

Armenian Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

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THE PRESENT STUDY centers on the collection of Armenian manuscripts housed in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. It offers, first, a brief overview of some general facts and characteristic features of Armenian manuscripts, and then proceeds to discuss the Vatican Library's collection of Armenian manuscripts, situating them in relation to Armenian manuscript studies at large, addressing their main value, and pointing out some particular highlights. It concludes with a survey of cataloguing efforts and scholarly work undertaken to date on the manuscripts. The collection emerges as particularly rich in manuscripts bearing witness to Roman Catholic missionary efforts among the Armenians, as well as to the life and

Abstract: This article treats the Armenian manuscripts housed in the Vatican Library, offering an overview of their main contents and principal value, as well as surveying the scholarly work undertaken on the collection. After a brief sketch of some general facts and characteristic features of Armenian manuscripts in general, the main value of the Vatican Library's collection is discussed in relation to Armenian studies at large. Significant individual manuscripts are highlighted and situated in the larger context of Armenian history. Materials bearing upon Roman Catholic missionary efforts among the Armenians and Armenian Catholic communities are discussed, as well as "hybrid" manuscripts that combine Armenian elements with other linguistic, cultural, and confessional traditions.

Keywords: Armenian manuscripts, Vatican Library, Colophons, Codicology, Paleography, Cataloguing.

2 practices of Armenian Catholic communities. A significant number of “hybrid” manuscripts are also to be found that contain Armenian elements alongside those of other linguistic, cultural, or confessional traditions. The collection is not large relative to other major repositories of Armenian manuscripts, consisting of 137 manuscripts held in multiple *fondi*, but it is an important one and deserves to be better known.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF ARMENIAN MANUSCRIPTS

A. Survival of Armenian Manuscripts and the Transition from Manuscript to Print

Approximately 31,000 bound Armenian codices have survived down to the present day.¹ Although this number may

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1. Dickran Kouymjian, “Armenian Manuscripts,” in *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Alessandro Bausi et al. (Hamburg, 2015), 38–40 at 38. A note on transliteration in this paper: for Armenian, I follow the system established by H. Hübschmann, A. Meillet,

seem like a small figure next to the estimated 300,000–500,000 surviving Latin manuscripts from the Middle Ages, it seems less so when compared to the estimated 55,000–65,000 Greek manuscripts extant, and—to cite a closer neighboring culture—the 12,000 surviving Georgian manuscripts.² Furthermore, when one considers the tumultuous history of the Armenians and the repeated destruction of towns, monasteries, and libraries that we hear of throughout the medieval sources, not to mention the massacres of the late nineteenth century and genocide of the early twentieth, when tens of thousands of manuscripts were destroyed, one rather ought to be surprised that there are so many.³ The vast majority of surviving Armenian manuscripts date from after 1600 (between seventy and seventy-five percent), a notable fact since although the first Armenian printed book appeared as early as 1511/12, manuscripts continued to be copied and produced into the nineteenth century.⁴ Unlike in Europe, where the printing press quickly led to a revolution in the scope and technology of book production only fifty years after its invention, in the Armenian orbit manuscript production existed alongside printed book production for more than 200 years in a symbiotic relationship, with manuscripts remaining the primary technology until the 1740s, when printing gained the

and É. Beneviste as employed in the *Revue des études arméniennes*, except where other spellings of names are already in common use; for Syriac and Arabic, I follow the Library of Congress system.

2. Figures taken from Bernard Coulie, “Collections and Catalogues of Armenian Manuscripts,” in *Armenian Philology in the Modern Era: From Manuscript to Digital Text*, ed. Valentina Calzolari (Leiden, 2014), 23–64 at 23–24; Marilena Maniaci, “Greek Manuscripts,” in *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies*, 51–53 at 52; Kouymjian, “Armenian Manuscripts,” 39.

3. Coulie, “Collections and Catalogues,” 23.

4. Dickran Kouymjian “Armenian Bookbinding from Manuscript to Printed Book (Sixteenth to Nineteenth Century),” *Gazette du livre médiéval* 49 (2006): 1–14 at 1–2; Kouymjian, “Armenian Manuscripts,” 38–39.

4 ascendancy and manuscript production rapidly declined, continuing thenceforward primarily as an act of piety or luxury into the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵

B. Earliest Armenian Manuscripts and Materials

Although Armenian manuscripts began to be produced as early as the fifth century following the invention of the Armenian alphabet by Mesrop Maštoc', which ushered in an age of extensive translation activity from Greek and Syriac into Armenian, as well as original Armenian production, no securely datable manuscripts survive from before the ninth century (of which there are two) and fewer than twenty manuscripts pre-date the year 1000.⁶ Thus, there is a gap of over 450 years between the time when Armenian manuscripts were first produced and the earliest extant copies, during which time very little is known about manuscript production.⁷ In the Latin and Greek milieus, the codex replaced the scroll by the fourth century and by the time Armenian letters were invented about a hundred years later, the codex was already the established medium of text

5. Kouymjian, "Armenian Bookbinding," 1–2; Kouymjian, "Armenian Manuscripts," 40. For an overview of early Armenian printing, see Meliné Pehlivanian, "Mesrop's Heirs: The Early Armenian Book Printers," in *Middle Eastern Languages and the Print Revolution: A Cross-Cultural Encounter; A Catalogue and Companion to the Exhibition*, ed. Eva-Maria Hanebutt-Benz, Dagmar Glass, and Geoffrey Roper (Westhofen, 2002), 53–92. On early Armenian printing and print culture, including its relation to "history of the book," see Sebouh D. Aslanian, "Reader Response and the Circulation of Mkhitarist Books Across the Armenian Communities of the Early Modern Indian Ocean," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 22 (2013): 31–70; and Aslanian, "Port Cities and Printers: Reflections on Early Modern Global Armenian Print Culture," *Book History* 17 (2014): 51–93.

6. Kouymjian, "Armenian Manuscripts," 38.

7. Dickran Kouymjian, "The Archaeology of the Armenian Manuscript: Codicology, Paleography, and Beyond," in *Armenian Philology*, 5–22 at 6–7.

production. It is most likely that Armenians used the codex right from the start without any transition from the roll. And in fact, there are no papyrus manuscripts or rolls from the early period, all extant manuscripts being parchment or paper codices.⁸ Rolls (known in Armenian as հմայիլ, *hmayil*) do exist, however, in later centuries (mostly after the fifteenth), being used often as magical talismans with healing powers.⁹

C. Colophons and Dating

It is a fortunate characteristic of the Armenian manuscript tradition that from an early period it was established practice to include a highly developed colophon (յիշատակարան, literally “the place of memory” or “memorial”) written by the scribe upon completion of the manuscript, often with notes by the illuminator or binder as well.¹⁰ In addition to indicating his name, the place and date of writing (along with the monastery and its abbot), the patron, and members of his family for whom he requests prayers, the scribe often would also mention the political and religious rulers of the time and the significant events going on in the wider world around him, including wars, invasions, natural disasters, and even aspects of more mundane daily life, making Armenian colophons a rich source of historical information.¹¹ Apart from the obvious importance they have for

8. *Ibid.*, 7.

9. *Ibid.*; Dickran Kouymjian, “Armenian Codicology,” in *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies*, 116–31 at 120.

10. Kouymjian, “Armenian Manuscripts,” 38.

11. Anna Sirinian, “On the Historical and Literary Value of the Colophons in Armenian Manuscripts,” in *Armenian Philology*, 65–99 at 65. See also Avedis K. Sanjian, “The Historical Significance of Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts,” *Le muséon* 81 (1968): 181–95; and Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 1301–1480: A Source for Middle Eastern History*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 2 (Cambridge, MA, 1969).

