

MICHAEL PIFER

Department of Middle East Studies
Center for Armenian Studies
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, University of Michigan, 2014

Certificate in World Literature, Institute for World Literature, Bilgi University, 2013

B.A. in Near Eastern Studies and Creative Writing, University of Michigan, 2007

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2017- **Lecturer in Armenian Language and Literature**
Middle East Studies, University of Michigan

2014 - 2015 **Manoogian Simone Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow**
Comparative Literature & Armenian Studies Program, University of Michigan

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

Kindred Voices: A Literary History of Medieval Anatolia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

Edited Volumes:

An Armenian Mediterranean: Words and Worlds in Motion, Kathryn Babayan and Michael Pifer, editors (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

Refereed Journal Articles:

“The rose of Muhammad, the fragrance of Christ: Liminal poetics in medieval Anatolia.”
Medieval Encounters 26 (2020): 285-320..

“The forgetful figure: Armenian representations of trauma in Arak’el of Tabriz and Shahan Shahnur.” The Journal of Literature and Trauma Studies 5, no. 1 (2017).

“The diasporic crane: Discursive migration across the Armenian-Turkish divide.”
Diaspora: a Journal of Transnational Studies 18, no. 3 (2009/2015).

Refereed Book Chapters:

“Reading Yakob Meghapart’s Songbook (Venice, 1513): A social and linguistic history of the first printed volume of Armenian poetry.” A Social History of Language in the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1800. Edited by Aslihan Gürbüz and Nir Shafir. (Forthcoming; volume under review by Edinburgh University Press.)

“The age of the gharib: Strangers in the medieval Mediterranean.” In An Armenian Mediterranean: Words and Worlds in Motion (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 13-38.

“Introduction: A movable Armenia.” In An Armenian Mediterranean: Words and Worlds in Motion (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 1-11.

Edited Journals:

“Entangled Literatures and Histories in the Premodern Ottoman World.” Special Issue of The Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association. Co-edited by N. İpek Hüner-Cora and Michael Pifer. Fall 2020 (Forthcoming).

Encyclopedia Articles:

“Mesrop Maštoc’,” Fifth-century inventor of Armenian alphabet, Encyclopædia Iranica, forthcoming in 2020.

Book Reviews:

“The Art of Armenia: An Introduction” by Christina Maranci, Oxford University Press, in the Journal for the Society of Armenian Studies, forthcoming in 2020.

Translations:

The Color of Pomegranates, Sergei Parajanov. (Translated from Eastern, dialectal, and Classical Armenian). Subtitles for the Criterion Collection release, 2018, in collaboration with John Gudelj and Subtext Subtitles.

“Strange/ր,” by Zahrad. (Translated from Western Armenian). Dibur. 5, Fall 2017.

“Exit without exodus” and “Aleppo, Aleppo,” contemporary poems by Maroush Yeramian. (Translated from Western Armenian). Absinthe: A Journal of World Literature in Translation. Vol. 23, 2017.

Lifeless Menagerie: The Riddles of St. Nerses Shnorhali. (Translated from Middle Armenian). In preparation for monograph-length study.

Articles in Preparation:

“Word and Sound in Sergei Parajanov’s The Color of Pomegranates,” co-authored with Marie-Aude Baronian.

“Toward an Armenian Posthumanism?” Invited contribution to edited volume Materiality and Armenian Studies, co-edited by Marie-Aude Baronian and Dzovinar Derderian.

Poetry:

“The future of the past.” Asimov’s Science Fiction. September 2014.

AWARDS AND HONORS

2016 - 2017	National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship
2015	ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award
2011 - 2014	Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellowship
2012	Agnes H. and R. A. Yarmain Research Fellowship
2010	K. Allin Luther Award in Persian, University of Michigan
2009	Foreign Language and Area Studies Award in Farsi
2007	George and Celeste Hourani Award in Arabic, Armenian, Persian, Turkish and Islamic Studies, University of Michigan
2007	Helen J. Daniels Prize for Best Essay, Hopwood Awards
2007	University of Michigan Hopwood Award, Essay Division
2006	University of Michigan Hopwood Award, Essay Division
2004	University of Michigan Hopwood Award, Essay Division

INVITED TALKS

- 2019** “**Armenians in a Persianate world: On the poetry of Kostandin Erznkats’i.**”
The Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center. New York, NY. November.
- 2017** “**Armenian riddles: Learning how to read with medieval poetry.**” Armenian Studies Program, University of Michigan. September 20.
- 2017** “**The age of the gharib: Strangers and estrangement in the pre-modern Mediterranean.**” Near Eastern Languages & Cultures, University of California, Los Angeles. March 2.
- 2017** “**The age of the gharib: Strangers and estrangement in the pre-modern Mediterranean.**” Department of History, University of California, Irvine. March 1.
- 2014** “**Community formation and cosmopolitan poetics in Middle Armenian literature.**” International Institute, University of Michigan. October 15.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Papers Presented:

