



FLORENCE STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL
AFRO-EURASIA

2

Cultural Entanglements across Medieval Armenia

Catalogue of the Photo Exhibition

9 April – 12 June 2026, University of Florence, Palazzo Fenzi-Marucelli

Curated by

GOHAR GRIGORYAN, ZAROUÏ POGOSSIAN, IRENE TINTI

within the ERC project ArmEn



All'Insegna del Giglio





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**Armenia
Entangled**
Connectivity and Cultural
Encounters in Medieval
Eurasia 9th - 14th Centuries



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DIPARTIMENTO DI STORIA,
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ARTE E SPETTACOLO

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MARGINAL NOTES, CENTRAL DEBATES

Irene Tinti

This small-size manuscript is a portable codex (18×13 cm, *Fig. 12a*) containing the Armenian version of Peter of Aragon's *Book of Virtues* as well as shorter treatises by the same author. Peter was a Dominican, a member of the Catholic community based in K'rna (Nakhijevan) that would eventually become the order of the *Fratres Unitores* (cf. Cat. n° 11 and 23).

Originally composed in Latin by Peter and translated into Armenian in 1339 by his Armenian religious brothers Yakob and Hayrapet, this work is based on Latin sources, notably Dominicans William Perault (c. 1200–1271) and Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274). Dealing with moral theology and including a section on Faith, it was particularly useful as a repository of theological knowledge and as the object of interconfessional debates: thus, it was copied in both Catholic and Apostolic milieux, as attested by the surviving manuscript tradition. Its currency in both camps is also confirmed by near-contemporary sources, namely, the *Unitor* Mkhit'arich' Aparanets'i (c. 1345–1417) and the Apostolic historian T'ovma Metsop'ets'i (1376/9–1447).

The Matenadaran manuscript 46 is particularly important because it was copied on the orders of an Apostolic theologian, Yovhannēs Orotnets'i (1313–1386), by his pupil and later successor as the head of the school of Tat'ev, Grigor Tat'evats'i (1344–1409). Even more significantly, it contains a double series of marginal notes.

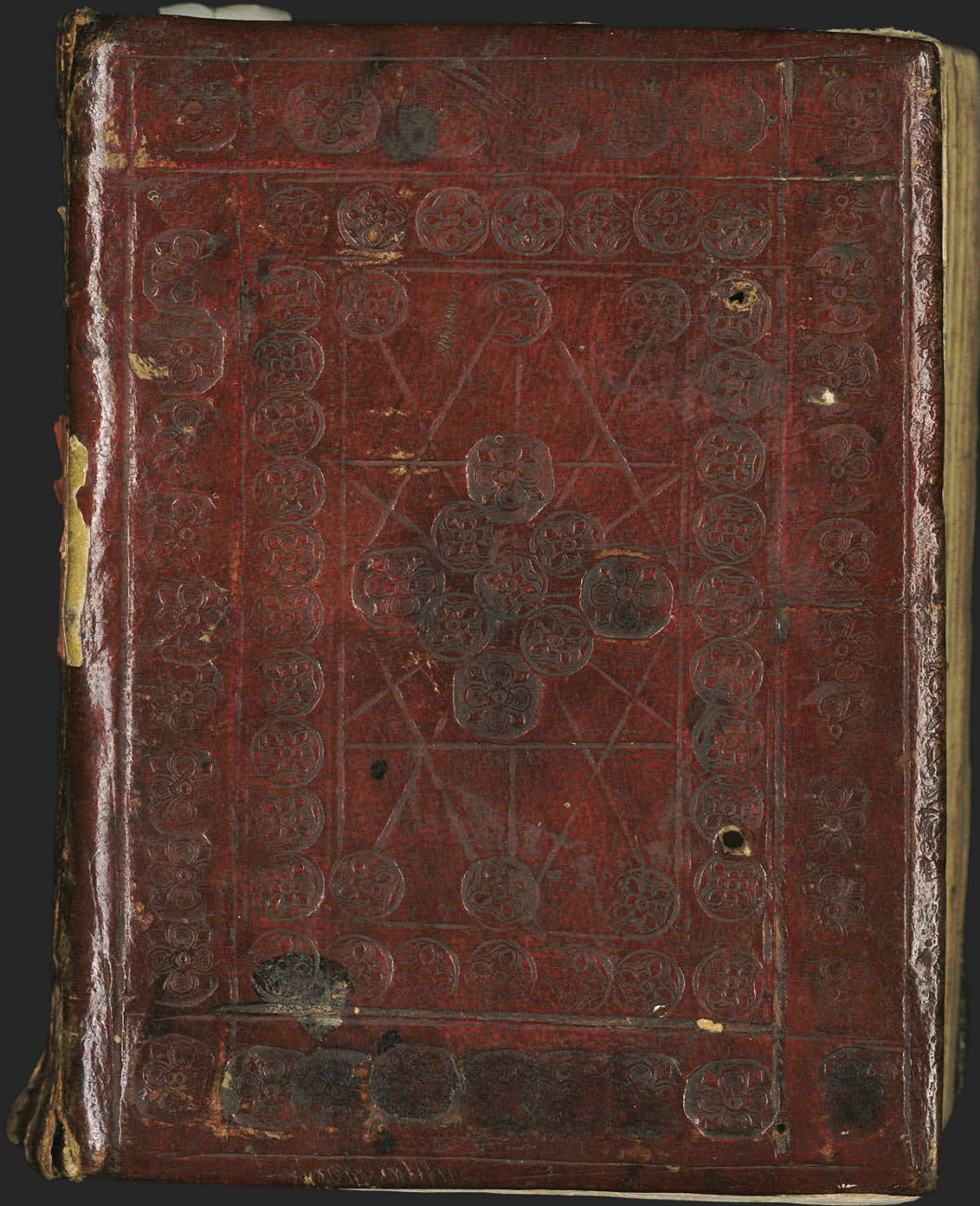
The earlier notes were left by Grigor Tat'evats'i himself, and the others by a later Catholic reader, Ignatios. Their annotations were added to textual passages dealing with theological issues at the heart of the Catholic vs Apostolic confessional divide. Ignatios's comments criticised Tat'evats'i's editorial interventions on Peter's text, but he also deleted (*Fig. 12c*) or modified (*Fig. 12b*) Tat'evats'i's original remarks to suit his own agenda. The erasures were so effective that the underlying text has not thus far been retrieved, even through the use of multispectral imaging (*Fig. 12d*).

Thus, manuscript 46 contains a Catholic text based on European sources and translated from Latin. It was commissioned by an Armenian Apostolic theologian, and the text was copied, edited to suit a different context and readership, and annotated by an even more prominent Apostolic theologian. Furthermore, it includes a series of comments left by a subsequent Catholic reader, who sides with the original author and polemically engages with the Apostolic copyist. All this is clear evidence that the same manuscripts circulated in both Catholic and Apostolic milieux and shows at the same time that the exchanges were not unidirectional. It also exemplifies the varied and complex responses to the activities of the *Unitores* among the Armenians: acceptance, confessional adherence, and spirited defence on the one hand; theological rebuttal and intellectual renegotiation on the other.

12a. Front cover of a manuscript containing the Armenian versions of Peter of Aragon's *Book of Virtues*, *On the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, and *On the Eight Beatitudes*. Manuscript commissioned by Yovhannēs Orotnets'i and copied by Grigor Tat'evats'i in the Vaghatin Monastery, Siwnik', before 1386. Yerevan, Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, MS 46. Photographic credit: Matenadaran.

12b. Marginal note written by Grigor Tat'evats'i (before 1386) and later modified by Ignatios (14th–15th cc.). Tat'evats'i: "He [Peter of Aragon] began sowing the weeds with the wheat, did he not?" Ignatios: "Was it not the cursed Grigor Tat'evats'i who began sowing the weeds with the wheat, but in abundance?" Yerevan, Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, MS 46, folio 28r (lower margin). Photographic credit: Matenadaran.

12cd. Erased note, likely originally written by Tat'evats'i; new comment added by Ignatios: "Orotnets'i and Tat'evats'i have sown multiple weeds within this holy book." Yerevan, Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, MS 46, folio 62v (lower margin). Multispectral image by Matenadaran (Vanik Khechoyan); Maximum noise fraction (MNF) analysis applied by Jost Gippert (2025). Photographic credit: Matenadaran.



a

Ոչ Լիւսաւ զորոնք, սերմանէ՛ ընդ ցորենցն յորիցոր տալ թեւա
 ցի ստեփծեալն բայց բազմ:

b

որոնքն և տալ թեւա
 զորոնք յորիցոր սերմանեալն Ի ԿԸ
 սի՛ գրիս:

c

որոնքն և տալ թեւա
 զորոնք յորիցոր սերմանեալն Ի ԿԸ
 սի՛ գրիս:

d



The catalogue presents 27 case studies that bear witness to cultural interactions in and around medieval Armenia. These testimonies come from multiple sources: small pieces of pottery and coins; majestic monuments and abandoned ruins; legendary narratives and visual arts; historiographical and juridical texts; lapidary inscriptions and handwritten manuscripts; and even tiny marginal notes that were intentionally erased in medieval times. Collectively, these sources and artefacts narrate a story of medieval Armenia and Armenians that spans a multitude of interconnections across Eurasia.

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