ retention and release of water for hydropower can cause unexpected droughts and surges downstream. The UNDP-GEF project I observed was trying to informally move the bilateral dialogue forward while promoting bilateral projects to facilitate cooperation in the meantime.

In the areas where local communities have engaged in water and flood management initiatives, it is because there are local “champions” which had the political and social capital to take matters into their own hands, and to galvanize informal local action. Beyond water user associations which deal exclusively with pricing issues, in practice, there are very few formal local organizations dealing with water and flood management issues. The UNDP flood project I observed was trying to catalyze independent action and personal responsibility for adaptation to flooding in the face of climate change, but this is a major cultural change for villagers that expect the state to meet their needs for safety and water resource provision.

Jeanene is a PhD candidate in the Interdisciplinary Program in Near & Middle Eastern Studies at the Univ. of Washington, Seattle.
“OtherYerevan.am: A Virtual Museum of Yerevan’s Alternative Cultural Heritage”

With this project we proposed to gather, store, curate and display current and historical images, maps and other relevant information about important cultural-architectural heritage sites present (as well as recently destroyed) in the landscape of Yerevan in a web-based virtual museum, OtherYerevan.am. The primary goal of the project was to create a list of heritage sites which have heretofore been excluded from official lists of protected sites and monuments, as well as to include both authoritative and crowd-sourced content about those locations.

Between May 2014 and January 2015 we sent out a questionnaire to over 70 local architects, artists, art historians, cultural preservation specialists and other similar professionals to create an initial list of locations for the website. During that period co-PI Sarhat Petrosyan and head research assistant, Nvard Yerkanian, supervised volunteers at urbanlab Yerevan, who took photos of locations and recorded their geographic coordinates. Upon compiling the list, Nvard created a database of locations, which included additional information about each location, such as architect, year constructed, as well as archive photos (if applicable) of the locations. Between February 2015 and July 2015 we worked with web designers and developers at Helix to create OtherYerevan.am. The website helps discover and document important sites of alternative cultural heritage in the capital of Armenia. A great feature of the OtherYerevan.am website is the “Suggest a Location” capability, and we hope that residents of Yerevan continue to use this crowd-sourcing capability to submit geographic coordinates and photos of important locations. Within the project we also printed a map of OtherYerevan.am locations, with the addition of walking tours, which were walked and timed by the research assistant ahead of the website launch. We expect that this printed map will be of interest to tourists visiting Yerevan.

One key challenge in heritage management of urban and architectural sites in Yerevan is the fact that many of them, while fully worthy of protection, are not listed on official lists of cultural heritage and are therefore vulnerable. This project makes an important contribution to the preservation of Yerevan’s historical cultural heritage by revealing and recording sites that might not be under the protection of the authorities, and by harnessing the power of social media and crowd-sourcing for the collection and showcasing of valuable local knowledge, which might have no other outlet. As a pilot study, we think this project has demonstrated the effectiveness of utilizing social media, crowd-sourcing and the geoweb for the storage, collection and curation of information about important heritage sites. We plan to continue utilizing the website for these purposes, and hope to replicate the concept in other cities and town in Armenia.

Diana is a Lecturer and Director of the Geospatial Technology Program at the University of Miami.

Sarhat is Director of urbanlab Yerevan and teaches at the National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia.

Diana K. Ter-Ghazaryan
Sarhat Petrosyan

“Our experience with ARISC has been extremely positive, and we hope to be able to continue this working relationship. We will continue interfacing with ARISC, and hope to be able to participate in future grant competitions announced by this organization.”

