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### Aelius Theon in Armenian tradition

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#### *Abstract*

Preliminary exercises (*progymnasmata*) had a fundamental role in the field of grammatical and rhetorical education, moving from Greek heritage to other cultures, including Armenian from the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD onwards. The so called Hellenizing school translated the Greek handbook attributed to Aelius Theon, a text conceived as methodical explanation intended for teachers which offers many topics of interest nowadays. There is some direct and indirect evidence of knowledge about preliminary exercises in later Armenian authors. The influence of the preliminary exercises' system has been recently investigated through Armenian original works in order to find evidence of the real use of this method in literary education. Nevertheless, mention of Theon and the "Theonites" can be found in Armenian scholars' texts, as Hacob Manandyan, the first and the only editor of the complete Armenian text of the *Progymnasmata* by Aelius Theon (1938), shortly stated in the German introduction of his edition. The main purpose of this paper is to analyze these mentions in the commentary on Dionysius Thrax's *Ars Grammatica* written by Hamam Arewelc'i (9<sup>th</sup> century AD) and in the *Letters* by Grigor Magistros (11<sup>th</sup> century AD), discussing whether they can be related to Aelius Theon and the preliminary exercises' practice.

Giulia Mangialardi (Genoa, 12.02.1993) obtained a Master's Degree in Classical Philology and History of Antiquity at the University of Pisa, discussing a thesis entitled "Formazione ed educazione nei *Progymnasmata* di Elio Teone: i modelli letterari di un professore della prima età imperiale" (2018). Basing on her interests in ancient rhetoric and education, she focused her attention on the peculiarity of Theon's method and sources, comparing the *Progymnasmata* by Theon to other Greek and Roman rhetorical works of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.