- 2021** “**Seeking a Word for Grapes: ‘Diversity’ and ‘Difference’ in Aşık Paşa’s Garib-name.**” Invited panelist by Sharon Kinoshita, keynote speaker, 55th International Congress on Medieval Studies. Western Michigan University. Kalamazoo, MI. May 9-12.
- 2020** “**Weaving word and image in the films of Sergei Parajanov.**” For the workshop “Scripts, Sounds, and Songs: Mediating History in the Caucasus and Beyond” at the University of Michigan. October 2020.
- 2019** “**Re-reading the rose and nightingale: Patterns in medieval Anatolian literary production.**” 54th International Congress on Medieval Studies. Western Michigan University. Kalamazoo, MI. May 9-12.
- 2019** “**Seeking Doctrine in the Ambiguous Poetry of Medieval Anatolia.**” At the conference: “Generations and Legacies: Louise Manoogian Simone’s Vision for Armenian Studies.” University of Michigan, Sept. 13-14.
- 2018** “**Against fate: Parsing Armenian literary history from the margins.**” The Mediterranean Seminar at the University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI. October 26-27.
- 2018** “**Nerses Shnorhali’s riddles: Vernacular reading in medieval Cilicia.**” 53rd International Congress on Medieval Studies. Western Michigan University. Kalamazoo, MI. May 10-13.
- 2017** “**Doing other literary history.**” Speaker at workshop “Literature and Liminality: Exploring the Armenian In-between.” University of Michigan. December 8.
- 2017** “**The in-between aroma: Liminal poetics in medieval Anatolia.**” Invited participant at Traveling Texts and Inter-Religious Exchanges and Encounters, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany. October 17-19.
- 2016** “**Translating sound and voice: Persianate poetics in a Middle Armenian romance.**” Invited speaker at After Alexander: Classical Texts in Arabic, Persian, and Armenian. The University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI. April 18-19.
- 2015** “**Literary adaptation in medieval Armenian poetry.**” Invited speaker at the Sixth Annual Armenian Studies Program International Graduate Student Workshop. The University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI. April 17-18.
- 2014** “**Jalal al-Din Rumi and Soltan Walad’s engagement with Turkish and Greek communities in Konya.**” 49th International Congress on Medieval Studies. Western Michigan University. Kalamazoo, MI. May 8-11.

- 2013** “**Strange epistemologies: the master-student relationship of Jalal al-Din Rumi.**” 52nd annual meeting of the Midwest Medieval History Conference. Augsburg College. Minneapolis, MN. October 18-19.
- 2013** “**Oral literature and the de-figurement of cross-cultural interaction.**” Workshop on Armenian Folklore and Mythology sponsored by the Association Internationale des Etudes Arméniennes, the Society for Armenian Studies, and Harvard University. Boston, MA. August 30 - September 1.
- 2012** “**The heteroglossic stranger: literary ‘interaction’ in medieval Armenian, Persian, and Turkish literature.**” The Middle East Studies Association annual meeting. Denver, CO. November 17-20.
- 2012** “**Exile and the formation of early modern Persian and Armenian selves.**” Early Modern Migrations: Exiles, Expulsion, & Religious Refugees 1400-1700. Victoria College in the University of Toronto. April 19-21.
- 2011** “**The limits of reason: early modern Armenian print culture and the occult.**” 166th American Historical Association annual meeting. Chicago, IL. January 5-7.
- 2011** “**Whence the crane: envisioning Armenia through a global optic.**” Symposium: “The World in Armenian History, Armenia in World History.” In honor of the 30th Anniversary of the Armenian Studies Program at the University of Michigan. University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI. October 15.
- 2011** “**The threshold of dignity: performing the human in medieval Armenian and Persian wandering.**” 23rd Annual Medieval Studies Symposium. Indiana University. Bloomington, IN. April 1.
- 2011** “**The study of books, the fear of the Lord: The early modern Armenian book market.**” 165th American Historical Association annual meeting. Boston, MA. January 6-9.
- 2009** “**Encounters with the ineffable and the role of the senses in the gardens of Armenian medieval poetry.**” University of Michigan: Graduate Workshop on Armenian Literature. University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI. April.

Workshops Organized:

- 2020** “**Scripts, Songs, and Sounds: Mediating History in the Caucasus and Beyond.**” Sponsored by the Center for Armenian Studies at the University of Michigan. Co-organized with Alex MacFarlane and Armen Akbarian. Keynote address by Harsha Ram.
- 2017** “**Literature and Liminality: Exploring the Armenian In-between.**” December 2017. Sponsored by the International Institute at the University of Michigan. Co-organized with Maral Aktokmakyan.