OTHER YEREVAN

Download the latest version of Other Yerevan at http://www.otheryerevan.am/files/pdf_map/OY_map.pdf?r=509

A presentation of the project at Innovate Armenia can be viewed at armenian.usc.edu

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.
The 2015 season of research by the Vayots Dzor Silk Road Survey (VDSRS) Project took initial steps to research and record a sample section through the landscape of medieval sites and other archaeological remains which constitutes the Corridor of Silk Road Heritage in Vayots Dzor and parts of Syunik, Armenia. The Silk Road is a contemporary term for the phenomenon of travel and trade which articulated the Armenian highlands with Europe, the Near East and Asia from ancient times to the Late Medieval period. The physical remains of this historical phenomenon form part of Armenia’s greater medieval archaeological landscape, which constitutes a foundation of both cultural identity and development in the country.

During the 2015 season we focused on the northern section of the Silk Road Heritage Corridor, situated along the Arpa River and between the Nakhichevan border and the town of Yeghenadzor. During the medieval period (AD 5th-15th C) the routes which run along the Arpa River and connect the modern-day towns of Areni and Agarakadzor formed part of the wider network of roads, trails and paths which connected cities such as Partaw, Dvin, Tbilisi and Tabriz, and the coasts of the Black and Caspian Seas. The valleys and mountain slopes of this region therefore contain a dense assemblage of medieval sites and architectural remains, especially dating to the Developed and Late medieval periods (12-14th C AD) when the Proshyan and Orbelyan families constructed castles, bridges, caravanserais (road inns) and monasteries in the region.

The aim of this first season of the project was to begin site-directed survey in Vayots Dzor province, establishing a sense of the local landscape and a base for further research. We were based in Aghavnadzor village, and moved through the surrounding region recording sites and features with GPS coordinates and photographs. We were supported in the survey by Davit Davtyan, a junior researcher at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography in Yerevan. The formal and stylistic properties of this ceramic assemblage we will be able to study in greater detail using the dated ceramic materials we collected.

A primary result of the survey season is a collection of coordinate data from our handheld GPS units. This data is new and very important, because it provides very accurate location information for sites the locations of which were previously unknown, or known only in vague descriptions recorded on unpublished Institute lists such as “1-2 km N-NE from the village.”

Also, this data is important because we will use it to shift the way we understand the Silk Road as a phenomenon both in the medieval period and as it changed over time. For instance, it is already apparent that the sites and places in Vayots Dzor which were active and which participated in the social world of “Silk Road Culture” in the Developed and late medieval period were not arranged in a single line. Instead, these sites are arranged in a network through the valleys and along the mountain slopes. We will continue to develop new theories about the Silk Road culture of Vayots Dzor and the Silk Road Corridor as a phenomenon as we work with this coordinate data and combine it with ceramic data, inscriptions, and historical data.

Of the numerous sites and locales we recorded on the survey, we collected surface ceramic materials from 20 distinct sites. These surface collections ranged from a few sherds in some cases to extensive collections from eroded medieval settlements such as Anapat and Areni/Arpa.

All of the ceramic materials from these sites has been preliminarily analyzed, photographed and drawn and is currently stored in the medieval faculty of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography in Yerevan. The formal and stylistic properties of this ceramic assemblage (which was largely 12-15th century in date) will be explored in detail in our in-process publications; however, it is already possible to observe a “local style” in red painted red ware pottery for late medieval Vayots Dzor, which stands in fascinating chronological and typological relationship with ceramic types known from the same period from sites like Ani and Dvin.

Franklin is a Lecturer at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Babajanyan is a PhD student at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography NAS, RA.
Heather A. Badamo


My project examines Christian-Muslim exchange as it is manifested in the cult of the military martyrs. In an era dominated by war, from the ninth through the thirteenth centuries, image-makers in the eastern Mediterranean transformed peaceable saints into fierce warriors armed for battle: St. Theodore might be seen brandishing his sword on amulets, St. George slaying enemies of the faith in murrals, or rescuing Christians from Arabs. Tales of their efficacious icons abound in histories and hagiographic accounts. Thus, in a Syrian narrative an icon of St. Theodore inspires a ghazi descended from Muhammad to convert to Christianity.

As I argue, icons of these aggressive saints flourished especially at frontiers, places where the dominance of rival religions challenged the certainties of Christianity and contested its status as “the one true faith.” By studying icons of military saints at the frontier, this project uncovers how material and visual culture mediated diverse modes of encounter both within and between Christianity and Islam.