6 dating manuscripts and providing information about centers and features of manuscript production, through them we get a rare and precious glimpse into the world and psychology of the scribes themselves, expanding our knowledge of manuscript and scribal culture. However, because these colophons were the last thing written in the manuscript, they were the most liable to loss over time, the first and last pages of a manuscript always being the ones most likely to suffer deterioration. Despite this loss, thanks to the many that survive we can exactly date approximately fifty-five to fifty-nine percent of Armenian manuscripts due to precise indication in the colophons of when the text was copied, and many more can be closely dated due to other details given in partially-damaged colophons.¹²

D. Main Collections of Armenian Manuscripts

Armenian manuscripts are preserved today in museums, libraries, monasteries, and private collections in Armenia, the Near East, Europe, and America. The largest and most important collections are in Yerevan in Armenia at the Matenadaran (Repository of Ancient Manuscripts) (11,100), Jerusalem at the Armenian Patriarchate (3,890), the libraries of the two Mekhitarist Armenian Catholic monastic brotherhoods in Venice and Vienna (each with approximately 3,000), the Armenian monastery at New Julfa (Isfahan) in Iran (approximately 1,700), the Armenian Catholic monastery of Bzommar in Lebanon (approximately 1,500), the Catholicosate at Ējmiacin in Armenia (approximately 600), and the Armenian Patriarchate at Istanbul (approximately

12. Kouymjian, "Armenian Manuscripts," 38; Dickran Kouymjian, "Dated Armenian Manuscripts as a Statistical Tool for Armenian History," in *Medieval Armenian Culture*, ed. Thomas Samuelian and Michael Stone, University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 6 (Chico, CA, 1984), 425–39.

500).¹³ The Vatican collection is among the important “lesser” collections, containing 137 Armenian manuscripts.

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E. Catalogues and Cataloguing

Yakob Tašean’s massive first volume catalogue of the Vienna Mekhitarist manuscript collection appeared in 1891–95 and included detailed information on the date, place, scribe, artist, patron, binder, size, material, script, number of columns and lines, quire structure, and decoration of each manuscript. Based on the highest European standards of manuscript catalography of his day, it set a standard of high scientific precision and thoroughness in Armenian cataloguing that has since been followed (and subsequently expanded) with the result that more than eighty percent of the surviving Armenian manuscripts in the world have been included in detailed or summary catalogues of the major collections.¹⁴ Cataloguing, nevertheless, remains an ongoing task today, including most importantly the *General Catalogue* of the Matenadaran Collection.¹⁵ Nearly all

13. Figures, in some variance with one another, taken from Kouymjian, “Armenian Manuscripts,” 38; and Coulie, “Collections and Catalogues,” 26.

14. Yakob Tašean, *Յուզակ հայերէն ձեռագրաց Մատենադարանին Մխիթարեանց ի Վիեննա* = *Catalog der armenischen Handschriften in der Mechitharisten-Bibliothek zu Wien*, I–II, Haupt-Catalog der armenischen Handschriften herausgegeben von der Wiener Mechitharisten-Congregation 1, Die armenischen Handschriften in Österreich, 1–2 (Vienna, 1891–95); Kouymjian, “Armenian Manuscripts,” 38–39; Kouymjian, “Archaeology of the Armenian Manuscript,” 5.

15. Kouymjian, “Archaeology of the Armenian Manuscript,” 6. As of April 2017, eight volumes have been published, which cover the first 2,700 manuscripts in the collection; see Ö. Eganyan et al., eds., *Mayrats‘uts‘ak hayerēn dzeragrats‘ Mashtots‘i Anuan Matenadaranani* = *General‘nyi katalog armianskikh rukopisei Matenadaranani imeni Mashtotsa* = *General Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots Matenadaran*, 8 vols. to date (Erevan, 1984–). Abbreviated descriptions of all the Armenian manuscripts (11,077) contained in the collection are contained

8 Armenian manuscripts and catalogues have been included in Bernard Coulie's *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits arméniens*, and its three supplements, which is a comprehensive catalogue of catalogues covering all collections known to exist of one or more Armenian manuscripts, with bibliography and detailed description of the current state of cataloguing for each of them.¹⁶ A master list of Armenian manuscripts, a project initiated by Michael Stone and Bernard Coulie, is currently underway, as well as a fourth supplement to Coulie's *Répertoire* and a second edition incorporating updated bibliographic information.¹⁷ Access is thus available to the entire corpus of Armenian manuscripts in one place for the first time, making the work of scholars using Armenian manuscripts much more efficient than in previous decades.¹⁸

F. Paleography

Four basic scripts are used in the Armenian manuscript tradition: *երկաթագիր*, *բրվրգիր*, *նստրգիր/նսուրգիր*, and

in Ö. Eganyan et al., eds., *Ts'uts'ak dzeragrats' Mashtots'i Anuan Matenadaranani = Catalogue of Manuscripts of the Mashtots Matenadaran = Katalog rukopisei Matenadaran imeni Mashtotsa*, 3 vols. (Erevan, 1965–2007). All of the volumes are available in online form at the website of the Matenadaran: <http://www.matenadaran.am/>.

16. Bernard Coulie, *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits arméniens* (Turnhout, 1992); Coulie, "Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits arméniens: Supplément I," *Le muséeon* 108 (1995): 115–30; Coulie, "Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits arméniens: Supplément II," *Le muséeon* 113 (2000): 149–76; Coulie, "Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits arméniens: Supplément III," *Le muséeon* 117 (2004): 473–96. See also, Coulie, "Collections and Catalogues," 25.

17. Kouymjian, "Armenian Manuscripts," 39; Kouymjian, "Archaeology of the Armenian Manuscript," 6; Coulie, "Collections and Catalogues," 25.

18. Coulie, "Collections and Catalogues," 25.

չրազիր (*erkat'agir*, *bolorgir*, *notrgir/nōtrgir*, and *šlagir*).¹⁹ *Erkat'agir* (“iron script”) is a kind of majuscule script of all capital letters found in all early Gospel books and is comparable to the uncials of early Latin manuscripts.²⁰ *Bolorgir* (“whole” or “round script”) is marked by the introduction of minuscule letters and dominated scribal hands from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, with earlier antecedents, including a mixed script containing characters proper to all four scripts in, for example, the enigmatic Armeno-Greek papyrus of the sixth or seventh century.²¹ It continued in usage into the nineteenth century and is the script on which most Armenian fonts are based today, as well as the handwriting of many.²² *Notrgir/nōtrgir* is, as it sounds, a “notary script” used at the royal court or catholicosate, dating at least as far back as the twelfth century to the Armenian Cilician court, though there is only a limited number of exemplars surviving from this period, and none from the Bagratuni or Arcruni courts of the ninth to eleventh centuries, during which time it is presumed a similar script was employed.²³ The term *šlagir* (“slanted script”) appears from the eighteenth century and describes a fluid cursive script with joined letters, again, not unlike the handwriting of many today.²⁴

19. Kouymjian, “Archaeology of the Armenian Manuscript,” 11. For detailed discussion of all these scripts, with illustrated examples, see Dickran Kouymjian, “History of Armenian Paleography,” in *Album of Armenian Paleography*, ed. Michael Stone, Dickran Kouymjian, and Henning Lehmann (Aarhus, 2002), 13–75.

20. Kouymjian, “Archaeology of the Armenian Manuscript,” 11.

21. *Ibid.*, 12–16; Kouymjian, “History of Armenian Paleography,” 59–63.

22. Kouymjian, “Archaeology of the Armenian Manuscript,” 12–14.

23. Kouymjian, “History of Armenian Paleography,” 73–75.

24. *Ibid.*, 13, 73–75.

CONSPECTUS: THE NATURE OF THE COLLECTION

10 A. General Facts, Figures, and Features

The Vatican Library contains 137 Armenian codices, of which 125 have received detailed description in a scientific catalogue.²⁵ Of these 125, eighty-eight are part of the Borgiani armeni collection, thirty-three are part of the Vaticani armeni collection, two are part of the Barberiniani orientali collection, and two are part of the Chigiani collection.²⁶ Another dozen manuscripts were acquired after the publication of Eugène Tisserant's catalogue in 1927, being added to the Vaticani collection and bringing the total number to 137.²⁷ Of the 125 manuscripts in the Vatican Library that have been catalogued, representing 140 discrete units due to some distinct items having been bound together, sixty-five are precisely dated (forty-six percent of the collection—below the average of Kouymjian's figure of fifty to fifty-nine percent of the total Armenian manuscripts in the world) with, as expected, the majority falling between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries (see fig. 1). Of the seventy-five undated items (representing fifty-four percent of the collection), most can be approximately dated with some accuracy. Here, too, the majority belongs between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries: 101 items (or seventy-two percent) date to after the year 1600, thus falling right within Kouymjian's seventy to seventy-five percent estimate of all the world's surviving Armenian manuscripts (fig. 2).²⁸ The oldest dated manuscript, Vat. arm. 4, is a very early copy of the

25. Eugène Tisserant, *Codices armeni Bybliothecae vaticanae Borgiani, Vaticani, Barberiniani, Chisiani* (Rome, 1927).

26. *Ibid.*, vii.

27. Coulie, *Répertoire*, 168.

28. Kouymjian "Armenian Bookbinding," 1–14; Kouymjian, "Armenian Manuscripts," 38–39.

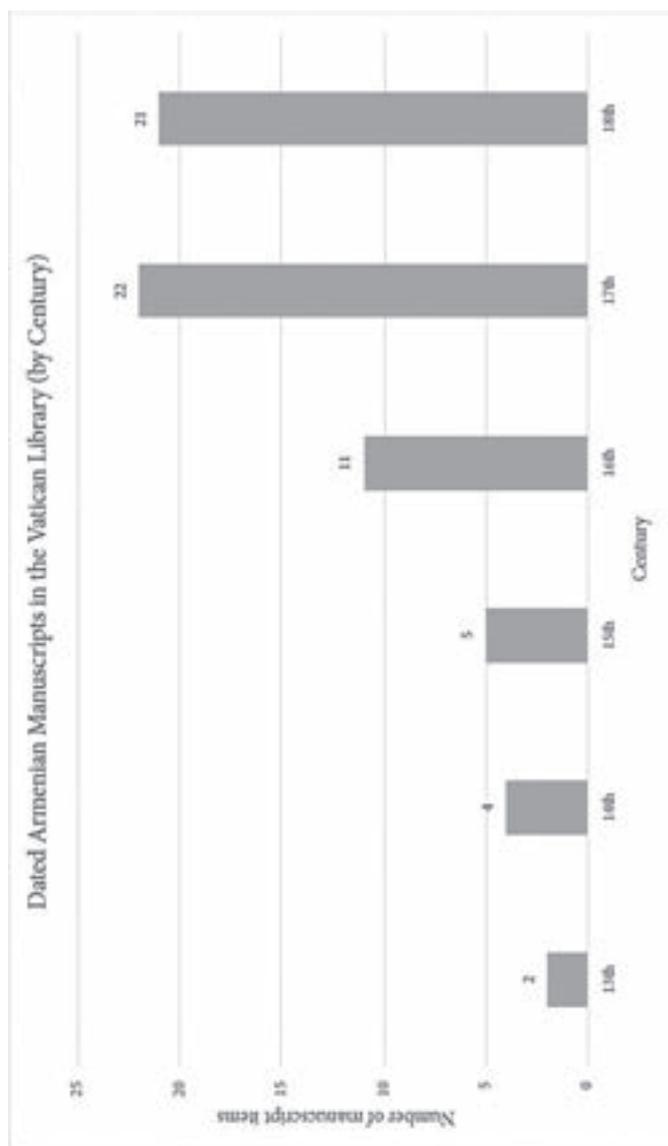


Figure 1.

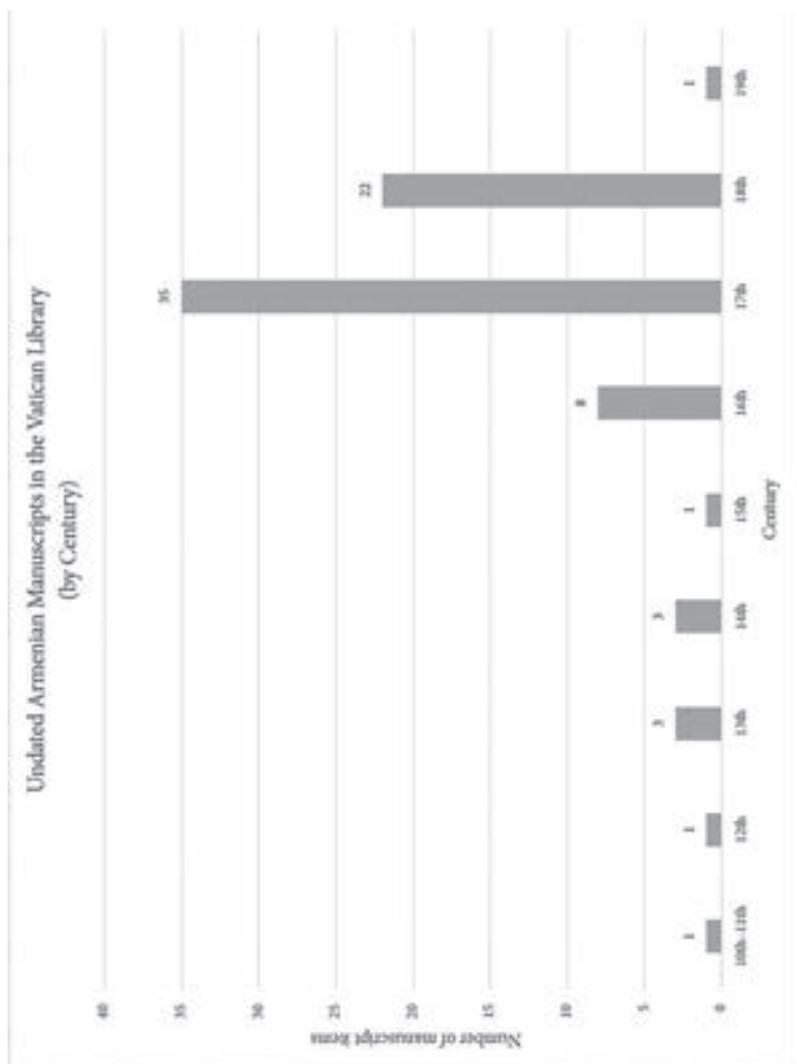


Figure 2.

