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Foreword: *"Meeting in the body of the horse – From where we started"*

Jasmine Dum-Tragut

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FOREWORD

"Meeting in the body of the horse – From where we started"

The academic understanding of equine medicine and hippology during the High Middle Ages was significantly reshaped by Jasmine Dum-Tragut's 2005 research work. Her research involved translating and analysing the previously unstudied Armenian Cilician horse book of King Smbat[1] from medieval Cilician Armenian to German.[2] By meticulously examining its sources, which drew from Arabic, Persian, European, ancient Greek, Roman, and Indian traditions, Dum-Tragut illuminated the Armenian equine medical tradition. Her findings demonstrated that, although translated from Arabic, King Smbat's horse book incorporated substantial influences from both the Islamic East and the Christian West. She brought Armenian traditions and their significance to the attention of both Western and Eastern equine studies and veterinary fields for the first time. These findings were later incorporated into German translations of Arabic equine literature.

In 2013, following several years of dedicated research into disparate Armenian equine fragments by Jasmine Dum-Tragut, a noteworthy advancement took place. A substantial medical manuscript, identified as an additional "horse book", was bequeathed by an Armenian family with origins in Isfahan, Iran, to the Matenadaran, the Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, Armenia. The condition of this

[1] In 1980, Babken Č'ugaszyan undertook the scholarly task of editing a microfilm copy of King Smbat's Horse book, which was then held by the Saračyan family in Los Angeles, making also an effort to etymologize several obscure terms. Babken Č'ugaszyan, *Bžškaran jioy ew arḥasarak grastnoy* (The medical book for horse and draft animal) (Erevan: Haykakan SSH GA hratarakč'ut'yun, 1980).

[2] Jasmine Dum-Tragut, Kilikische Heilkunst für Pferde. Das Vermächtnis der Armenier. Kommentar Übersetzung Glossar (Hildesheim, New York: Olms, 2005).

manuscript was severely deteriorated, necessitating prompt and expert conservation efforts.

The codex includes an Armenian treatise on horses, identified by its colophon as a copy of the renowned horse book of King Smbat, though it was copied in Sivas/Sebaste (then Ottoman Empire, now Turkey) in 1504. Following the completion of its restoration, J. Dum-Tragut re-examined the codex to ascertain its authenticity as a copy of the 1296/98 horse book of King Smbat. The investigation also aimed to determine if any alterations or additions were made and to verify if this particular copy served as the *Vorlage*, the source, for the Georgian translation of an Armenian horse book, commissioned by the Georgian Prince Giorgi in 1788.

Further complicating matters was the unresolved issue of corroborated Arabic translations of Armenian horse books, which had also been mentioned in secondary literature. However, with the exception of manuscript British Library Or 3133, which had previously been utilized to compare the Arabic text with the Armenian text of the Cilician horse book of King Smbat, none of the other three circulated Arabic manuscripts containing translations from Armenian had undergone thorough research or analysis.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the study of equine medicine and history had not deeply investigated the corroborated translations from Armenian into Arabic and Georgian. Researchers had not previously engaged in combining and comparing these texts, analysing their linguistic characteristics, content, terminology, and the transfer of knowledge via translation and compilation from various translated sources. Furthermore, the potential role of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia in the transmission of equine hippiatric and hippological knowledge during the thirteenth century, within a region central to cultural exchange between Crusaders, Eastern Christians, Arabs, Persians, Mamluks, and Mongols, had not been explored.

The inception of an interdisciplinary project focused on the transfer of knowledge in equine medicine occurred in response to these observations, with research commencing at the University of Salzburg in 2022.

The Vienna Workshop

Recognizing the value of sharing preliminary and unexpected findings from the research on Armenian, Arabic, and Georgian manuscripts, the interdisciplinary team deemed it appropriate to present these to a professional audience during an expert workshop. This event also aimed to facilitate discussions on challenges and potential future directions for the research beyond 2026.