To date, scholarship has treated the warrior saints’ cult as a phenomenon that was fundamentally Byzantine in its genesis and orientation. Yet, the shrines of these saints and their most renowned miracles were located at or beyond the borders of the empire. Such places may have been peripheral to Byzantium, but they were central to the cultural life and dissemination of the cult.

Taking my cue from the images themselves, this project studies the visual cultures of Egypt, the Levant, and the Caucuses together with Byzantium. These Christian-Muslim frontiers, characterized by multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies, facilitated the production of images that mobilize common iconographies, diverse styles, and a militarized visual vocabulary that promoted an inflexible stance towards religious rivals. Thus, I argue that icons of warrior saints cannot be fully understood without reference to the various types of cross-cultural contact that took place between local Christian communities and those they deemed to be religious others.

This project moves beyond static disciplinary boundaries, mobilizing a large corpus of images and texts to focus on dynamic networks of encounter and exchange. The images at the heart of this study constitute an expansive category that includes both traditional objects of art historical inquiry (such as murals, icons, and manuscripts) and those more commonly regarded as the purview of material culture studies (coins, seals, weapons, and textiles) (8-9). Primary sources ranging from hagiographic works to religious polemic and geographies do not simply provide a historical context for visual material. Rather, images and texts are approached as complimentary phenomena, each of which played a role in constituting the saints, establishing patterns of interaction, and relaying an array of cultural and religious norms.

Heather is a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Art History at the University of Chicago.

Heather Badamo
Georgia

The Georgia warrior saints adhere closely to Byzantine dress and iconography, but here the saint pairs his Byzantine armor with Persian leggings.

Photo by Heather Badamo
“Uncertain Returns: Citizenship, Property and Law in the Caucasus”

My ethnographic research examines the long-term consequences of forced migration. During the course of a 12-month fieldwork period, I have worked with Meskhetian Turks (sometimes known as Ahiska Turks), a community displaced from Georgia in 1944, in Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, 3 settings that reflect its competing understandings of homeland, security, and belonging. In all 3 contexts, the central goal of this project is to analyze how Meskhetian Turks’ return and reintegration efforts are shaped by their entanglements with local, national, and international legal orders, particularly in the domains of property and citizenship. I approach these issues not only through open-ended interviews, but through the examination and discussion of legal documents and extensive participant-observer work. Throughout my research period, I have accompanied my interlocutors to Public Service Halls, hospitals, notary offices, and Interior Ministry offices, as well as joining their dinner conversations that revolve around resolving thorny legal issues for themselves and their loved ones. The data I have collected, in the form of recorded interviews, photographs, and extensive fieldnotes, represent a forcibly displaced community’s lived experience of law in the post-Soviet context. My theoretically and historically grounded analysis of the data is focused on demonstrating how overlapping legal regimes function to exacerbate or minimize uncertainty and vulnerability.

My analysis is currently in progress, but I have a number of working conclusions. Firstly, although there is a great deal of debate within the community about their own ethnic background and the concept of ethnicity or nationality, there is a broad consensus about the provision and meaning of citizenship. Many of my interlocutors have similar experiences of the generous and restrictive aspects of Soviet citizenship and have struggles with citizenship issues in the post-Soviet context. These experiences and their understanding of how the relationship between citizen and state works in western countries define their understanding of citizenship as an institution. Thus, their own recent experience with citizenship law is a source of confusion, disappointment, and uncertainty. A related conclusion is that, for those in Azerbaijan considering a return to their homeland, a lack of trust in the legal process that would, in theory, allow them to become Georgian citizens is a key impediment to the return process. The negligible number of “legal repatriates,” that is, those who have come to Georgia via the legal framework that the Georgian government created as part of its obligation to the Council of Europe, is also a strong indication that the process has been ineffective. My research further suggests that many see the stalled repatriation process as a failure on the part of their community leadership and the international human rights legal order to effectively shape relevant national laws. Finally, at a local level, I have found that it is interactions with agents of the law, rather than knowledge of the content or intentions of legislation, that leads to feelings of security and justice or defenselessness and inequity. My interlocutors had frequent and lively discussions about their experiences with police, border guards, notaries, and public service workers. Anthropology of law research on vulnerable populations in other contexts has had similar conclusions on this issue, but my research demonstrates that the incorporation and exclusion that comes out of these routine interactions, and community members’ group analysis of them, form a constantly shifting landscape. Community members are both sensitive to unfair treatment and eager to find signs of objectivity and even partiality.