- 2014** “**Memory, Texts, Film,**” workshop with Marie-Aude Baronian, Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies, University of Michigan. Co-Organized with Dzovinar Derderian.
- 2014** “**The Kurdish Frontier and Ottoman-Qajar Relations,**” workshop with Sabri Ateş, Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies, University of Michigan. Co-Organized with Dzovinar Derderian.
- 2013** “**Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire,**” workshop with Parvaneh Pourshariati, Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies, University of Michigan. Co-organized with Alison Vacca.

Panels Organized:

- 2020** “**Other Archives of Armenian History.**” At the workshop: “Scripts, Sounds, and Songs: Mediating History in the Caucasus and Beyond.” University of Michigan, October 9. Co-organized with Alex MacFralane and Armen Abkarian.
- 2018** “**Mediterraninity from the Edge.**” The Mediterranean Seminar, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Oct. 26-27. Co-organized with Cameron Cross.
- 2012** “**Armenia in dialogue with the Near East, 8-15th centuries.**” The Middle East Studies Association 2012 annual meeting. Denver, CO. Co-organized with Alison Vacca. November 17-20.

Discussant:

- 2021** “**Rethinking post-WWI and Armistice through the Lens of Literature and Art.**” **At the workshop:** “From Empire to Nation-State: The Ottoman Armistice, Imagined Borders, and Displaced Populations (1918-1923).” The University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI. February 18-19.
- 2019** “**Literature and Materiality.**” Tenth Annual Armenian Studies Program International Graduate Student Workshop: “Armenian Studies and Material Objects.” The University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI. April 26-27.
- 2019** “**A New Generation: Literature after the Revolution.**” At the symposium: “The Iranian Revolution and its Disciplinary Aftereffects” The University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI. February 16.
- 2016** “**Armenian Literature, Translated.**” Seventh Annual Armenian Studies Program International Graduate Student Workshop: “Translating Armenians, Armenians Translated.” The University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI. April 22.

Roundtables:

- 2019** “**Image and Sound in Sergei Parajanov’s ‘The Color of Pomegranates’.**” Roundtable with Marie-Aude Baronian and Michael Pifer, accompanying a screening of the film. The University of Michigan. Ann Arbor. February 7.
- 2018** “**An Armenian Shah-nama.**” Presented at the Mediterranean Seminar, “Things” roundtable, University of Oregon. Eugene, OR. April 13-14.

Public Lectures Organized:

- 2019-** **Garj Talk Series at St. John Armenian Church.** Sponsored by the Center for Armenian Studies, University of Michigan.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate courses designed and taught as instructor of record:

- 2020** **Middle Armenian Poetry in the Islamicate World**
Offered as independent study, History Department, University of Michigan
- 2019 - 2020** **Contemporary Short Stories in Eastern Armenian**
Offered as independent study, Center for Russian, East European, & Eurasian Studies, University of Michigan
- 2019** **Working with Medieval Manuscripts**
Graduate workshop at the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan, Armenia
- 2018** **Translating Classical Armenian Texts: Poetry and History**
The Fresno Institute for Classical Armenian Translation
University of California, Fresno
- 2017** **Classical Armenian Language and Literature**
Dumbarton Oaks and the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library

Undergraduate courses designed and taught as instructor of record:

- 2020** **From Kim Kardashian to Movses Khorenatsi: Deciphering the Armenian Experience**
Middle East Studies, University of Michigan
- 2019** **Advanced Armenian (Eastern and Western)**
Middle East Studies, University of Michigan

- 2019 - Beginning Western Armenian**
Middle East Studies, University of Michigan
- 2018 - Modern Armenian Literature**
Middle East Studies, University of Michigan
- 2017 - Intermediate Western Armenian**
Middle East Studies, University of Michigan
- 2017 - Armenian Culture and Ethnicity**
Middle East Studies, University of Michigan
- 2015 Global Apocalypse**
Comparative Literature, University of Michigan
- 2015 Life Between Borders: Travel and Transgression in World Literature**
Comparative Literature, University of Michigan
- 2010 - 2011 Writing World Literature: Beyond Disaster**
Comparative Literature, University of Michigan
- 2009 - 2010 Writing for an Academic Audience**
English Department, University of Michigan

Relevant professional development:

- 2013 University of Michigan Graduate Teacher Certificate**
Pedagogical enrichment program: <http://crlt.umich.edu/um.gtc/description>
- 2013 Facilitator of Practice Teaching Sessions**
Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- 2021-2024 Armenia Entangled: Reimagining Cultural Encounters and Connectivity in Medieval Eurasia**
European Research Council Project, Member
- 2019- Peer Reviewer**
The Journal of World History, Gorgias Press, Routledge
- 2018-2020 Book Review Editor**
Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies

