

Armenian and Georgian Women Patrons, IX-XIV Centuries (Florence, 24-25 Nov 25)

Florence, Italy, Nov 24-25, 2025

Gohar Grigoryan

Armenian and Georgian Women Patrons (IX-XIV Centuries).

International conference, 24-25 November 2025.

University of Florence, SAGAS Department,
Palazzo Fenzi, Via San Gallo 10.

Organisation: Gohar Grigoryan and Zaroui Pogossian

The growing number of studies dealing with female agency in medieval Eurasia has necessitated forging new ways of analysing socio-political and cultural histories of the relevant regions. One useful category to approach this question is patronage, which—despite its etymology—has proven productive for tracing medieval women. Despite some forays into this subject of study, patronage has a still unexplored potential for offering answers to larger questions dealing with socio-religious systems and political-administrative realities of premodern societies. By exploring women's patronage practices, including their self-representation through art or inscriptions among others, one may start to draw patterns of behaviour and social norms that go beyond religious or linguistic boundaries, opening up new opportunities of studying entanglements. This third and final conference within the ERC-funded ArmEn project is dedicated to this subject with a focus on women patrons hailing from medieval Armenian and Georgian lands, who were active in the greater region that covers south of the Caucasus to the Eastern Mediterranean and Northern Syria. The purpose of this two-day meeting is twofold: it aims to reflect on the state-of-the-art and to explore the forms and functions of female patronage through the lens of architectural, artistic, and intellectual creations. While the preferred chronological span of this inquiry is the ninth to the fourteenth centuries, several case studies dealing with other periods are also included insofar as they contribute to advancing the knowledge on medieval Armenian and Georgian female patronage, with an aim of placing it in a wider context.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

24 November 2025, Aula Parva

10:00 Greetings: FULVIO CERVINI, Director of the SAGAS Department, University of Florence; KHA-JAG BARSAMIAN, Pontifical legate of Western Europe and representative of the Armenian Church to the Holy See

Introduction: ZAROUI POGOSSIAN and GOHAR GRIGORYAN

Chair: BARBARA ROGGEMA

10:30 CHRISTINA MARANCI (Cambridge, MA)

Queen Katranidē and her spiritual oꝛspring

11:00 MAIA MATCHAVARIANI (Tbilisi)

Martha-Mariam of Georgia: A queen between empires, texts, and loyalties

11:30 MARCO BAIS (Rome)

Two Albanian noblewomen promoters of saints' cults: Queen Šušanik and Princess Helinē

12:00 Lunch

Chair: MICHELE NUCCIOTTI

14:00 JOST GIPPERT (Hamburg)

From conversion to rulership: Women's patronage in Georgia between legend and fact

14:30 SARA NUR YILDIZ (Ankara)

From Georgian princess to pious devotee and patron: Gurji Khatun and Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi

15:00 SUZAN YALMAN (Istanbul)

The agency and patronage of two Seljuk queens: The cases of Mahpari Khatun and Gurji Khatun

15:30 Coꝛffee/tea break

Chair: IRENE TINTI

16:00 ZAROUÏ POGOSSIEN (Florence)

Women's patronage and politics in Arc'ax and Siwnik' (IX-XIII centuries)

16:30 GOHAR GRIGORYAN (Florence, Fribourg)

Does the representation of gender vary if the commissioner is a woman?

17:00 End

19:00 Dinner

25 November 2025, Aula Parva

09:20 Greetings

Chair: LAPO SOMIGLI

09:30 THAMAR OTKHMEZURI (Tbilisi)

Mariam Queen of Kartli – commissioner and "redeemer" of Georgian manuscripts

10:00 NATIA NATSVLISHVILI (Tbilisi)

Architectural patronage in the Kingdom of Georgia: Noble female donors and their financial resources

10:30 Coꝛffee/tea break

Chair: EDDA VARDANYAN

11:00 DAVID ZAKARIAN (Fresno, CA)

Tracing female agency: Women sponsors of medieval Armenian manuscripts

11:30 ARMINE MELKONYAN (Florence)

Manuscript production and patronage by childless women

12:00 ANNALISA MORASCHI (Brno, Paris)

Four generations of Vach'utian women and their patronage

ArtHist.net

12:30 Final discussion

13:00 Lunch

15:00-17:00 ERC ArmEn project meeting (team members only)

Reference:

CONF: Armenian and Georgian Women Patrons, IX-XIV Centuries (Florence, 24-25 Nov 25). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 19, 2025 (accessed Apr 6, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/51168>>.