In Turkey, my research on Ottoman property regimes and the Turkish media’s coverage of Soviet WWII-era deportations provided me with important perspective for my ethnographic work in Azerbaijan and Georgia. In particular, newspaper articles from the late 1980s and early 1990s were sympathetic to Meskhetian Turks as co-ethnics persecuted by the Soviets for their very Turkishness. This sympathetic attitude has certainly played a role in shaping migration to Turkey over the last 25 years. In more recent years, it has also led to the production of a number of documentaries and human-interest stories on the “forgotten history” of the deportation and its aftermath. These have been produced for a Turkish audience within Turkey, but Meskhetian Turks in Azerbaijan and Georgia, the vast majority of whom have satellite dishes that give them access to Turkish channels, have watched and subsequently discussed these productions with great interest.

Irina is a doctoral candidate in New York University’s Department of Anthropology.
Awards 2015-2016

Graduate Fellowships

In our seventh year of awarding Graduate Fellowships, 3 awards of $1,500 were made to graduate students enrolled in degree-granting programs in the US. These awards help cover travel to and/or living expenses in the Southern Caucasus. Several highly qualified applicants applied. Awards were made to the following projects:

- Bamberger, Benjamin (University of Illinois) "In the Mountains of Georgia: Alpinism, Tourism, and the Making of Soviet Georgia, 1923-1955"
- Fittante, Daniel (University of California, Los Angeles) "Connection without Engagement: The Paradoxes of North American Armenian Repatriation"
- Otruba, Ariel (Rutgers University) "The Elastic Geography of the South Ossetian Administrative Boundary Line: A Study of the Lived Geopolitics of Borderization and Creeping Occupation in Georgia"

Junior Research Fellowships

With funding from a grant from the US Department of Education, ARISC offered the Junior Research Fellowships for the third year. The goals of the fellowship are 1) to support research in and the study of the South Caucasus; 2) to select, recognize and financially support individuals early in their careers who demonstrate high potential to contribute to research in this region; 3) to support a mentoring relationship that will both develop the academic skills of the mentee and strengthen ties between the US and host country.

The following awards of up to $4,000 each were made:

- Czarnecki, Natalja (University of Chicago) "Daily Encounters with 'The Informal': Regulation and the Politics of Trust at the Outdoor Food Market in Contemporary Tbilisi, Georgia"
- Erb-Satullo, Nathaniel (Harvard University) "Forging Communities: Investigations of Early Iron Production at a Late Bronze to Early Iron Age Fortress Site"
- Tate, Richard (University of Florida) "Linking Cultural and Biological Conservation in Adjara, Georgia"

ARISC members can look forward to reports on these projects in forthcoming newsletters. ARISC sends its best wishes to the awardees for a fruitful research season!

Collaborative Heritage Management in the Republic of Armenia Grant

This is the sixth year we are offering the Collaborative Heritage Management Grant, whose purpose is to support collaborative teams in the preservation and conservation of the Republic of Armenia’s archaeological and historical heritage. Applications are being taken on a rolling basis with awards to be made the end of August 2016.