prayer book of Grigor Narekac'i, copied in the year 1226–27 by a certain scribe Թադէոս/Թաթէոս (T'adēos/T'at'ēos), who later gave his book to be deposited at the Armenian hospice (նսպեթալս) in Rome, with the following dedication: *ես Թաթէոս տուի գիրս գիրգս ի հռոմայ նսպեթալս եւ որ հեռացուցանէ զսայ յայտ յաղաւթից տանէդ զվարձս ուղայ յի առցէ* (“I T'at'ēos gave my book to the hospice at Rome, and whoever removes it away from this house of prayer, may he receive the retribution of Judas”).²⁹ This Armenian hospice in Rome, originating in the thirteenth century according to chroniclers, was close to the grave of St. Peter. In the sixteenth century, however, Pope Pius IV ordered it to be destroyed along with the nearby church of St. James, in order to enlarge St. Peter's and build the present-day Basilica, removing the manuscript from the hospice before the demolition and in doing so incurring upon himself—unfortunate man—the retribution of Judas thanks to the curse written by T'adēos/T'at'ēos three hundred years before in a language he did not understand.³⁰ The oldest manuscript of the collection, Chig. R.VI.44, although not precisely datable, is a gospel book from the tenth or eleventh century executed in *erkat'agir*.³¹

29. Tisserant, *Codices*, 221–24; Յովհաննէս Միսքճեան, “Ցուցակ հայերէն ձեռագրաց Քահանայապետական Մատենադարանին Վատիկանու,” *Հանդէս Ամսօրեայ Զ* (1892): 211–14, 244–47, 273–75, 339–43 at 273–74 [Yovhannēs Misk'čean, “Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,” *Handēs amsoreay* 6 (1892): 211–14, 244–47, 273–75, 339–43 at 273–74].

30. Միսքճեան, “Ցուցակ հայերէն ձեռագրաց,” 274 [Misk'čean, “Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts,” 274]; Anna Sirinian, “La presenza degli Armeni nella Roma medievale: Prime testimonianze manoscritte ed epigrafiche (con un'iscrizione inedita del XVI secolo),” in *Atti della Pontificia accademia romana di archeologia: Rendiconti*, ser. 3, 86 (2014): 3–42 at 7–12.

31. Tisserant, *Codices*, 359–60. Tisserant designated Chig. R.IV.22 and Chig. R.VI.44 as “Chisiani orientales 1” and “Chisiani orientales 2” respectively (noting R.IV.22 and R.VI.44 as “olim” shelfmarks), which may

B. Main Value of the Collection and other Highlights

- 14 Compared to the large collections of Armenian manuscripts housed at the Matenadaran in Armenia, the Mekhitarist libraries of Venice and Vienna, or the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Vatican collection of Armenian manuscripts is a small, modest collection. Neither do the Armenian items particularly stand out among the approximately 80,000 manuscripts the Vatican Library contains. However, it is considered one of the important “lesser” collections of Armenian manuscripts because it is particularly rich in manuscripts bearing witness to Roman Catholic missionary efforts among the Armenians, as well as to the life and practices of Armenian Catholic communities themselves, particularly in Transylvania and Poland, but also in the lands of traditional Armenian residence of Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus, for example Naxiĵewan. Roman Catholic and Armenian interaction in ecclesiastical and diplomatic realms goes back in earnest to the early days of Cilician Armenia right at the beginning of the Crusader period (or even before), in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, and continues down to the present. Interaction is attested in the Vatican collections as early as the thirteenth century in Vat. arm. 3 (1287), which contains various works bound together, such as a missal and other liturgical services translated from Latin into Armenian, and a lectionary (*ձաշոյց*), Borg. arm. 61 (1268), with adaptations from the Roman lectionary.³² The main colophon of this lectionary is written by the hand of the constable Smbat, one of

lead to the mistaken assumption that these manuscripts are classed in a separate collection known as “Chisiani orientales,” or “Chigiani orientali,” on analogy with Barberiniani orientali. However, the Vatican Library does not maintain a language subdivision of the Chigiani collection.

32. Tisserant, *Codices*, 91–102 (Borg. arm. 61), 205–21 (Vat. arm. 3).

the most celebrated figures of thirteenth-century Cilician Armenia, a diplomat, judge, writer, supreme commander (սպարապետ) of the military forces, and older brother of King Het'um I, who in the late 1240s made a journey to the Mongol court at Qara Qorum (Karakorum), pledging submission to the Great Khan Möngke.³³ This later had disastrous consequences for the Armenian Cilician kingdom when the Egyptian Mamlūk army surprisingly defeated the Mongol forces along with an Armenian contingent at 'Ayn Jālūt in 1260, removing Mongol supremacy from the region and hence leaving Armenians in enmity with the Mamlūks, the new regional power, who after repeated invasions, eventually sacked and brought to a permanent end the Cilician kingdom in 1375. The manuscript also contains a number of marginal ornamentations of note and is a rich and beautiful display of Cilician miniature painting.

From a later period, there are a number of important documents from two Armenian Catholicos (Xač'atowr II, r. 1560–84, and his successor Azaria I, r. 1584–1601) from the latter half of the sixteenth century. Amid the Ottoman-Safavid conflicts of that period, Catholicos Azaria wrote to Pope Gregory XIII (1572–85) in 1585 expressing his and a number of bishops' willingness to enter into union with Rome in exchange for protection; he also sent a profession of faith in accordance with Roman Catholicism. These original, autographed documents, and others of a similar nature, are contained in Vat. arm. 2.³⁴

From a slightly later era, a number of codices from the Borgiani collection contain apologetic and polemical works

33. Claude Mutafian, *Roma-Armenia* (Rome, 1999), 166.

34. Tisserant, *Codices*, 201–5; Միսքեան, “Յուզակ Հայերէն ձեռագրաց,” 244–45 [Misk'cean, “Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts,” 244–45]; Dickran Kouymjian, “Armenia from the Fall of the Cilician Kingdom (1375) to the Forced Emigration under Shah Abbas (1604),” in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. Richard Hovannisian, 2 vols. (New York, 1997), 2:1–50 at 32.

relating to the theological differences between Catholics and Armenians, connected with Christology and the language of the Council of Chalcedon, the two traditions' divergences in liturgical and ritual practices, as well as lexical and linguistic materials to aid Europeans in mastering the Armenian language by Paolo Piromalli (1591–1667), a Dominican monk and expert in Armenian and Persian, who eventually was named bishop over the Armenian Catholics of Naxijewan (Borg. arm. 10, 11, 13, 23, 26, 40, 46, 53).³⁵ A great number of Armenian liturgical materials—missals, lectionaries, hymnals, and calendrical materials—that contain modifications, adaptations or translations from Roman materials bear witness to the hybrid liturgical reality of Armenian Catholic communities (Borg. arm. 21, 35, 38, 39, 40, 50, 51, 56, 57, 58, 61, 67; Vat. arm. 3, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32; Barb. or. 100).³⁶ Other polemical, theological, or apologetic documents relating to Catholic-Armenian relations form part of the collection (Borg. arm. 18, 20, 25, 29, 31, 38, 66; Vat. arm. 3, 13, 21, 22),³⁷ such as a medieval forgery containing a would-be fourth-century pact of friendship and union between Constantine the Great and Pope Sylvester on the one hand, and Gregory the Illuminator and King Trdat III on the other, a propagandistic attempt on the part of pro-Uniate parties at showing an early linkage between the Latin and Armenian churches (Borg. arm. 23, 30; Vat. arm. 2, 8).³⁸ Several of these texts issue from communities linked to the work of the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide,

35. Tisserant, *Codices*, 13–14, 15, 16–17, 27–29, 32–35, 65–67, 77, 79–80; and Mutafian, *Roma-Armenia*, 322.

36. Tisserant, *Codices*, 25–27, 61, 64–65, 65, 65–67, 78–79, 81, 81–84, 84–87, 91–102, 109–17, 205–21, 301–5, 306–13, 313–19, 319–20, 320–21, 321–22, 322–23, 333–40, 344–53.

