

**THE ARARAT-ESKIJIAN MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTER (AEMRC), THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES AND RESEARCH (NAASR), THE PROMISE ARMENIAN INSTITUTE AT UCLA, AND THE ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM AT CAL STATE NORTHRIDGE (CSUN)**

**PRESENT A HYBRID EVENT**



**Bone Memory: Armenian Pilgrimages to the Killing Fields of Dayr al-Zur**

By

**Dr. Elyse Semerdjian**

*Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair of Armenian Genocide Studies, Clark University*

**Sunday, April 21, 2024**

**4:00 pm Pacific / 7:00 pm Eastern**

**Ararat-Eskijian Museum Sheen Chapel**

**15105 Mission Hills Road, Mission Hills, CA 91345**

This presentation outlines the earliest Armenian pilgrimages to the killing fields of Dayr al-Zur (Der Zor) in the Syrian Desert. It is there that Armenians interacted with the remains of Armenians murdered during the Armenian Genocide (1915-1918) in acts of remembrance. Semerdjian discusses the origins of the now-destroyed Armenian Genocide Memorial in Dayr al-Zur and the ritual and collection habits of pilgrims that enact what she calls bone memory. Using archival documents and oral histories, she presents the genesis of these memory practices that largely halted during the Syrian War.

Elyse Semerdjian is a social historian of the Ottoman Empire whose research focuses on the experiences of women and the empire's Armenian subjects. She has authored *“Off the Straight Path”: Illicit Sex, Law, and Community in Ottoman Aleppo* (Syracuse University Press, 2008) and *Remnants: Embodied Archives of the Armenian Genocide* (Stanford University Press, 2023) as well as several articles on gender, Ottoman Armenians, urban history, and law in the Ottoman Empire.

The presentation will also be live-streamed on the Ararat-Eskijian Museum’s YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/@AraratEskijianMuseum>.

**For more information call the Ararat-Eskijian Museum at 747-500-7584 or e-mail [Eskijian@ararat-eskijian-museum.com](mailto:Eskijian@ararat-eskijian-museum.com)**

*Photo: Dayr al-Zur (Der Zor) memorial, destroyed in 2014, courtesy of Bardig Kouyoumdjian*