In our next issue, look for the report by ARISC CHM Fellows Alan Greene (Stanford University, USA) and Roman Hovsepyan (Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography NAS Republic of Armenia): Website for the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography NASRA.
In Appreciation

Donations

ARISC is very fortunate and thankful to have received generous donations from Ani & Robert Zakari, Ann Marie Kohlligian, Anoush Miridjanian, MD, Ardash and Shirley Daronatsy, Carl and Valerie Narssrian, Prof. John F. Cherry, Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Giragosian, Linda Shahinian & Herb Schiff, Rouben and Lida Surenian, Sona Minakian, Susie and Reuben Jamhariyan, and several Anonymous donors in support of our projects. Thank you!

In Appreciation

ARISC would like to thank all our 2014-15 representatives for their tremendous work. Susan Marukhyan expertly carried out ARISC activities at our Armenia Branch; Leyla Rustamli has been the steadfast Azerbaijan Representative; and Diana Lezhava has been steadily working to create and maintain our Georgia Branch.

Many thanks to staff members of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia: Pavel Avetisyan, Gayane Shagoyan, and Roman Hovsepian; Hamlet Melkumyan, Harutyun Marutyan, and Yulia Antonyan from Yerevan State University; Nazenie Gharibyan from the Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts; Zara Khachatryan from the Institute of Molecular Biology NAS RA; and Sarhat Petroysan from the National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia.

In Azerbaijan Ms. Shahla Khudiyeva, Director of the Baku American Center, IRC, Dr. Fariz Ismayilzade, Vice-Rector for External, Government and Student Affairs, and Dr. Anar Valiyev, Associate Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs from the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy University. Dr. Maisa Ragimova, Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, and Dr. Najaf Huseynli - Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, ANAS. And Tural Aliyev as summer Intern.

ARISC Events

Reading Groups

ARISC Reading Groups offer a unique way to build bridges between US and local scholars. Reading materials, selected by group members, are always relevant to the South Caucasus and are easily available. Our Representatives also occasionally may bring in a scholar to enhance discussions.

The groups select from fiction and non-fiction pieces alike. Among the international list of authors whose works have been read are Hovhannes Tumanyan, Aksel Bakunts, Marilyonne Robinson, Alexandre Dumas, Benjamin M. Wheeler, Ulviyya Mikayilova et al, Elene Japaridze et al, Stephen F. Jones, Kurban Said, Abraam Goulbat, Azar Nafisi, Matturin Murray Ballou, Anar, Mir Jalal Pashayev and Afaq Masud. Please join us! For upcoming events, check our website www.arisc.org

Film Study Groups

In Spring 2015 ARISC launched a new project, Film Study Groups, where contemporary as well as Soviet era movies are screened, usually followed by discussions.

The Film Study Group aims to brings Georgian and international scholars together in an informal setting to discuss and explore Georgian, as well as South Caucasian cinema. As usual, the movie screenings are followed with very interesting discussion involving the audience. The discussion concerns various topics raised in the movie or hidden behind the images. The sessions are free and open to the public. Among the movies screened with these series are: Felicita by Nutsa Aleksi-Meskhishvili, In Bloom by Nana Evtimishili and Simon Gross, Mimino by Giorgi Danelia, and others.

Writing Groups

ARISC coordinates writing groups for visiting and local academics. The first ARISC Writing Group was held in Armenia in May 2013. The group discussed two short stories by Nairi Avedissian, “School Lunch” and “Sherin,” about the author’s childhood in Egypt. Since these were unpublished the group had the privilege to be among the first readers. Are you interested in joining? This is a great motivator and opportunity to have peers offer their unique perspectives on your work, be it a publication, grant proposal, or other as yet unpublished writing. Contact our reps: armenia@arisc.org, azerbaijan@arisc.org, georgia@arisc.org
ARISC Events

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 American University of Armenia (AUA), and the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography. In Azerbaijan: the American Center, IRC, ADA University, the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, Naxçıvan Section, the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC). In Georgia: the American Councils for International Education: ACTRI/ACCELS, the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC), the Center for Social Sciences (CSS), and Ilia State University.