37. *Ibid.*, 22–23, 24–25, 31–32, 36, 47–59, 64–65, 108–9, 205–21, 244–45, 297–99, 299.

38. *Ibid.*, 27–29, 36–47, 201–5, 237; and Mutafian, *Roma-Armenia*, 93–94.

which was active among Armenians from the early period of its history.

A number of manuscripts provide linguistic aids on the Armenian language for Europeans, especially for those coming from a knowledge of Italian or Latin, which present a fascinating glimpse into early efforts to offer Armenian language training in Europe, and also relate of course to Catholicizing efforts among the Armenians (Borg. arm. 6, 14, 15, 22, 31, 44, 46, 53, 62, 86).³⁹ There are a few significant works of translation from a later period of Latin to Armenian, including Thomas Aquinas (Borg. arm. 45, from 1415) and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (Borg. arm. 66, from the eighteenth century).⁴⁰ The works of the latter had been translated in the early eighth century in Constantinople from Greek into Armenian by Step'anos Siwneč'i.⁴¹ Along with the works of Grigor Narekač'i mentioned above (Borg. arm. 3, 16, Vat. arm. 4), the collection has works from three other major figures of medieval Armenian literature: Nersēs "Šnorhali" Klayec'i (Borg. arm. 3, 4, 30, 83,), Nersēs Lambronac'i (Borg. arm. 3, 84), and Grigor Tat'ewac'i (Borg. arm. 30; Vat. arm. 18).⁴² A few codices contain magical healing texts and divinations, a genre that was particularly popular among Armenian merchants of the early modern period (Borg. arm. 63; Vat. arm. 12, 15, 19).⁴³

In addition to the prevalence of colophons in Armenian manuscripts, it was also established practice for scribes to copy the colophons of previous scribes in their exemplars and for owners of manuscripts to leave notes, especially in the front or back of the manuscript. Colophons and notes

39. Tisserant, *Codices*, 7, 17–18, 18, 27, 47–59, 72–73, 77, 79–80, 102, 192.

40. *Ibid.*, 73–77, 108–9.

41. Robert Thomson, *The Armenian Version of the Works attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite*, *Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientaliū* 488, *Scriptores armeniaci* 17 (Louvain, 1987), vii.

42. Tisserant, *Codices*, 3–5, 5–6, 18–20, 36–47, 173–77, 177–85, 282–86.

43. *Ibid.*, 102–3, 244, 247–61, 286–94.

18 then had a tendency to pile up upon one another. Two codices in the collection are notable in this regard for the number of notes remaining. Borg. arm. 84, containing the works of Nersēs Lambronac’i and copied in 1325, has eleven colophons or owner’s notes, the final and principal one being written by the hand of a certain Vardapet: *Յովհանէս անթապետի կիւլիկեցի* [*Yowhanēs ant’pc’i kiwlikec’i*] (i.e., from Այնթապ [Aintab] in *Կիլիկիա* [Cilicia], now Gaziantep, in the present-day Republic of Turkey).⁴⁴ The other text is Barb. or. 100, a collection of Armenian ritual and calendrical texts adapted to Roman usage from the thirteenth century, which contains over twenty colophons and owner’s notes, providing a rich look into the way Armenians memorialized important events in their lives, especially the passing of loved ones, in the pages of their manuscripts, which to them were always holy objects.⁴⁵

C. “Hybrid” Manuscripts: Deconstructing the Category “Armenian” Manuscripts

An unusual feature of the Vatican collection of Armenian manuscripts is the significant number of them that show a blending of linguistic and cultural boundaries, blurring the somewhat artificial distinctions between *areas* or *languages* by which manuscripts are traditionally classified (e.g., “Armenian,” “Greek,” “Latin,” or “Syriac”). Such “hybrid” manuscripts combine Armenian elements alongside those of other linguistic, cultural, or confessional traditions and can prove to be among the most fascinating and intriguing. One such is a magnificent pentaglot psalter (Barb. or. 2), one of the oldest of its kind, written in Ethiopian, Syriac, Bohairic (Coptic), Arabic, and Armenian at the monastery of St. Macarius near the Nile delta in the fourteenth cen-

44. *Ibid.*, 177–85.

45. *Ibid.*, 344–53.

ture, attesting to the relevance of all five of these languages for the community that produced it.⁴⁶ Another example is Vat. lat. 5974, a gospel manuscript copied in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem near the end of the twelfth century, whose text is in Latin but whose decorations were executed by an Armenian Cilician artist.⁴⁷ Armenian masters from Cilicia were employed in the scriptorium of the Holy Sepulchre during the period of the Crusader states, and this manuscript is a witness to the interconnection and interrelation of Christians from various traditions, most of all in a place like Jerusalem. A similar scenario occurs with Vat. ethiop. 50, a collection of prayers from between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Ethiopian, but again, with decorations by an Armenian artist.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, we do not know where the manuscript was produced. Several Greek manuscripts in the Vatican Library have marginalia in Armenian, indicating their circulation in an Armenian milieu.⁴⁹ Two manuscripts in the Borgiani collection, Borg. arm. 14 and 22, are of an Armeno-Turkish variety.⁵⁰ They are lexical aids that have word lists in Italian and Turkish or Armenian and Turkish, with the Turkish language being represented in Armenian letters. These texts were used by

46. Mutafian, *Roma-Armenia*, 79 (the third language is mistakenly referred to as “greco” instead of “bohairico”); Tisserant, *Codices*, 343; Arnold van Lantschoot, *Codices coptici Vaticani, Barberiniani, Borgiani, Rossiani*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1947), 2, pt. 1:1–4. See the fully digitized manuscript in DigiVatLib, http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Barb.or.2.

47. Vrej Nersessian, *Treasures from the Ark: 1700 Years of Armenian Christian Art* (London, 2001), 199–200. See the fully digitized manuscript in DigiVatLib, http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.5974.

48. Silvanus Grébaut and Eugène Tisserant, *Codices aethiopicis Vaticani et Borgiani, Barberinianus orientalis 2, Rossianus 865*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1935–36), 1:206–9.

49. See Anna Sirinian, “Un carme bizantino in onore degli evangelisti e la sua versione armena nel Vat. gr. 1445,” *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici* 36 (2000): 121–69 at 126–31.

50. Tisserant, *Codices*, 17–18, 27.

Catholic missionaries to reach the native Armenian population, many of whom were primarily Turcophone by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A vast Armeno-Turkish literature (Turkish literature in Armenian characters) proliferated from the eighteenth century onwards, first with the printing of religious and educational works, but then in the realm of periodicals and eventually *belles lettres*, the first modern novel in Turkish being written by an Armenian using the Armenian script.⁵¹

Armenian and Syriac hybrids are even more interesting. Two bifolia of Vat. sir. 623, palimpsests whose lower text reveals an Armenian gospel written in *erkat'agir* from the ninth century, are the earliest example.⁵² But of more interest is Vat. sir. 544, a collection of prayers, written in the year 1711–12.⁵³ Unfortunately, the scribe did not indicate where the manuscript was copied. Among these prayers we find a few Armenian texts, written in Syriac letters: what purports to be a *ba'ūtha* (ܒܘܬܗ) of Jacob of Sarūg (fols. 9v–12v), the Armenian creed with its standard conclusion (fol. 13r–v), and the morning hymn, which is the fourteenth ode, “Glory to God in the heights” (Φωνὴ ἡ πρωῒνου Ἰουσιθῆ, Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις θεῷ) (fol. 14r–v).⁵⁴ Most commonly, *garšūnī* re-

51. See Sebouh D. Aslanian, “Prepared in the Language of the Hagarites: Abbot Mkhitar’s 1727 Armeno-Turkish Grammar of Modern Western Armenian,” *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 25 (2016): 54–86; Haig Berbérian, “La littérature armeno-turque,” in *Philologiae turcicae fundamenta*, vol. 2, ed. Louis Bazin et al. (Wiesbaden, 1964), 809–19.