The research team convened a one-and-a-half-day workshop, "Armenian-Arabic Encounters", held on November 4 and 5, 2024, at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna, to officially unveil the novel findings. This compilation of essays encapsulates the principal presentations, observations, and discussions undertaken by the participants of this distinguished workshop.

Participants in order of their contributions in this volume:

Jasmine Dum-Tragut, Professor, Dr. DDr. h.c., holds expertise as an Armenologist, Linguist, and Equine Scientist. She leads the interdisciplinary Centre for the Study of the Christian East at the University of Salzburg and its Armenian Studies Division, while also serving as a Senior Scientist in the Department of Biblical Studies and Church History. Beyond her significant contributions to Armenian language, history, and cultural heritage, recognized with top Armenian and international honours including two honorary doctorates and distinguished awards from the Austrian and Armenian presidents, she has dedicated over two decades to researching medieval Armenian equine treatises. Her work includes the German translation, commentary, and analysis of the "Cilician Horse Book" along with other research and publications on Armenian hippology and hippiatry. Currently, she is the Principal Investigator for the FWF project "Meeting in the Body of the horse: Cultural Transfer and Knowledge Transmission between Christian West and Muslim East in Late Medieval Armenian Horse Books."

Hasmik Paremuzyan is a lecturer and PhD student at the Chair of Arabic Studies at Yerevan State University, where she also earned her MA in Arabic Studies in 2017. Her scholarly work delves into the intellectual and cultural history of the medieval Islamic world and the intellectual traditions of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, with a special focus on the transmission and adaptation of medical knowledge and the history of equine medicine.

Since 2011, **Susanne Saker** has been a subject librarian for Near and Middle Eastern Studies at Marburg University Library. She studied Arabic Studies and Journalism at the University of Leipzig from 1997 to 2002. In 2003, she began her doctoral thesis at the University of Marburg. As part of the interdisciplinary DFG project "Zur Kontinuität des hippiatrischen Erbes der Antike im arabischen Sprachraum des Frühmittelalters" [The continuity of hippiatric heritage of antiquity in the Arabic-speaking world of the early

Middle Ages] she edited and translated, based on two manuscripts, the Arabic translation of Theomnest's treatise on Equine Medicine. Her study "Die Pferdeheilkunde des Theomnest von Nikopolis: ein Handbuch für den praktischen Tierarzt im arabischen Sprachraum des Frühmittelalters" was published in 2008.

Martin Heide is Associate Professor of Semitic Languages at the Philipps-Universität Marburg (now retired), specialising in the critical edition of Hebrew, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic texts, such as medieval Arabic literature on hippiatry. Between 2000 and 2007, he worked on an interdisciplinary project at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich together with Veronika Goebel and Joris Peters, editing and translating ibn aḫi Ḥizām al-Ḫuttali's *Kitāb al-bayṭara.* In 2021, he co-authored with Joris Peters the monograph *Camels in the Biblical World*.

Marat Yavrumyan, holds a doctorate in Arabic Studies, 2006, from the University of Bayreuth. He served as Assoc. Professor (2011-2022) at the Department of Arabic Studies, Yerevan State University (YSU), Armenia; and as PI of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation project "Universal Dependencies for Armenian" (2017-2021, YSU). From 2022-2025/6 he has been working as postdoctoral research in the FWF project "Meeting in the Body of the Horse" at Centre for the Study of the Christian East, University of Salzburg, Austria; since April 2025 PI of the Laboratory of Armenian Language Technology at YSU, Yerevan. He focuses on the Arabic equine treatises written by ibn aḫi Ḥizām al-Ḫuttali's and those written in the Mamluk period and their interrelation with the Cilician Armenian equine texts.

Nino Sakvarelidze holds a doctorate in Classical Philology, Byzantine Studies, and Georgian Philology from Tbilisi State University, as well as Theology from Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. She previously held a position at the Korneli Kekelidze Institute of Ancient Georgian Manuscripts in Tbilisi. During her doctoral studies in Munich, she served as a research assistant at the German Liturgical Institute in Trier. Following her doctorate, she engaged in research and teaching in Innsbruck, lectured in Regensburg, and was a visiting lecturer in Milan. Since 2020, Nino Sakvarelidze has been a lecturer at the St. Ephräm Scientific Centre for Orient & Occident Studies in Vienna and the International Theological Institute – University of Catholic Theology in Trumau, where she contributes to the Master's program in Theological Orient & Occident Studies. Additionally,

since March 2023, she has been a research associate for the project "Meeting in the body of the horse," working on the Georgian equine treatises.