“Applying to Graduate Programs in the US” by Talin Lindsay, ARISC and Purdue University. June 3, 2014. Yerevan, Armenia


“Applying to Graduate Programs in the US” by Talin Lindsay, ARISC and Purdue University. June 5, 2014. Tbilisi, Georgia. The event was co-sponsored by ARISC and Center for Social Sciences

“Landscapes of Metal Production and Settlement in Kvemo Kartli, Georgia” by Nathaniel Erb-Satullo, Harvard University and ARISC Fellow. June 6, 2014. Tbilisi, Georgia. The event was co-sponsored by ARISC and Center for Social Sciences


WiP: “Peculiar Problems, Peculiar Opportunities: Armenian Refugees, Relief and Reconstruction in Early Soviet Transcaucasia” by Jo Laycock, Sheffield Hallam University. July 30, 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia

WiP: “Practicing Stalinism in the Georgian NKVD” by Timothy Blauvelt, American Councils for International Education and Ilia State University. September 17, 2014. Tbilisi, Georgia

Joint lecture of ARISC and the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of Anas: “Views from the West: Eastern South Caucasus in Greek and Latin Sources” by Lara Fabian, University of Pennsylvania and ARISC Fellow. September 24, 2014, Baku, Azerbaijan


WiP: “Transparency of Civil Society Organizations, and Why it Matters in Georgia and Beyond” by Hans Gutbrod, Transparify.org. October 1, 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia

WiP: “Attitudes Toward the Judiciary in Georgia” by Koba Turmanidze, CRRC Georgia. October 8, 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia

Joint lecture of Center for Social Sciences and ARISC: “Spaces of Stalin: Hometown Effect, Historical Legacy and the Politico-Economic Landscape” by Dr. Alexi Gugushvili, University of Oxford; Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS); Center for Social Sciences (CSS). October 13, 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia


WiP: “Constructing Social Identity: Silence and Argument in a Palestinian-Israeli Group Discussion” by Wendy Smith, California State University, San Bernardino and Visiting Fulbright Professor. October 22, 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia


WiP: “Elite Perceptions and Georgia’s Foreign Policy Towards Russia: A Comparative Analysis” by Kornely Kakachia, Levan Kakhishvili, Salome Minesashvili, Tbilisi State University. October 29, 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia

Reading Group in Yerevan! “The Circassian Slave or The Sultan’s Favorite” by Maturin Murray Ballou, continued. November 11, 2014, Yerevan, Armenia

WiP: “The Pains of Prison Reform: Violence, Trust and the Prisoner Society in Georgia” by Gavin Slade (Freie Universitat) and Vakhtang Kekoshvili (Ilia State University). November 12, 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia


WiP: “The Role and Limitations of Non-State Actors in Influencing Public Policy in Georgia: Groups, the Media and the Public in Agenda-Setting and Policy Formulation” by Nana Macharashvili, Ekaterine Basilacia, Nodar Tangijashvili, Tbilisi State University. November 26, 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia


Reading Group in Yerevan! “The Rain” and “Bakarr the First, Tsar of Georgia” from A. Goulbat’s “Caucasian Legends”. December 9, 2014, Yerevan, Armenia

WiP: “State/Party Capacity and Constraints on State Action: Operationalizing and Indexing State Capacity in Georgia and Armenia” by Dustin Gilbreath, CRRC-Georgia. December 10, 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia

WiP: “Stalin’s Russia vs. Georgia’s Stalin: Similarities and Differences in Public Attitudes” by Alexi Gugushvili (BIGSSS) and Peter Kabachnik (CUNY). December 17, 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia


Reading Group in Tbilisi! “Tales of the Caucasus: The Ball of Snow” by Alexandre Dumas. December 26 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia


WiP: “Higher Education Admissions Reform and Access to University: the Case of Georgia” by Lela Chakhaia, European University Institute, January 21, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia

Reading Group in Yerevan! “The Ball of Snow” from the “Tales of The Caucasus” by Alexandre Dumas. January 27, 2015, Yerevan, Armenia
WiP: “Emigration and Return Migration of North Caucasian Muslims in 1860-1880” by Vladimir Troyansky, Stanford University, January 28, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia

WiP: “Housing Inequalities in the South Caucasus – The Cases of Yerevan and Tbilisi” by David Sichinava, Tbilisi State University, CRRC Georgia. February 4, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia

Reading Group in Yerevan! “On Edgar Allan Poe” by Marilynne Robinson. February 10, 2015, Yerevan, Armenia

WiP: “Defiant Discourse Under an Oppressive Regime and International Solidarity: The Case of Portugal and ‘the Three Marias’” by Vera Peixoto, Utrecht University, February 18, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia

Reading Group in Yerevan! “On Edgar Allan Poe” by Marilynne Robinson, continued. February 24, 2015, Yerevan, Armenia

WiP: “Japan's Northern Borders: Spatial Epistemology and the State” by Edward Boyle, Hokkaido University, February 25, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia

Reading Group in Tbilisi! “Georgia – A Political History since Independence” by Stephen Jones. Thursday, 26 February 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia

WiP: “The Influence of Collective Memory on Reconciliation and Peace Building on the Caucasus” by Bartłomiej Krzyżtani, University of Wrocław. March 4 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia


WiP: “From Discourse to Practice: The EUu’s Migration Management Strategy in Neighboring Third Countries” by Martine Brouillette, University of Poitiers, France, March 18, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia

Reading Group in Tbilisi! “Ali and Nino” by Kurban Said. March 19, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia

WiP: “Ethnocentrism and the Use of Force in Georgia, 1990 to 2014” by Chris Anderson, University of Iowa, March 18, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia

Film Study Group in Tbilisi! “Felicita” by Nutsa Aleksi-Meskhishvili, March 26, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia

WiP: “The Myths and Realities of Being an Immigrant in Georgia: Policy and Societal Levels” by Mariam Chumburidze (IRC), Tamar Zurabishvili (ICMPD). April 1, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia


WiP: “Specific Features of the Georgian Language and Alphabet” by Nana Shavtvaladze, University of Georgia, April 22, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia
“From Baku to Kars: Muslim Solidarity Across the South Caucasus, 1878–1922” by Alexander E. Balistreri, Princeton University and ARISC Fellow. April 28, 2015, Baku, Azerbaijan

Film Study Group in Tbilisi! “In Bloom” by Nana Ekvtimishvili and Simon Gross. May 4, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia.


WiP: “Animating the City: Safavid Soundscapes in Socialist Tbilisi” by Paul Manning, Trent University. May 13, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia

WiP: “Resource Flows, Politics and Instability in the Caucasus: a Discussion on Identifying Cause” by George Welton, GeoWel Research, May 20, 2015, Tbilisi, Georgia

Reading Group in Baku! “Education of the Children with Disabilities in Azerbaijan: Barriers and Opportunities” by Ulviyya Mikayilova et.al. May 22, 2015, Baku, Azerbaijan

Opening of ARISC Georgia Branch

On December 11, 2014, ARISC organized an event dedicated to the opening of its Georgia Branch. The event was held at Ilia State University. Attendance was free, the working language was English. The event had an academic character and involved a public talk on Sir Oliver Wardrop, one of the Western Diplomats and academics who contributed to the recognition of the first republic of Georgia in the beginning of the 20th Century and established one of the first Georgian Studies Centers at the University of Oxford. The event was co-sponsored by Education and Training International, Ltd., who provided funding for the joint small publication on Wardrop, as well as the Wardrop wine specially bottled for the reception. The event was marked by the public talk of Professor Stephen Jones, ARISC Vice President, and Mr. Beka Kobakhidze, PhD student at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, who spoke about the role of Wardrop for South Caucasian states and especially, Georgia.