52. Francesco D’Auito, “Graeca in codici orientali della Biblioteca Vaticana (con i resti di un manoscritto tardoantico delle commedie di Menandro),” in *Tra Oriente e Occidente: Scritture e libri greci fra le regioni orientali di Bisanzio e l’Italia*, ed. L. Perria, Testi e studi bizantino-neoellenici 14 (Rome, 2003), 227–96 at 268.

53. Arnold van Lantschoot, *Inventaire des manuscrits syriaques des fonds Vatican (490–631), Barberini oriental e Neofiti*, Studi e testi 243 (Vatican City, 1965), 69.

54. See the fully digitized manuscript in DigiVatLib, http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.544.

fers to Arabic texts written with the Syriac alphabet, but over the centuries, the Syriac alphabet was also employed to render texts in Mongolian, Sogdian, Persian, Malayalam, Kurdish, Turkish, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and, as here, Armenian.⁵⁵ In 1964 a preliminary study including transcription was undertaken by Arnold van Lantschoot, but only of the creed and morning hymn, not the *ba'ūtha*.⁵⁶ Recently, Hidemi Takahashi published a survey of all the known Armenian *garšūnī* material.⁵⁷ In the course of his research, he was able to determine that the text labeled a *ba'ūtha* of Jacob of Sarūg was in fact the brief formulae for the renunciation of Satan, confession of faith, and confession of sins as found at the very beginning of the Armenian book of hours (Տաճարագիրք).⁵⁸ While preliminary work has been done on studying the way Armenian was transcribed with the Syriac alphabet, and there is now a comprehensive inventory and classification of such Syro-Armenian texts that up to now are known to exist thanks to Takahashi, much less work has been done on the way communities that produced these texts actually made use of them liturgically.⁵⁹

55. Arnold van Lantschoot, "Un texte arménien en lettres syriaques," in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant*, 7 vols., Studi e testi 231–37 (Vatican City, 1964), 3:419–28 at 419; Sebastian Brock, "Armenian in Syriac Script," in *Armenian Studies = Études arméniennes: In memoriam Haïg Berbérian*, ed. Dickran Kouymjian (Lisbon, 1986), 75–80 at 76.

56. van Lantschoot, "Un texte arménien," 419–28.

57. Hidemi Takahashi, "Armenian Garshuni: An Overview of the Known Material," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 17 (2014): 81–117.

58. *Ibid.*, 86–87.

59. On Armenian in Syriac script, see van Lantschoot, "Un texte arménien"; Brock, "Armenian in Syriac Script"; David S. Margoliouth, "The Syro-Armenian Dialect," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1898): 839–61; and most recently, Takahashi, "Armenian Garshuni." On Armenian-Syrian relations from an earlier period, see: Joseph J. S. Weitenberg "Armeno-Syrian Cultural Relations in the Cilician Period (12th–14th c.)," in *The Syriac Renaissance*, ed. Herman Teule and Carmen F. Tauwinkl, Eastern Christian Studies 9 (Leuven, 2010), 341–52. For a brief intro-

RESPECTUS: ACQUISITIONS, CATALOGUING, AND
SCHOLARLY USE

22

A. *History of Acquisitions*

The Vatican Library's holdings of significant numbers of Armenian manuscripts are a relatively recent phenomenon. The first record of an Armenian manuscript in the Vatican collections appears in the early sixteenth century during the pontificate of Julius II (1503–13). By 1686, when an inventory of Oriental manuscripts was undertaken, there were but seven Armenian codices numbered as part of the Vaticani collection.⁶⁰ By the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were still only thirteen, one of the additions being due to Joseph Simon Assemani (Vat. arm. 9), who in 1719 wrote to Abbot Mxit'ar in Venice requesting a copy of a manuscript held there that contained the sermons of Aphrahat, ascribed in the Armenian tradition to Jacob of Nisibis.⁶¹ By the turn of the twentieth century, the collection still numbered less than twenty, but it grew exponentially in 1902 under Pope Leo XIII, when the manuscripts of the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide were added to the library, among which was the Borgiani collection, rich in Oriental manuscripts thanks in part to the collecting efforts of Cardinal Stefano Borgia (1731–1804).⁶² Tisser-

duction to the socio-cultural environment in which one such Armenian *garšūni* text circulated, see Ester Petrosyan, "Manuscript Cairo Syriae 11 as a Gateway to Understanding the 17th-Century Socio-Cultural Environment in Diarbakir," *Banber Matenadarani* 24 (2017): 70–76.

60. Anna Sirinian, "Vaticani armeni," in *Guida ai fondi manoscritti, numismatici, a stampa della Biblioteca vaticana*, ed. Francesco D'Aiuto and Paolo Vian, 2 vols., *Studi e testi* 466–67 (Vatican City, 2011), 1:564–68 at 564; Tisserant, *Codices*, vii.

61. Tisserant, *Codices*, viii.

62. "History," Vatican Library website, accessed 17 May 2018, <https://www.vatlib.it/home.php?pag=storia>.

ant indicates the difficulty involved in knowing the precise details of how all of these manuscripts were acquired in the Borgia collection, because in order to do so one would need to undertake extensive research into the archives of the Propaganda Fide, which in his day would have been a difficult task.⁶³ Leaving to one side then how they entered the Borgia collection in the first place, their entrance into the Vatican Library had the result of adding eighty-eight more Armenian manuscripts to the collection, and in the same year, the enormous Barberiniani collection was purchased, among which were two more Armenian manuscripts. The Chigiani collection was donated to Pope Pius XI in 1923, among which were two Armenian manuscripts. Fourteen more were added to the Vaticani collection in 1923–24, bringing the collection to 125. These latter manuscripts, which were acquired in the East and—note the dates—in the years immediately following World War I, are emblematic of a larger trend of the time, when Armenian manuscripts begin to pop up all over private and public collections in the West, many of which may have been spoils of the Armenian Genocide. All these manuscripts were catalogued by F. C. Conybeare and Eugène Tisserant in their 1927 *Codices armeni Bybliothecae vaticanae*, and since then a dozen more have been added to the Vaticani collection, mostly as donations.⁶⁴

63. Tisserant, *Codices*, ix: *Cum de Borgianis codicibus dicendum sit, primum significare volumus, quod historia eorum enucleari non poterit nisi perscrutato s. Congregationis de propaganda fide archivo, cuius exploratio ardua*. He does provide some details (ix–xi), based on what he could discover in the indices of the Vatican Library.

