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THE TEAM OF THE SNSF RESEARCH PROJECT  
“Mass Death, Science and Medicine: Handling  
the Corpses of War in Modern Europe (1850-1960)”

# BONES AND RELICS

## Necrogeographies of the Armenian Genocide

**ELYSE SEMERDJIAN**

Clark University

**8 JUNE 2026 | 18H15-20H**

Uni Philosophes | Room 201

**ORGANIZATION & INFORMATION**

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[warlosses.hypotheses.org/mass-death](http://warlosses.hypotheses.org/mass-death)



Join Elyse Semerdjian as she traces the earliest Armenian pilgrimages to the killing fields of Dayr al-Zur in the Syrian Desert. In this landscape of loss, pilgrims came face to face with the remains of victims of the Armenian Genocide (1915-1918), transforming grief into acts of remembrance. The talk explores the origins of the now-destroyed Armenian Genocide Memorial and the powerful rituals and practices through which pilgrims expressed what Semerdjian calls “bone memory.”

**Elyse Semerdjian** is the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair of Armenian Genocide Studies at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University. She is a social historian of the Ottoman Empire whose research focuses on the experiences of women and the empire’s Armenian subjects. She is the author of *“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.

Vahan Papazian (1876–1973), known by the pseudonym “Goms,” looks upon bones protruding from the soil during his pilgrimage to Dayr al-Zur in 1930. Source: National Archive of Norway, Oslo.