5th Anniversary of the Works-In-Progress Series

In 2015 ARISC in conjunction with its partner organizations, Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) Georgia and American Councils in Georgia, celebrated the 5th anniversary of the Works-In-Progress Series. Talks are organized every Wednesday, at 18:30 at the office of Eurasia Partnership Foundation and aim to provide support and productive criticism to those researching and developing academic projects pertaining to the Caucasus region. W-i-P Series are free and open to the public. It is an informal platform that gives an opportunity to local or international researches to present their ongoing research projects and receive feedback from the audience.

The 5th anniversary was marked by a presentation by Professor Kevin Tuite from the University of Montreal on his research about St. George and the impact of his life on the development of Georgian society. After the presentation a very interesting discussion was held that was followed by a small reception of cake and drinks.
The international symposium, “Education in the South Caucasus: Modernization, Innovation and Future Trends” that took place at Ilia State University (ISU) on Friday, June 19, 2015, examined past and current challenges as well as new directions and trends in educational reform in the South Caucasus.

Video of the day-long symposium, organized by the American Research Institute of the South Caucasus (ARISC), in cooperation with Ilia State University (ISU) and Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF), is now available at www.arisc.org.

The symposium aimed to identify and advance an understanding of culturally specific challenges facing higher education in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia by creating a forum for the discussion and sharing of ideas among scholars, practitioners and policy-makers. It also sought to encourage an open dialogue of best practices in developing cross-border cooperation.

Jones gave the symposium’s opening remarks, followed by Giga Zedania, ISU Rector, and Khatuna Ioseliani, Program Manager at OSGF, both of whom also provided words of welcome.

The morning session focused on “Challenges in Education” and aimed to address topics that bridged the gap between the current and future state of education relative to the opportunities and challenges for educational reform.

“The symposium, bringing together representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, showed how important higher educational reform is to the economic and political future of all three states. It showed us too, the need for regional cooperation in higher education - common problems can be solved more effectively by common effort.”

- Prof. Stephen Jones, Vice President of ARISC

The presenters at this session included Giorgi Sharvashidze, Georgian Ministry of Education, Hamlet Isaxanli of Azerbaijan’s Khazar University, and Angelina Hovhannisyan, Armenian Ministry of Education. Stephen Jones of Mount Holyoke College and Vice President of ARISC moderated the ensuing discussion.

The afternoon session addressed “Promising Directions in Education.” Speakers for this session were scholars known and recognized for their active engagement in topics ranging from innovative approaches for faculty teaching and student learning to policy planning and strategy, including Simon Janashia from Columbia University, Joanna Regulska of Rutgers University, Üzeyir Bağirov, Qafqaz University, and Samvel Karabekyan, National Team of Higher Education Reform Experts. Jane Britt Greenwood, AIA, of Prince Sultan University, moderated the discussion following these presentations.

This symposium was free and open to the public. It was supported by a Title VI grant from the US Department of Education. Specifically, $6,140 or 69% of the symposium was financed with these funds, and an additional $2,697 or 31% was financed from Open Society Georgia Foundation, and by a private donation.

Video clips of the presentations are available at http://arisc.org/?page_id=2511
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Any generally recognized academic or educational institution in the South Caucasus, or any association of such institutions that hosts ARISC in its physical space for an agreed period, may become an Overseas Institutional Member, upon application and acceptance by ARISC. Annual overseas institutional membership dues are $500.

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Any undergraduate or graduate student currently seeking a degree at an accredited university may be admitted as a Student Member, upon application and acceptance by ARISC. Student Members will have all rights and privileges of Individual Members, and they will elect one Student Director to the board. Annual student membership dues are $10.

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**Benefits of Membership**

ARISC members receive access to an online discussion group and an annual newsletter. Members can get in-country support for the logistics of conducting research and access to other scholars of the South Caucasus.

**Giving to ARISC**

ARISC welcomes your gift contributions to support its mission! Checks can be made payable to The American Research Institute of the South Caucasus or ARISC and mailed to:

Talin Lindsay
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700 W. State Street, Suite 219
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