64. Sirinian, “Vaticani armeni,” 566–67.

B. Cataloguing the Collection

- 24 Scholarly work on the collection commenced at the end of the nineteenth century when Vienna Mekhitarist scholar Yovhannēs Misk’cean traveled to the Vatican to catalogue the Armenian manuscripts there, then consisting of only thirteen manuscripts in the Vaticani armeni collection. His detailed descriptions of the codices were of a high scientific quality and were published in the Vienna Mekhitarists’ scholarly monthly periodical, *Հանդէս Ամսօրեայ* (*Handēs Amsōreay*).⁶⁵ After the major additions in the early nineteenth century, especially the Borgiani collection, British Armenologist F. C. Conybeare (1856–1924) received permission to prepare a scholarly catalogue of all Armenian manuscripts in the Vatican Library. In three separate trips between 1907 and 1913, he prepared detailed descriptions of the manuscripts in the collection.⁶⁶ Interrupted by the Great War, he never got a chance to bring his efforts to completion before dying in 1924. The work then fell to Eugène Tisserant, one of the important Catholic figures of the twentieth century, who would later become Cardinal in 1936 and chief librarian of the Vatican Library from 1957 to 1971, during which time he also played an important role in the Second Vatican Council, especially in regard to issues relating to Eastern Christians. He made use of Conybeare’s notes, bringing the work to completion three years later, which remains even today up to modern scientific standards.⁶⁷ As mentioned above, a dozen or so manuscripts have been added to the collection since the publication of

65. *Միսքճեան*, “Յուցակ Հայերէն ձեռագրաց,” 211–14, 244–47, 273–75, 339–43 [Misk’cean, “Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts,” 211–14, 244–47, 273–75, 339–43].

66. Tisserant, *Codices*, xii.

67. Andrea Schmidt, “Eugène Tisserant et les études arméniennes: Les documents des Archives Vaticanes sur les missions catholiques en Arménie au XIII^e siècle,” in *Le Cardinal Eugène Tisserant (1884–*

this catalogue in 1927, and an updated comprehensive catalogue, currently nearing completion thanks to the efforts of Bernard Coulie and Anna Sirinian, will include their earlier work. Descriptions (though not with the full details proper to a catalogue) and a few illustrations of two gospels (Vat. arm. 40 from 1644 and Vat. arm. 44 from 1501) appeared more recently in a volume devoted to gospel books on the occasion of the bimillenary of Christianity.⁶⁸

C. Use of the Collection in Scholarly Studies

The Armenian manuscripts of the Vatican Library have been featured in a number of scholarly handbooks and reference works. Incomplete when it was published and now extremely out of date, a 1942 handbook of illuminated oriental manuscripts intended to provide a starting point for art historians to look at influences and interactions between Byzantine art and the Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, Nubian, Ethiopic, Georgian, and Armenian traditions, and although it included Vat. etiop. 50, which contained illuminations by an Armenian artist, it did not mention any of the other Armenian manuscripts in the Vatican collection.⁶⁹ Erroll Rhodes's ambitious *Annotated List of Armenian New Testament Manuscripts*, a work primarily intended for textual critics of the Armenian New Testament that attempted to list all "Armenian manuscripts which contain the text of the New Testament or its parts, whether complete or fragmen-

1972): *Une grande figure de l'Église, une grande figure française*, Sources et travaux d'histoire immédiate 14 (Toulouse, 2003), 89–99 at 90.

68. For Vat. arm. 44, see Bernard Coulie, "110. Tetravangelo. Armeno," in *I vangeli dei popoli: La parola e l'immagine del Cristo nelle culture e nella storia*, ed. Francesco D'Aiuto, Giovanni Morello, and Ambrogio Piazzi (Rome, 2000), 400–2. For Vat. arm. 40, see Coulie, "125. Tetravangelo. Armeno," in *I vangeli*, 425–28.

69. Hugo Buchthal and Otto Kurz, *Hand List of Illuminated Oriental Christian Manuscripts* (London, 1942), 69, 98.

tary,” had little hope of being comprehensive, due both to the vast amount of extant Armenian gospel manuscripts alone (approximately 6,000 or twenty percent of all extant Armenian manuscripts; including New Testaments and whole Bibles the figure rises to twenty-four percent), and to the fact that in 1959 the manuscripts of many collections were still uncatalogued.⁷⁰ All the Vatican manuscripts mentioned in Tisserant’s catalogue were included (Barb. or. 117; Borg. arm. 24, 36, 68, 69, 70, 71, 85; Chig. R.VI.44, Vat. arm. 1, 10, 19, 40), but those added after its publication, which includes at least two gospel manuscripts, were not listed.⁷¹ A far more important work appeared in 1960 from M. A. van den Oudenrijn, which centered on the fascinating history and prolific literary activity of the Armenian Unitores from the fourteenth century onwards, who had centers in historic Armenia as well as Italy. He brought together the principal manuscripts that issued from these communities, including liturgical and doctrinal works, translations, books of grammar, lexical aids, and more.⁷² Much remains to be done on evaluating and critically analyzing these works, but van den Oudenrijn laid the groundwork with this well-indexed and thorough handbook, which provides most of the relevant manuscript material and a brief but detailed outline of the history, major centers, and literary works of these small but prolific commu-

70. Erroll Rhodes, *An Annotated List of Armenian New Testament Manuscripts*, Annual Report of Theology, Monograph Series 1 (Tokyo, 1959), v; Dickran Kouymjian, “The Art of the Book: Armenian Medieval Illumination,” in *Armenia: Imprints of a Civilization*, ed. Gabriella Uluhogian, Boghos Levon Zekiyan, and Vartan Karapetian (Milan, 2011), 88–123 at 91.

71. Rhodes, *Annotated List*, 62–63.

72. Marcus Antonius van den Oudenrijn, *Linguae haicanae scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Congregationis, Fratrum Unitorum et FF. Armenorum Ord. S. Basilii citra Mare consistentium quotquot huc usque innotuerunt* (Berne, 1960).

nities. The Vatican Library manuscripts, whose greatest value lies precisely in this field, feature prominently in van den Oudenrijn's work.⁷³ Finally, in 1992 appeared Chahé Adjémian's important *Յուզակ Աստուածաշունչ Մատենի Հայերէն Զեռագիրներուն* (*Grand catalogue des manuscrits arméniens de la Bible*), which gives precise details on the contents of the 294 Armenian manuscripts of the Bible or portions thereof available to him at the time, the relatively small number of manuscripts being due in part to the fact that copying the Bible in its entirety as a single book was not normal practice until very late in the Armenian tradition.⁷⁴ Appearing in this catalogue was Vat. arm. 1, an impressive and beautifully decorated complete manuscript of the Bible, copied in 1625.⁷⁵

Reference has been made already to van Lantschoot's study of two Armenian texts in Syriac script, as well as Takahashi's more comprehensive overview of Syro-Armenian materials.⁷⁶ But apart from a few tentative suggestions in these works, no rigorous exploration was made into the community or communities from which these texts derive, including the reasons for producing them and the way they were used. Charles Renoux's critical and exhaustive study on the Jerusalem lectionary in Armenian (*Ճաշոց*), made use of five manuscripts that make up part of the Vatican collection (Borg. arm. 19, 61, 67; Vat. arm. 32; Chig. R.IV.22), Chig. R.IV.22 and Borg. arm. 61 being particularly import-

73. *Ibid.*, 316–22.

74. Շահէ Աճէմեան = Chahé Adjémian, *Յուզակ Աստուածաշունչ Մատենի Հայերէն Զեռագիրներուն* = *Grand catalogue des manuscrits arméniens de la Bible* (Lisbon, 1992). On the transmission of the Armenian Bible, see S. Peter Cowe, "A Typology of Armenian Biblical Manuscripts," *Revue des études arméniennes* 18 (1984): 49–67.

75. Աճէմեան = Adjémian, *Յուզակ Աստուածաշունչ Աճէմեան* = *Grand catalogue*, 933–37.

76. van Lantschoot, "Un texte arménien," 419–28; Takahashi, "Armenian Garshuni," 81–117.

ant witnesses due to their early date.⁷⁷ Chig. R.IV.22 is one of the ten oldest Armenian lectionaries extant.

28 The modern scholar of Armenian manuscripts today most engaged in research making use of the Vatican Library collection is Anna Sirinian of the Università di Bologna. In addition to the effort undertaken with Bernard Coulie of cataloguing the remaining undescribed manuscripts, she has written a number of articles utilizing the Vatican's Armenian manuscripts. These include a number of studies using colophons to tell a story of Armenian relations and interactions with Rome, as well as other aspects of medieval Armenian history; a study on Greek manuscripts that contain Armenian writing showing circulation outside the community in which they were produced, including a special focus on Vat. gr. 1445, which contains a poem on the gospels in Greek and Armenian; further research into the Vatican Library's acquisition of Armenian manuscripts; contributions to occasional exhibitions that have made use of the Vatican Library collections (see below); a study on materials relating to the Mekhitarists in the Vatican collections, and her study in progress that is the production of a guide to all Vatican Armenian material, including material of Armenological interest not already identified among the Borgiani armeni, Vaticani armeni, Barberiniani orientali, and Chigiani collections (among other items, it will include some of those "hybrid" manuscripts that incorporate Armenian elements along with at least one another linguistic or cultural tradition).⁷⁸

77. Charles Renoux, *Le lectionnaire de Jérusalem en Arménie: Le Čašoc'*, 3 vols., *Patrologia orientalis*, 200, 214, 221 (Turnhout, 1989–2004), 1:520 [106].

78. Anna Sirinian and Chiara Aimi, "I manoscritti armeni copiati a Roma nel XIII secolo," in *Roma e il suo territorio nel medioevo: Le fonti scritte fra tradizione e innovazione; Atti del convegno internazionale di studio dell'Associazione italiana dei paleografi e diplomatisti (25–29 ottobre 2012)*, ed. Cristina Carbonetti Vendittelli, Santo Lucà, and Maddalena Signorini (Spoleto, 2015), 121–60; Sirinian, "La presenza degli Armeni,"

The occurrence of the bimillenary of Jesus's birth, the 1700th anniversary of the founding of the Armenian national church, the 1600th anniversary of the invention of the Armenian alphabet, and the centennial of the Armenian Genocide all within the last seventeen years provided much occasion for libraries and museums to produce special exhibitions and publications to mark those events. Three in particular made important use of the Armenian manuscripts at the Vatican Library. In 1999 the Vatican Library and the Catholicos of Eĵmĵiacin observed the 1700th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity as the state religion of Armenia with the exhibition and its corresponding publication *Roma-Armenia*, highlighting the long history of connections and interactions between the eternal city and Armenia that have occurred over the centuries from pre-Christian times all the way to the present in the political, cultural, commercial, and ecclesiastical realms. The Vatican's Armenian manuscripts played a central role in this exhibit (Borg. arm. 8, 11, 23, 26, 53, 61, 65, 84; Vat. arm. 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 17, 40; Barb. or. 2), with descriptions and illustrations featuring in the companion volume that included contributions from experts in the field of Armenian studies.⁷⁹ The next year, in 2000, another exhibition took place at the Vatican Library, *I vangeli dei popoli: La parola e l'immagine del Cristo nelle culture e nella storia*, which marked

3-42; Sirinian, "Da Drazark a Roma: Una pagina di storia ciliciana nel colofone del manoscritto Arch. Cap. S. Pietro B 77," in *Bnagir' yisatakac': Dall'Italia e dall'Armenia; Studi in onore di Gabriella Uluhogian*, ed. Gabriella Uluhogian et al. (Bologna, 2004), 67-95; Sirinian "Un carme bizantino"; Sirinian, "Vaticani armeni"; Sirinian and Francesco D'Aiuto, "Su alcuni manoscritti d'interesse mechtaristico in fondi non armeni della Biblioteca Vaticana," in *La spiritualità armena nei secoli X-XII: Atti della I. settimana di studio sulla spiritualità armena, Isola di San Lazzaro-Venezia, 3-8 settembre 2002* (Venice, 2002), 183-204.

79. Mutafian, *Roma-Armenia*, 63, 79, 93-94, 111, 129, 143-44, 166, 207-8, 211-12, 265, 293, 322, 327-28.

30 the bimillenary of Christ's birth with an exhibition of gospel and Bible manuscripts and early printed texts in Latin, Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian, Arabic, and Old Church Slavonic. This massive and beautifully illustrated volume made use of the Vatican's Armenian gospel manuscripts (Borg. arm. 68; Vat. arm. 1, 40, 44; Chig. R.VI.44), including two gospel manuscripts not included in Tisserant's catalogue.⁸⁰ Another exhibition in celebration of the 1700th anniversary of Armenian Christianity took place at the British Library, *Treasures from the Ark*, with a companion volume coming out in 2001. The purpose of this exhibit was to showcase the range of Armenian art, not just manuscript illuminations for which Armenians are most well known, but also ceramics, carved wood, textiles, metalwork, and other arts. The work is important for exploring complicated questions surrounding the place of Armenian art in western and non-western art history, and used Vat. lat. 5974, a Latin gospel illuminated by an Armenian Cilician artist, to question traditional dualities and categorizations.⁸¹

CONCLUSION

Scholarly work on the small but significant collection of Armenian manuscripts at the Vatican Library remains ongoing. Cataloguing the remaining manuscripts is already at a late stage of completion by Bernard Coulie and Anna Sirinian. Although the Vatican Library has embarked on a massive digitization project of its collections, the Armenian manuscripts are understandably not of the highest priority, as they are not among the most important manuscripts in its collections. However, four of the 137 manuscripts have been digitized: Vat. arm. 1, Vat. arm. 3, Borg. arm. 61, and

80. *I vangeli*, 348–50, 400–402, 425–28.

81. Nersessian, *Treasures*, 198–200.

Borg. arm. 65.⁸² As mentioned, the value of the collection's materials is extremely rich in the interface of Armenian and Catholic relations, which has had a continuous and active history for nearly a millennium. The collection awaits scholars to take up this topic at large and in earnest, in which task the Armenian manuscripts at the Vatican Library will play a crucial role. Much more work can be done with the Vatican manuscripts on looking at what I refer to as "hybrid" manuscripts. The massive nature of the Vatican Library's collection of 80,000 manuscripts, and Armenians' history as characteristic "go-betweens," with a long history of hybrid identities and life intermixed with communities of other languages, cultures, and religions, makes the Vatican Collection an ideal place to undertake research with this as its focus, and Armenian an ideal language with which to begin a study focused on "hybrid" manuscripts.⁸³

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82. See DigiVatLib, Vat. arm. 1 (http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.arm.1); Vat. arm. 3 (http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.arm.3); Borg. arm. 61 (http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borg.arm.61); and Borg. arm. 65 (http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borg.arm.65). Two other manuscripts have been digitized only from the microfilm: Borg. arm. 30 (http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borg.arm.30) and Borg. arm. 40 (http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borg.arm.40.pt.1 and http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borg.arm.40.pt.2).

83. On Armenians as quintessential "boundary-" or "border-" "crossers," "go-betweens," and cross-cultural brokers, and on the relation of Armenian studies in general to the field of interactive world history, see Sebouh D. Aslanian, "The Marble of Armenian History: Or, Armenian History as World History," *Études arméniennes contemporaines* 4 (2014): 129–42; and Aslanian, "From 'Autonomous' to 'Interactive' Histories: World History's Challenge to Armenian Studies," in *An Armenian Mediterranean: Words and Worlds in Motion*, ed. Kathryn Babayan and Michael Pifer (New York, 2018), 81–125.