Heinrich Justin Evanzin is a physician and licensed pharmacist. He specialized in pharmacognosy and phytochemistry during his pharmacy studies at the University of Vienna. His diploma thesis was in pharmacology and toxicology. As a military pharmacist, he taught phytotherapy and led pharmacobotanical excursions. He holds a dissertation project in historical-comparative linguistics at the University of Salzburg, researching Armenian plant names in a fifteenth-century *materia medica*. After pharmacy licensure, he studied medicine at the Medical University of Vienna. He is a member of several scientific societies related to medicinal plants and the history of pharmacy. Currently in residency, he is the scientific director of a phytotherapy training program for pharmacists. His expertise bridges pharmacy history and plant-based medicine.

Hylke Hettema studied Middle East studies and Arabic at Radboud University (Nijmegen, Netherlands) and earned a MA at the same university, specializing in Arabic linguistics. Currently she is working on PhD research at Leiden University/Netherlands, which focuses on the connection of the Arabian horse to the Arab Identity in the medieval Middle East.

"…the disciplines are the place where we begin, but not where we end."
Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies, Allen F. Repko

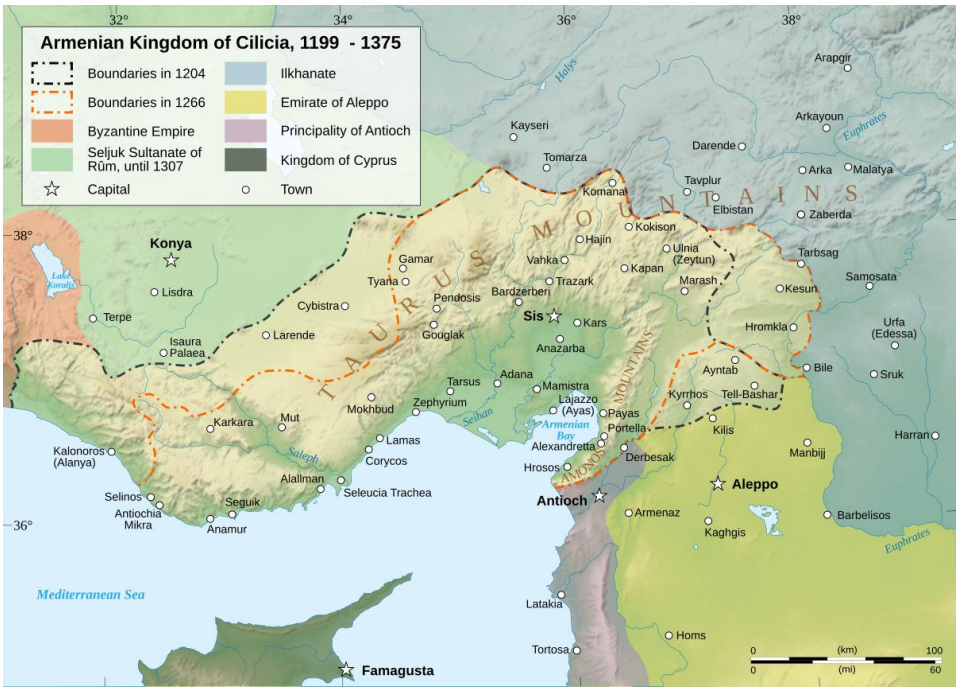

Fig. 1. The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia in the twelfth-fourteenth centuries[3]

Jasmine Dum-Tragut
Centre for the Study of the Christian East,
University of Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria

[3] © https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Kingdom_of_Cilicia#/media/File:Cilician_Armenia-en.svg.