

Foreword

The completion of this book would not have been possible without the support of many people, to whom I am deeply grateful. Bringing this volume together has reminded me – again and again – that academic life is sustained not only by ideas, but by communities: by mentorship offered generously, by friendships that outlast projects, and by the patience that underpins shared intellectual endeavour.

This Festschrift is offered first and foremost in honour of Manana Tandaschwili on the occasion of her forthcoming retirement, in celebration of her remarkable achievements. Her scholarship has shaped the conversations that animate Caucasiology, and her work continues to inspire new questions, methods, and collaborations. Equally important is the example she has set as a colleague and mentor: through her intellectual generosity, her high standards, and the seriousness with which she approaches both people and ideas. Many of us have benefited from her guidance – sometimes in formal academic settings, sometimes through a timely word of encouragement – and this volume reflects the breadth of respect and affection she has earned over the years.

A volume like this depends on a remarkable amount of often invisible labour, and I am grateful to everyone who helped make that labour lighter. I thank all contributors for their willingness to write – often amid crowded schedules – and for meeting deadlines with such good humour and collegiality. The care, breadth, and ambition of these essays are a testament to the esteem in which Manana Tandaschwili is held, and I am grateful for the generous spirit of collaboration that ran through the entire process. I also appreciate the many small acts of assistance – quick replies, careful cross-checks, and thoughtful suggestions – that rarely show on the page but are essential to any collective endeavour.

Special thanks go to the reviewers and advisers – formal and informal – whose feedback improved the volume in ways both subtle and substantial. Particular appreciation is due to Jost Gippert for his support throughout the editing process, for his mentorship, and for his invaluable advice. Mariam Gobianidze, my partner-in-crime in this project, has been an extraordinary source of support; it is largely thanks to her organisational skills and steady commitment that this volume achieved its present shape and diversity. Anastasia Kamarauli also deserves special mention: without her help, some of the contributions would not have been possible, and I owe her sincere thanks for her bibliographic assistance and careful attention to detail.

I would like to thank all contributors once again for their commitment, their patience, and their collegial spirit. This volume has been brought together to mark an important moment and to acknowledge, in a collective way, the work, influence, and example that Manana Tandaschwili has offered to colleagues, students, and the field more broadly. Lastly, I would like to thank David Maisuradze for the wonderful design of the cover.