



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM | DIPARTIMENTO
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA | DI STORIA CULTURE CIVILTÀ



MAPPING A SYMBOLISED MEMORY

THE *TABULA CHOROGRAPHICA ARMENICA* AND THE CROSS-CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY OF ARMENIAN HOLY PLACES BETWEEN HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Four seminars held by Prof. Nazenie Garibian

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Aula Magna, University Library of Bologna – Aula Gambi, P.za San Giovanni in Monte, 2

The monumental manuscript map *Tabula Chorographica Armenica* (BUB, rot. 24) is considered one of the most important discoveries in the Library of Bologna University of recent decades. Commissioned in Constantinople by Luigi Ferdinando Marsili in 1691 and created by a famous learned man, Eremia Çelepi Keomurtchian, it is an extraordinary valuable document on several levels. Neither a real geographical/topographic map, nor featuring Armenia or other countries as historical-political entities, the *Tabula* rather represents a unique *onomasticon* of crystalized sacred traditions and cross-cultural shared heritage. Through more than 800 watercolour images and signs, accompanied with explanatory captions, it maps almost all the religious centres, monasteries, holy sites, and places of worship belonging to the Armenian Church or venerated by the Armenians and neighbour ethnic groups of the region.

Prof. Nazenie Garibian will deliver four seminars presenting the *Tabula* as a case study of cartographic backdrop for recording the collective memory of a historical, religious and cultural heritage. They are distributed over five weeks between the mid-April and end of May. Using a cross-disciplinary approach and rich iconographic material, Prof. Garibian will explore the *Tabula* from various perspectives regarding the physical and symbolic “territories of memory” collected in the map itself and its iconography.

1. The Tabula Chorographica Armenica as a *Thesaurus* of Historical-Cultural Memory

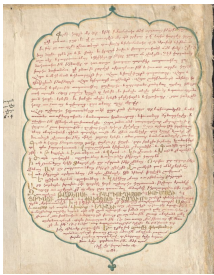
April 16th, 15.30-17.30h – Aula Magna, University Library of Bologna, via Zamboni 35



The seminar will present the *Tabula* within the context of the Armenian history and culture, highlighting the particular value of the document as representing a manuscript witness of collective memory and its importance for the study of national identity building. A special attention will be given to its conceptual geography between physical and symbolic territories and its cross-cultural pattern featuring inscriptions in different languages and places belonging to other Christian traditions and countries. A visit to the map showcased in the Marsili Hall of the Library will close the session (17.30-18.00).

2. Designing Mental Statehood: The creation of the *Tabula Chorographica Armenica*

May 9th, 15.30-17.30h – Aula Gambi, P.za San Giovanni in Monte 2



The author of the *Tabula Eremia* Keomurtchean left a long *didascalia* at the top of the map, which gives us the key to understand his motivations and to consider the *Tabula* in a broader political and cultural environment of 17th century Constantinople. Questions such as the intellectual background of the author; the political aspirations of Armenian community; the diplomatic relations between European powers and the Ottoman Empire; the missions of count Marsili in Orient and the possible purposes of his commission will be addressed.

3-4. Between Real and Ideal Representations: The iconography and Archaeological Data of the *Tabula Chorographica Armenica*

I session: May 22nd, 10-12h – Aula Gambi, P.za San Giovanni in Monte 2

II session: May 29th, 10-12h – Aula Gambi, P.za San Giovanni in Monte 2



The *Tabula* features a rich iconographic apparatus: palaces, thrones, pavilions, figures of men and idols, religious buildings, all carefully drawn and colored. The third seminar consists of two sessions dedicated to the iconography of the *Tabula* within the context of the 17th century oriental and European traditions. The first session will examine the pattern and the drawings of the map from the art history perspective, its authorship and possible models of inspiration. The second session will focus on the holy places and religious buildings, matching the most important and less studied ones with archaeological and historical data, and with photographs of survived physical monuments. The historical regions of Erznka, Taron and Artsakh are chosen for the case study.

Dipartimento di Storia Culture Civiltà

Memory Lab – 'Department of Excellence 2023-2027'

Hosting professor: Anna Sirinian



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