

Foreword

Essays in Medieval Armenian history and literature in honour of Hamlet L. Petrosyan

The remarkable professional career of Prof. Hamlet L. Petrosyan spanning over approximately five decades stands as a testament to dedication, scholarly excellence, and unwavering commitment to cultural heritage of Armenia. Born in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), a fact that would profoundly influence his life's trajectory, Prof. Petrosyan's journey through academic institutions and system of higher education has been both unique and exemplary. After graduating from the Department of Archaeology at Yerevan State University, he continued his academic career as a PhD student under the supervision of Prof. Babken Arakelyan, member of Academy of Sciences, writing his dissertation under this distinguished mentor's guidance. This formative academic relationship helped shape Professor Petrosyan's methodological approach and instilled in him a deep commitment to the study of medieval Armenian culture – a passion that would define his scholarly pursuits.

From his earliest years as a researcher during the late Soviet years, Prof. Petrosyan nurtured a dream that he often recalls: 'When we were researching *khachkars* (Armenian cross-stones) in Hadrut and Martakert with Artur Mkrtchyan, we had one dream – to graduate from university and return to Artsakh'. True to his word, he did return for research purposes, dedicating a significant portion of his 50-year professional career to studying the cultural heritage of Artsakh. His extensive fieldwork across the region has resulted in groundbreaking discoveries that have reshaped our understanding of Armenian medieval culture and architecture.

As the head of archaeological expeditions to numerous historical sites, Prof. Petrosyan has uncovered invaluable artifacts and structures that illuminate Armenia's rich past. His expertise in Armenian cross-stones has established him as a leading authority in this field, contributing significantly to the preservation and documentation of these unique cultural monuments. His methodological approach combines archaeological precision with a profound understanding of cultural context, allowing him to bridge material findings with their historical significance.

The year 2005 became a turning point in Petrosyan's academic career: he discovered the Antique-period city of Tigranakert in Artsakh and devoted to its excavations fifteen years of his life.

Since 2020, Prof. Petrosyan, together with his students and colleagues, has initiated the *Monument Watch*, an independent academic platform which, over the past five years, has presented the rich cultural heritage of Artsakh while maintaining academic neutrality and integrity.

Prof. Petrosyan's colleagues and students recognize him not only for his scholarly achievements but also for his unwavering dedication to mentorship and knowledge sharing. His generous spirit in guiding young researchers and his collaborative approach to academic projects have fostered a vibrant community of scholars dedicated to Armenian cultural studies.

On the occasion of his distinguished career, this tribute acknowledges Hamlet's profound contribution to Armenian archaeology, medieval studies, and cultural heritage preservation and dissemination.

The Volume Editors emphasize the efforts of Nzhdeh Yeranyan, a former student of Prof. Petrosyan, to bring together the colleagues from Italy, France, the United States, the Russian Federation, Islamic Republic of Iran, Georgia, and Armenia, and initiate the publication of papers in Medieval Armenian history and literature honouring Hamlet Petrosyan on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

Volume Editors