

Introduction

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The Matenadaran, Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, Armenia, is the world's most significant repository and centre for the study of medieval Armenian manuscripts. It possesses a collection of around 22,800 manuscripts, amulet scrolls, and manuscript fragments, most of which are in Armenian and around 4,000 in foreign languages: Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Georgian, Karshuni, Coptic, Hebrew, Old Slavonic, Ethiopic, and others.

Together with a multitude of original literary and historiographical sources (including those from the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, 1198–1375), which are of foremost importance for the social, political, and cultural history not only of Armenia, but also of the whole Middle Eastern and Caucasian region and beyond, the manuscript collection of the Matenadaran contains a wealth of translated literature. For instance, from the time of the invention of the Armenian alphabet in the early 5th century CE on, the Armenians translated numerous works from Greek into Armenian. These translations include important compositions by authors such as Philo of Alexandria, Irenaeus of Lyons, and Eusebius of Caesarea, the original texts of which are lost today. At the same time, a large number of early Armenian translations exist that do have surviving Greek originals. In many cases, the translations are older than the first extant Greek witnesses and thus can help to reconstruct correct readings of the Greek texts.

For that reason, there is a close relationship between Armenian Studies and the study of Classical Greek, Early Christian, and Byzantine texts. The Matenadaran has always cooperated and fostered connections with hundreds of scholars and students worldwide. Such fruitful collaboration exists not only with many individual scholars from a great range of academic institutions, but also with significant learned societies such as the AIEA (Association internationale des études arméniennes) and the SAS (Society for Armenian Studies, USA).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that there are few international journals specialised in medieval and early modern Armenian Studies. Among them we must mention the *Revue des études arméniennes* and *Le Muséon*; the latter often contains Armenological material, though it is a journal of Oriental Studies in general. To these two periodicals, the *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* should be added

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(but only occasionally does it publish papers on the medieval period), as well as the *Armeniaca. International Journal of Armenian Studies*, founded recently by our Italian colleagues.

Until now, our Institute of Ancient manuscripts has had one single academic periodical, the *Banber Matenadarani* (*Bulletin of the Matenadaran*, first published in 1941), which is mostly in Modern Armenian and thus only accessible to scholars knowing that language.

In light of all the above considerations, it is high time that the Matenadaran launched its own international journal in major Western languages, providing a new, widely accessible venue for research and publication to local and foreign scholars engaged or interested in Armenian Studies and related fields. The members of our editorial board come from various research institutions and universities throughout the world, and we are delighted to announce that MEMAS is collaborating with Brepols Publishers (Turnhout, Belgium).

The periodical will publish one volume consisting of two issues annually. Each paper is double-blind peer-reviewed by two experts. The articles, in English, French, German, and Italian, are submitted and peer-reviewed through the website of the journal: <https://journalmatenadaran.com/index.php/jmat>. Our preferred fields of research are source study, philology, history, theology, codicology, archaeology, and art history from the 5th to the 18th centuries. We hope the new periodical of the Matenadaran will be welcomed by our colleagues worldwide, and they will be willing to offer us the results of their studies for publication in MEMAS.

Aram Topchyan
Editor-in-Chief